

War Aims, Peace Hopes

Because of the time and place in which it came into being, *Horizon* was forced to confront the war. Contemporary events were of such immediacy and proximity that forced ignorance and apathy for the sake of some form of Ivory Tower artistic idealism would have rendered the magazine merely escapist, rather than the thought-provoking medium Cyril Connolly, Stephen Spender and others worked hard for it to be. As has been previously discussed, Connolly claimed, in his first 'Comment,' that *Horizon's* 'politics are in abeyance,' a stance that seemed to declare a break from the politically oriented periodicals of the 1930s such as *Left Review*.¹ But even at the beginning this did not prevent the magazine from printing the political views of others: essays exploring reasons for the outbreak of war, whether or not it should be fought, and what it would mean for Britain's future were plentiful, appear in the first issue. As Connolly immediately goes on to say in that same opening editorial, the absence of politics 'will not always be the case, because as events take shape the policy of artists and intellectuals will become clearer'.² Only by giving 'to writers a place to express themselves,' including their different views on the war and its import, could this clarity be eventually obtained.³

Horizon was to be a magazine that examined provocative topics, just as it promoted quality writing, and the insinuation was that quality literature and powerful ideas were inextricably linked. The role of politics, despite Connolly's reluctance to make definitive *Horizon's* political stance, was important in this effort. Indeed, Connolly gives credit to the 1930's for forcing a general acknowledgement of the socioeconomic

aspects of literary endeavour, stating in this first 'Comment' that 'the change that has come over literature in the last decade is an increased consciousness of its political and economic basis'.⁴ He also states that 'this is the only Marxist lesson that writers have soundly learnt,' implying that while the realisation of this aspect of writing was important, much of the effort in the previous decade to overly saturate writing with politics, and to see literature as merely a tool for political change, was misguided.⁵ Connolly's initial hope was that *Horizon* would provide a clearinghouse for ideas, without endorsing any of them explicitly. Nevertheless, the topic of 'war aims' and post-war planning was frequently the subject of essays in *Horizon*, demonstrating that Connolly, and the magazine by extension, could not evade questions that the war raised. Indeed, the discussion of societal improvement, particularly in both the early and late war years, was one of the most prominent aspects of the magazine, the analysis of which is an integral part of any attempt to understand the nature of *Horizon*, its editor, its contributors, and its readership.

Stephen Spender in particular was responsible for the presence of this political focus in the magazine in the first years of the war, when he still acted as an associate editor, according to Michael Sheldon in *Friends of Promise: Cyril Connolly and the World of Horizon*.⁶ During *Horizon*'s first months of production, before the fall of France, there was a sizeable contingent of writers contributing to the magazine who still believed that the war would last less than a year. This rapidly approaching victory necessitated the planning of a post-war social structure that could avert similar crises in the future, as well as serving as a rare chance to make what they felt to be extremely necessary fundamental changes to British institutions of government. According to

Sheldon, ‘Spender was especially eager to make *Horizon* a forum for analysing “war aims” and understanding the social responsibilities of writers and intellectuals’.⁷ As the war progressed, belief in a quick, easy victory was dashed, and this, as well as Spender’s gradual cessation of co-editing duties at *Horizon* concurrent with his growing responsibility at John Lehmann’s *Penguin New Writing*, dampened the ‘war aims’ bent of the magazine. This satisfied Connolly, who felt ‘that Spender’s influence had, at certain points, pushed the magazine too far into politics’.⁸ As previous chapters have revealed, the subject never disappeared, however, and contributions addressing it became popular once again as the tides of war changed. Connolly’s desire to publish varied types of writing, with different perspectives, as long as quality was of a high standard, ensured that the political views of many of the period’s leading writers and thinkers shaped the journal throughout its wartime run. Whether it was the call for clearly stated war aims, an international governing body or the unification of Europe, the future of Britain and the western world in general was a consistent point of discussion during the war years. This chapter considers a range of essays by a broad selection of writers that illustrate *Horizon*’s position as a forum for wartime political debate. These essays, collectively, show a developing concern with the post-war world, as well as with the conduct of the war itself.

To illustrate his point that ‘*Horizon* is concerned with the general issues of peace and war, and would consider the origins, ethics, conduct, and conclusion of them in an enquiry open to the most diverse points of view,’ Connolly included in the first issue essays by J.B. Priestley and Herbert Read, which he believed would ‘form a starting point’ in the debate.⁹ Priestley and Read, both frequent contributors to *Horizon*

throughout the war years, offer their hopes, fears, but more importantly their general ideas concerning the outbreak of war in that issue. The articles differ in structure and on many individual issues, but are similar in outlook. The shared leftwing perspective they use as starting points, not only characterise the authors' own leanings, but also, by appearing in the inaugural issue offer a strong indication of *Horizon's* political bent.

Priestley's 'The War—and After' is brief, only four pages in length.¹⁰ It begins with a pithy explanation for Nazi behaviour and successes thus far:

People still write to me to say that we are at war because we like war.

This is not true. Apart from some young Nazi hotheads and officers hoping for quick promotion, nobody now likes and wants war. The Nazis based their whole technique on this fact. In a really belligerent world they could never have brought off their remarkable series of *coups*. The trick was to threaten war in a world ready to pay almost any price for peace. The Nazis did not want war but the spoils of it. Collecting those spoils was rapidly becoming the national industry of the Third Reich.¹¹

Priestley goes on to characterise a second group, 'who applauded Leftish writers like myself when we said that Britain should make a stand against the Nazis,' but 'now revile us as warmongers because we believe in the stand that Britain is now making' (I:1 15). His reply to this attack, already indicated in his phrasing of it as a paradoxically circular argument, is developed by the posing of a hypothetical question: 'Why? Can you

disintegrate the Gestapo by passing a few resolutions in Hampstead?'.¹² The fruitlessness of appeasement and negotiation should be obvious, according to Priestley: 'We passed thousands of resolutions, spoke eloquently of peace and goodwill, but the dark stain spread over the map of Central Europe, the Gestapo moved in, and the refugees came thick and fast'.¹³ For Priestley, concurrent Soviet policy offers no alternative for those hoping warfare can be avoided: 'Bernard Shaw says it is all right now, because his friend Stalin has everything under control. Well, Stalin may have made special arrangements to see that Shaw comes to no harm, but the rest of us in Western Europe do not feel quite so sure of our fate, especially those of us who do not share Shaw's curious admiration for dictators'.¹⁴ In his dismissal of current British communist propaganda, particularly the reasoning behind the recently signed Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact (1939), Priestley demonstrates his own independent, less radical liberal ideology, one that shares much with the ideological stance *Horizon* would come to develop.

The last group Priestley describes are 'those people who say that we have no right to defy the employers of the Gestapo and the owners of the concentration camps because the British Empire is not an earthly paradise'.¹⁵ He cites the cases of South Africa and India as two examples often used by such critics. Priestley attempts to render this line of reasoning moot:

I have long been in favour of transforming the British Empire into something nearer what it pretends to be, but I believe we shall have a better chance of doing that when the Nazis are no longer screaming menaces and cracking whips at our heels. In fact, we shall have a better

chance of doing anything worth doing. On the other hand, if they stay at our heels, we shall be lucky to get off with our lives.¹⁶

Thus, according to Priestley, the war is unavoidable, and the menace the Nazis pose outweighs any argument to the contrary. Britain is certainly in need of repair, on many fronts, but seeing this need as a prerequisite for confronting the Nazis, misses, or at least underestimates, the necessity of dealing with the more immediate concern of a rapaciously land-grabbing, fast moving foe with little regard for diplomatic decorum and the international status quo, and even less for the finer points of perfecting democracy.

Much of Priestley's article deals with the state of affairs after the war. But before launching into his prognostications, Priestley offers an awkward caveat, the possible ridiculousness of making plans too far ahead at the beginning of a war that may not be winnable. In doing so he demonstrates the lack of certainty common in early discussions concerning all aspects of the war. According to Priestley, 'There has been a great deal of confused talk and writing about war aims[...]it is no use our becoming entangled in elaborate quarrels about the ultimate world order with the Nazis still around the corner[...]in my opinion it is quite impossible to do anything with a world that may be dominated at any moment by the Nazis'.¹⁷ Despite these dire observations, he is not so pessimistic as to believe that nothing can be discussed, and in arguing that change should be possible if the Allies win, he makes a comparison of the current war and the accompanying social mood with the First World War, demonstrating another set of views held in common with many other *Horizon* contributors of a similar political bent: 'I [do not] agree with the pessimists, who point out that here we are with another war on our

hands and nobody ever learns anything[...]the atmosphere of this war is so different from the last, which at first was like a long hysterical Bank Holiday, that it seems to me humanity has learnt a great deal'.¹⁸ Mistakes had been made leading up to the war, but Priestley, like others of his political stripe, felt vindicated in their judgement of the Nazis as implacable, and that this war was just, in most regards, unlike the previous World War. In a parting broadside to the communists, Priestley states that, as lessons learnt go, 'the only exception is perhaps to be found in Soviet Russia'.¹⁹

One last wartime supposition appears during the rest of the article, dealing with economics. Priestley ponders the basis of the war, and finds that, curiously: 'Here at last is a war that has not an obvious economic motive[...]for I do not believe that we are fighting because some imperial traders want to keep their mines and plantations, capitalists wish to protect their investments, and merchants hope for bigger markets when their rivals are defeated'.²⁰ Priestley's suggestion that this Second World War originates from political rather than economic causes makes it possible to emphasise his point that the war is just, therefore must be fought, and is worth fighting. He then puts forth the idea that the war, in boosting 'ingenuity and productive power,' as all wars do, might offer an opportunity to discuss 'a non-economic theory of human life'.²¹ The two things that seem to be most desired by human beings, according to Priestley, are 'Security and Freedom'.²² 'Security comes first,' he states, but the point where 'the demand for security changes into the desire for freedom is soon reached'.²³ Democracies often miss the first point, while autocracies miss the second, and 'security-at-the-expense-of-freedom only seems to apply with most people to elementary needs and does not apply to radio sets, cars, tiled bathrooms, antique furniture, collections of etchings, and the like'.²⁴

These luxuries easily lose out to freedom from ‘the censor, the informer, propaganda-at-all-costs, forced labour, and the whole paraphernalia of the police state,’ at least for ‘the healthy-minded’.²⁵ While they may seem as ‘nothing while you have’ them, Priestley believes these luxuries seem like ‘everything when you have lost’ them, and suggests asking ‘the nearest refugee’ what this feels like when they have been taken away.²⁶

There is, however, cause for worry concerning ‘the healthy-minded,’ according to Priestley, as he believes there may be ‘something in the modern world, no matter whether it accepts capitalist democracy, communism, Nazism, Fascism, that is bent on rapidly reducing the number of the healthy-minded, is addling the wits of man, is making it harder and harder to be easy, merry, affectionate and wise,’ and that this possible state, ‘in which the spirit cannot flower freely,’ is what produces all ‘profound and terrible conflicts’.²⁷ If this is indeed the problem, then there may be no defence. As Priestley puts it, ‘Perhaps where we need it most, we have no Maginot Line’.²⁸ If people are incapable of valuing their liberty, and are satisfied with security alone, the totalitarian solutions may seem fair, he suggests, and all hope for forward thinking makes little sense. The mentioning of this possibility, which he obviously hopes is remote, does fall in line with the concurrent popular line of thinking concerning modernity and the inevitability of social malaise and personal discontent. Applying this disillusionment to the current wartime situation, which he has already painted as a battle between freedom and slavery, has the ability to dismantle any argument he can call forth, and is itself possibly the most frightening concept due to this power. Nevertheless, despite the obvious danger, Priestley is willing to put forth the idea that the war can be a vehicle for positive change as well, a theme he develops further later in the magazine’s run.

Herbert Read's 'At the Moment of Writing' deals predominately with the same topics as Priestley's article, but rather than exploring the morality and spirituality of the forces at play at the outset of war and beyond, Read focuses largely on the geopolitical realities of the current situation. In doing so, his essay offers a group of commonly held liberal definitions of background and motivations. There is a fair bit of speculation in the essay as well, but in considering the economic and ideological necessities of post-war restructuring, Read offers additional perspectives that are indicative of the liberal musings that were frequent during the early months of the war. Unlike Priestley, Read is not willing to begin dispensing labels immediately, because the present time is so uncertain: 'I give my contribution to this discussion a temporizing title because the forces engaged in the war change front so completely from time to time that only a mind as agile as a communist's can meet each phase with a ready "analysis"'.²⁹ Read's appraisal of the situation as chaotically fluid is due in no small part to the recently signed non-aggression pact between the Soviets and the Nazis. His feelings regarding this turn of events is revealed in the sideways insult of the communist ability to forever adapt to staggering policy reversals with new spin. Read describes the current state as revolving around the relationship of France and Britain, with 'the Empire and France[...]strongly united and comparatively consistent in their attitude,' albeit somewhat 'embarrassed by their commitments to Poland and Czechoslovakia, now represented by shadow governments of exiles'.³⁰ There is also slight unease at home along with colonial instability, with 'mutterings of discontent in India [and] South Africa'.³¹ The war is declared, but not yet underway, at least for the two Western European Allies. Despite this inactivity, Read states, 'I think we have to admit that bored as most of us are with the

war, there is no considerable opposition to its continuance,' and that 'the general state of opinion in France and Great Britain might be best described as *fatalistic* [author's emphasis]'.³² In the early months of the war, during its Phony stage, France and England were united in boredom and disillusionment with the prospect of yet another war, as well as the desire to halt the Nazi machine. This is not to say, however, that a pervasive dread did not exist, and Read's use of the term 'fatalistic' is well suited to encompassing both boredom and dread.

For Read, the greatest hope for the Allies lies in this shared outlook and destiny, whatever its finer points, because however 'fatalistic' the popular outlook, France and Britain are united while 'Germany is isolated'.³³ The Soviets, despite the nonaggression treaty, are not the allies of Germany; their 'understanding[...]does not seem to amount to more than a non-intervention agreement'.³⁴ While 'Russia will do nothing to help the capitalist governments of Great Britain and France,[...]she is equally determined to avoid fighting on the side of the anomalous government of Germany'.³⁵ 'Like most of us,' according to Read, 'Russia is waiting for something to happen inside Germany'.³⁶ Like most of his contemporaries, he believes the ideological schism preventing military alliance with the Soviets is far too great to overcome.

Because of the abstention of the Soviets, Read believes that the sides are evenly matched up, that, 'in a military sense, the war is a deadlock, and it is difficult to see how it can "loosen up" in any decisive way'.³⁷ As a result of the lack of physical, outright hostilities and fighting during the preceding months since war was declared, there is every reason, according to Read, to believe that this war will be fought differently. 'As a result of this deadlock,' he writes, 'the most considerable struggle is going on in non-

military spheres—namely, in economics, diplomacy and propaganda,’ and that the conflict will remain in these terms for the foreseeable future.³⁸ Read’s belief that there was a deadlock, and that it would be ongoing, is certainly plausible given the relative inactivity during the first few months of the war prior to the printing of *Horizon*’s first issue, and was undoubtedly a belief shared by many. Even the events leading up to the war seemed more based in posturing and rhetoric than true aggression.

Thus, according to Read, the best policy is to focus on these aforementioned ‘spheres.’ Economics will not provide a quick solution: ‘Whether in due course we can exhaust Germany economically is a question I cannot answer,’ and ‘It would seem in any case to be a long-term policy, and meanwhile a decision may be reached in the other spheres’.³⁹ As for these two other spheres, ‘diplomacy and propaganda,’ they are ‘interrelated,’ and while international sympathy will ‘depend partly, of course, on the economic bribes we can offer,’ there can be ‘no real support[...]unless we can also win the confidence of the neutral countries and persuade them that it is equally their battle which we are fighting’.⁴⁰ Read further describes this interrelatedness of diplomacy, which ‘is the staff-work of such a war of persuasion’ while the real ‘force comes from the vitality and appeal of the ideas which we express as a nation and as an alliance;’ in other words, propaganda.⁴¹ Through these, he believes, the war will be fought and won.

Because of this relationship, and the nature of the conflict as Read sees it, ‘our intellectuals are really our first-line troops, and on their efficiency will depend the outcome of the war’.⁴² And because ‘the intellect cannot be conscripted,’ according to Read, and ‘is rendered completely ineffective by regimentation, by false directions, and by hypocrisy,’ the winner in the conflict must have truth on their side, as intellect ‘can

only come into action when it is on the side of truth'.⁴³ Thus the 'essential question in this discussion' becomes this: 'Do the war aims of the Allies represent a body of truth to which the intellect can pledge its services?'.⁴⁴ Read believes both sides have inherent faults that will be detrimental to their respective cases. For the Allies, particularly Britain, the Empire is itself a tough sale. Although 'it may be true that we do not want more colonies or to extend our empire in any way,' the British 'mean to defend what we have got, which is an unfair share, and between such defence and [imperial] aggression there is no essential difference,' in both the 'marxist and fascist point of view,' which Read sees as 'singular'.⁴⁵ The other side has inconsistencies and problematic selling points of its own, according to Read:

Germany claims, not very convincingly, that she has not got sufficient *Lebensraum* for her population of 80 millions. Nor has Belgium, nor has Italy, nor, for that matter, has Great Britain. Such claims for *Lebensraum* are really a naïve and impossible attempt to solve what is actually an economic problem. There is plenty of elbow-room in Germany: lacking, however, are the natural resources to ensure a high standard of living for the 80 millions *by present methods of production and distribution* [author's emphasis]. In any case the problem is not solved by the extension of national frontiers or the acquisition of colonies; for these involve the taking over of existing populations which are sometimes worse off economically than the population of the step-mother country.⁴⁶

Thus the economic sphere comes back into play; Read's belief that 'the extension of Germany's Lebensraum by the incorporation of Austria, Czechoslovakia, and Poland has merely intensified her economic problems,' and that 'the addition of a few barren tracts in equatorial Africa will not help matters to any appreciable extent' is based in the idea that Germany is attempting a quick, violent fix to a more profound economic problem, evidenced by the recent depression, and ultimately based in 'a disparity between the rates of production and consumption'.⁴⁷

As he stated before, Read believes economic solutions, which 'must be found on the consumptive [sic] side' because 'the restrictive control of production, including the deliberate destruction of surplus supplies of food, is a criminal action which would have only entered the minds of desperate men,' must form the basis for any final solution to the problems that ushered in the current conflict.⁴⁸ In particular, he sees the rise of Nazism as a symptom of current international economic malfunction, and while, at that point, 'the war is a localised and comparatively insignificant aspect of this general problem,' the economic crisis has 'every nation' in its 'grip,' including the 'United States and Russia'.⁴⁹ Read argues that due to this crisis, 'it is quite irrelevant to demand [the war's] cessation,' and that 'if we stop it, here and now, it will sooner or later break out again on another front, in another form'.⁵⁰ The only long term solution, Read decides, 'is to solve the economic crisis,' and in so doing 'stop the war'.⁵¹

He goes on to discuss the ethical and ideological differences between the sides, and their importance to his economic argument:

Meanwhile we hear the words liberty, freedom, tolerance. Very good words, but do they represent anything real in the context of the economic crisis? In my opinion they do—something very real. I believe that the crisis can only be solved in the spirit, and by men imbued with the spirit, of these words. The people who decry these words—communists, fascists, totalitarians and authoritarians of every kind—are people who want to solve the crisis by violent means. That is to say, they do not want a general solution of the crisis, but a partial solution which will temporarily benefit their country, their party or their class at the expense of the rest of the world.⁵²

The economic solution that will bring lasting peace, according to Read, is therefore one that embraces democratic ideals, and goes deep enough to better the lot of all groups to one degree or another. The most obvious answer, ‘the only fair solution,’ is ‘democratic socialism,’ which is the only ‘one which can be reached by free and unprejudiced discussion’.⁵³ Read believes democratic socialism to be ‘the next desirable stage in political evolution,’ and welcomes ‘any force or tendency that leads in that direction;’ while he admits that ‘democratic socialism is [not] the final stage or in itself free from intolerable defects,’ he believes that it is the best, quick hope of ‘democratisation’ of Europe and the ‘reorganization of production and distribution on an international egalitarian basis’.⁵⁴

Going even further in his conclusion, Read shares his belief, common amongst many who hope for economic revolution and believe in the necessity of conflict to catalyse change, that this war is the only way to get the 'democratisation' process started:

To stop the war, besides being a futile gesture, would leave the crisis unresolved. It would postpone the necessity of a solution. Therefore, in a spirit of fatalism (which my opponents are welcome to call a spirit of sadism) I say: Let the war go on. It is the shortest and therefore best way to replace the capitalist system by a democratic system, and which will at the same time rescind those partial and tyrannical solutions of the crisis represented by the Soviet Union no less than by Germany and Italy.⁵⁵

Read ends the article by restating his belief in the inevitable correction of international economic faults. He also reiterates his opinion that the war is not only necessary, but better fought sooner rather than later. Read's declaration of economics as the reason behind the current state of international affairs and the war itself is seemingly opposed to Priestley's belief that the present war may well be the first not motivated by economics, but both authors see the current conflict as a result of the opponent looking for quick, violent, temporary fixes. Both obviously have ideological and philosophical perspectives that are, for the most part, very similar, and, most importantly, both see the war as a catalyst for necessary change.

Priestley and Read were popular writers, and in showcasing their essays in the very first issue, Connolly was taking the chance that *Horizon* would be labelled middle-

brow by critics. Their names would help sell issues and subscriptions, but given the strength of Connolly's conviction that only the most worthy contributions could be accepted, his decision to print the essays side by side, in the inaugural issue, indicates his desire to demonstrate, at the very least, that *Horizon* could serve as the clearinghouse for ideas he describes in the first 'Comment.' And while it is true that both authors based their articles in a similar, leftist ideology, informed by Marxism but not beholden to it, they demonstrate two different ways of understanding the growing conflict, as economically or politically motivated. Also of interest is the decision of both writers to describe their hopes and predictions for the post-war period. Admittedly, at this stage of the war, before France fell, some believed that the conflict might end at the negotiating table, or at least be fought by the two Allies to a quick end. But the fear of occupation and of losing the war, which Priestley especially gives voice to, was also widely held. That both Priestley and Read are willing to analyse post-war possibilities in such an unsure climate is evidence of the lasting impact, as well as the highly unsatisfactory conclusion, of the previous World War. The idea that the mistakes of Versailles could not be repeated was powerful, and the participants in the discussion of post-war planning in *Horizon's* pages were ever mindful of the Great War's lessons. The next essay analysed examines these lessons, and more firmly grounds the war aims debate in economic theory.

The March 1940 issue includes an article by prominent economist R. F. Harrod, better known as the biographer of John Maynard Keynes. In 1945 Harrod was an unsuccessful Labour candidate for parliament, and a member of the Liberal shadow cabinet from 1946-48.⁵⁶ As would be expected, the 1940 article, 'Peace Aims and

Economics,' goes into much more depth regarding the economic basis for, and solutions to, the current conflict than other essays previously discussed. The primary focus is on post-war planning, rather than secondary, as it is in the articles contributed by Priestley and Read, and this too, fittingly, is grounded in economic theory. In many ways, Harrod's essay is in the same liberal vein as those of Priestley and Read, but the solutions it offers are, ironically, not as dependent on radical changes in economic practice. Harrod begins the essay by admitting that opportunities have been missed in the past: 'It must be in a chastened mood that one approaches the post-war problem[...] In the event of victory the opportunity of building a new world can hardly be as favourable as that of 1919'.⁵⁷ He implies that there are two reasons no lasting solutions were achieved in the deliberations that occurred after the First World War. The first of these is put forth as a subtle warning against too much trust in human nature:

There is an old-fashioned maxim that still finds favour among certain people, the idea of shaking hands after a fight and relying upon the generous gesture to go straight to the heart of the defeated foe. This is certainly in line with public school tradition, but the psychology implied is suspect in the extreme. The rush of chivalrous feeling may mellow an overweening spirit of victory; but the emotional discords of the vanquished are not likely to be so easily resolved.⁵⁸

The obvious example of such a scenario, even if Harrod does not explicitly say so, is easily seen in the Allied treatment of Germany after the First World War. The second

lesson of the First World War he offers, however, is explicit: 'The greatest mistake of all after 1919 was the split between French and British policy, and it would be a disaster to secure peace terms again, to which the British and French had their own conflicting sets of mental reservations'.⁵⁹ At this early point in the war, before France had fallen, it was a common belief that Germany would fall to the combined might of that country and Britain, and in less time than it took in the First World War. Harrod's essay assumes as much, as it spends a full paragraph expounding upon the need for complete French and British agreement in post-war policy: 'It is our primary duty as well as our primary interest to have 'peace aims' which the French can whole-heartedly endorse[...] And it is also our supreme duty to enter to the fullest degree into French feelings from the very beginning'.⁶⁰ Without full solidarity with the French, Harrod argues, any long term conditions imposed on Germany are likely to unravel, and it is implied that this is one of the primary reasons they eventually did unravel after the First World War.

Harrod goes on to explore more fully what conditions will probably be imposed. He states that 'German disarmament is indispensable,' but he admits that 'it is impossible to look forward to it with complete confidence, because the same forces which operated after 1919 may operate again, human nature being what it is, to induce in due time a weakness in the enforcement of the disarmament clauses and so lead to a renewed German hope of redress by force'.⁶¹ Thus disarmament alone is not enough, no matter how much effort is put into perfecting the treaties meant to safeguard it. 'Are we to be forever victims of the operation of this cycle,' Harrod asks, 'with its recurrent disasters?'.⁶² Not necessarily, according to Harrod, before proposing a solution that he believes might succeed: 'I believe there is a way out, not by pursuit of an idealist and

impractical political solution, but by turning attention to another field, that of economics'.⁶³ Harrod's solution implies that political solutions are not trustworthy, and ultimately must fail. However, the economic aspect of the conditions of Germany's defeat after the previous war also caused significant problems. Reparation payments served as a catalyst for the popular disgruntlement that ultimately brought the Nazis into power.⁶⁴ These reparations, particularly because of their 'large and unspecified amounts,' were a mistake 'that should not be repeated,' Harrod states.⁶⁵ There is 'no doubt,' he admits, that 'the Treaty, or, rather, defeat in the last war,' was an 'agitating factor' and 'provided a fertile soil for future troubles'.⁶⁶ But this was not the principle factor: 'To say that the German depression was due to reparations is about as sensible as saying that the British depression of the same period was due to the wickedness of the labour government, which was in power at the time'.⁶⁷ The German depression, like the British depression, was part of a larger 'world-wide phenomenon,' and as such, 'it is necessary to seek world-wide causes'.⁶⁸ What must be confronted, Harrod continues, is what he terms 'the problem of the Trade Cycle,' the cause of the Great Depression throughout the world and the root of the current conflict.⁶⁹ By arguing that the economic woes Germany experienced directly led to the Nazi regime, remilitarization, and thus the Second World War, and that these economic problems were symptomatic of a larger, worldwide malaise, Harrod attempts to prove that any feasible solution must be equally as expansive. It must address the basis for the breakdown in the capitalist system that caused the Depression to begin with. This failure of the system had little or nothing to do with the First World War, its outcome, or the Versailles Treaty's conditions.

Despite the obvious severity of the Depression in Britain in the early 1930s, there was astonishing indifference regarding the situation of the economy, Harrod goes on to state: 'Officially it was never recognised as a problem; only in the depth of depression was there a certain political flurry in which some obsolete and inapposite catchwords about the need for economy and balancing the budget were unearthed'.⁷⁰ Indeed, if it were not for rearmament in Britain, the 'recurrence of slump' in 1937 would have 'continued its baleful course' because 'no rational plans were made'.⁷¹ If the same fate is to be averted after the current conflict, 'in the event of victory,' then 'the opportunity to tackle the problem afresh' should be taken 'quickly,' which, if the 'evil of post-war depression on the one hand and inflation on the other' are to be avoided, will involve 'concerted effort in which victors and vanquished collaborate'.⁷² Until this point, he explains, economic fixes to the problems of depression and inflation have had 'necessarily to work within the national setting,' but for a long term, comprehensive, 'radical solution,' international collaboration is key. Although the path Harrod takes is different, as are many of the reasons he provides for the present conflict, he arrives at a conclusion similar to those proffered in Priestley and Read's respective essays: the necessity of an international body, of some type, that can better implement the economic changes necessary to end the cycle of war, and the accompanying and connected bouts of economic depression.

Harrod primarily proposes a post-war armistice that is what he calls a 'sort of inverted Federal Unionism' that 'reserves [foreign policy and arms] to national governments, but transfers subjects which, albeit in one sense for the time being less important, would become much more important, if civilization survives its present

doldrums'.⁷³ In allowing individual states, including a Germany he believes will be defeated, to maintain national power over their militaries and diplomatic initiatives, he believes they will allow their economies to unify under an international mandate. This sacrifice of economic determination, in the long run, will secure peace, and eventually make those abilities that remain nationalised, and the whims of individual nations themselves, much less important on the international stage. Harrod believes his solution will also have the happy effect of rendering 'the fussy emotions' of 'nationalistic pride' moribund, thus removing the primary motivating factor in the current war. His plan calls for first placating nationalist sentiment by only bringing economies into a centralised system, and leaving the other traditional symbols of statehood, like the military, in the hands of the individual nations. Member states will hardly notice the slow disintegration of nationalism that will inevitably take place as the connected nature of their economic future constantly increases the common sense of international unity. This is remarkably like the structural formation of the current European Union, which indicates either that Harrod was a forecaster of no mean ability, or that a proposal very much like his own was eventually adopted in Europe. That this essay appeared in *Horizon* indicates that Harrod's argument was considered a healthy addition to the discussion regarding war, and post-war, aims taking place in its pages. That the author was an economist of some repute undoubtedly gave the article some considerable weight, but it also passed Connolly's quality control. Harrod's essay is clearly expressed and free from any equations or economic jargon that would obfuscate its meaning for the magazine's lay readers. Moreover, his ability to form his argument cogently rivals that demonstrated in the essays previously discussed; his prose is eminently readable.

Connolly made an interesting choice for the contribution to immediately follow Harrod's piece: a tract by Howard Evans, 'Communist Policy and the Intellectuals.' This placement conveys the sense that the editor wants a direct comparison to be made to Harrod's essay and is undoubtedly meant to show that *Horizon* is willing to share radically different viewpoints. What is surprising, however, is that despite the venom with which Evans attacks what he assumes to be the core group that both supply and consume *Horizon*, some aspects of his conclusions fall into line with those of Harrod, as well as with Priestley and Read. Evans' essay is a diatribe against current 'soft' liberal thought, and a defence of the Soviet decision to enter into the non-aggression pact with Germany. He begins with an indictment of less radical left-leaning writers:

For over two years, a large section of the English intelligentsia has been becoming increasingly hostile towards the Soviet Union. It has also been showing a marked preference for the false 'totalitarian' conception of Nazi Germany as a new type of state no longer serving the interests of German Imperialism. It has been waiting, one might even say longing, for an excuse to declare itself equally anti-Soviet and anti-Nazi. This excuse has now been provided by the war situation and events since—and including—the Soviet German non-aggression pact.⁷⁴

Evans's charge is that members of the 'intelligentsia', far from desiring change, are secretly hoping to keep the status quo. His footnote to the term 'intelligentsia' indicates as much, with his characterization of *New Statesman* contributors like Kingsley Martin

and V.S. Pritchett as middlebrow and supporting ‘anything for a quiet time’, along with E.M. Forster, Raymond Mortimer, and *Horizon*’s own editor as highbrow and sharing a ‘lament of the lost *douceur de vivre*.’ And these intellectuals, according to Evans, have, as they did after the previous war, ‘once again[...]betrayed their social function of finding out the truth and telling it to people’.⁷⁵ Evans believes the reason behind this treachery is simple enough; the ‘intelligentsia,’ as was stated before, does not truly want change. Evans notes that ‘Soviet Russia is a working class state and its policy is conducted in the interests of the working class,’ while the ‘English intellectuals remain economically and ideologically tied to the capitalism which has suckled them—even if not always on Grade A’ (I:3 163). He labels the current conflict an ‘imperialist war,’ on both sides, and derides the idea of ‘Federal Unionism,’ which the intelligentsia ‘salve their consciences by chattering about’.⁷⁶ This, he claims, is only one of many ‘super-imperialist schemes’ which ‘can [only] work at all[...]by increased exploitation of the workers both home and colonial’.⁷⁷ The ‘fate of the mandated territories’ after the previous World War is evidence enough, he claims, that this will occur if such plans succeed.⁷⁸ An attempt at such a union, according to Evans, can provide, at best, a ‘breathing space between further wars’.⁷⁹ But Harrod’s treatise on post-war economic union shows that communist ideology as presented by Evans is not alone in recognizing that any attempt at unification in order to preserve peace must take a new, economically based course in order to avoid the mistakes made 25 years previously. Harrod’s methodology is different, as are the underlying theories that determine it.

What these essays, all appearing in the early months of *Horizon*’s run before the escalation of hostilities, cross-Channel bombings, and the invasion of France, have in

common is their simultaneous attempt to explain why the war began, and to provide a post-war plan that can prevent similar conflict. All are based on a common understanding of the failure of the previous war's solution, and deal primarily with economic theory due to the influence of the worldwide economic depression of the previous decade and its major role in the escalation of hostilities that led to the Second World War. In particular, the juxtaposition of the essays by Harrod and Evans demonstrate *Horizon's* commitment to 'give space to all points of view', as Stephen Spender states in the 'Comment' he contributes to the February 1941 issue of *Horizon* nearly a year later. He admits, nonetheless, that the political atmosphere in which these articles appeared was part of a 'phase of rather wishful thinking'.⁸⁰

The overarching discussion of the time, according to Spender, was about 'war aims', mostly based on the experience of the previous war. These were highly speculative, given that the present war had yet to begin in earnest for the French or the English. While Connolly and Spender felt that it was necessary to canvass different speculative opinions, they refrained from putting forth their own, as Spender notes:

It did not seem quite the moment to come forward with "*Horizon's* peace terms". We had our sympathies, and if an effective body of opinion had put forward realistic terms we should have supported them. Meanwhile, one of the most important lessons for the artist seemed to be to act only where he can be most effective. For us this seemed to be the encouragement of creative art and the expression of free opinion.⁸¹

For Spender, more personally than for the magazine as a whole, this phase was now outdated due to the progression of events during the previous year: 'Things have now altered,' he states in the following paragraph, and while he continues to agree that 'it is regrettable that the Government has put forward no peace aims,' he also believes that 'at the same time the absurdity of well-intentioned amateurs putting forward their views on what they would do on winning the war has become apparent'.⁸² This attitude undoubtedly drew from the growing pessimism about Britain's chances of winning, given the defeat and invasion of France and the terrifying bombings to which the island was now subjected.

This is not to say, according to Spender, that post-war problems should not be addressed. Indeed, he believes that 'victory, and a further victory after the military victory,' relies on changing the nature of the debate in the magazine.⁸³ As Spender states:

There are problems which we can discuss effectively in *Horizon*. These are close to us and immediate and urgent. They are concerned with the great task of constructing a better Britain after the war. But 'after the war' means now. Because it is now that we have the opportunity of establishing new ideas where old ones have collapsed, of planning better cities where old ones have been bombed, of replacing bankrupt institutions by better ones, of defending our old, and insisting on new and wider, social liberties.⁸⁴

Thus Spender makes plain the magazine's commitment to concentrate on discussion on the post-war future of Britain, rather than any speculation on post-war disarmament of Germany and international conditions that might keep it from rearming. As he goes on to say: 'The time has gone by when we can approach these problems in a spirit of speculation'.⁸⁵ He projects a 'planned series of articles by churchmen, politicians, scientists, technicians, educationists, thinkers and writers, all of whom agree that reconstruction is necessary, in order to achieve victory'.⁸⁶ The outcome of this plan, like many others in the magazine, is less expansive than its introduction would suggest. Spender was called up for National Service in October 1941, by which point he had already decided to substantially reduce his presence at *Horizon*.⁸⁷ The difference of opinion between Connolly and Spender regarding political content has previously been discussed in the first chapter. Spender left to fight fires, and Connolly quietly returned *Horizon* to a more neutral footing. War aims continued to be a sporadic topic, nowhere more so than in Connolly's later 'Comments,' but the official series only consisted of the essays that appeared in the March 1941 issue.

The series began with an introduction by J B Priestley entitled 'Prologue to Planning.' Priestley's political leanings are well documented, not least because of his co-founding of the Common Wealth Party.⁸⁸ 'Prologue to Planning' conveys many of these values. Priestley begins by establishing that the series will deal with post-war planning, and at the same time explicates the need for such an effort even while in the midst of the war. Priestley begins by restating the usual counter-argument regarding plans for the post-war world: 'Some people cry, rather querulously, "Why all this talk of planning? Get on with the war first,"' to which Priestley responds, 'Nobody is neglecting war duties

to discuss planning,' and warns 'the better the world they see ahead of them, the more likely men are to fight hard for it'.⁸⁹ He also offers a warning for those who say such planning is counter-productive: 'What ruins morale is a general feeling of dreariness and hopelessness [...]Nazi propaganda can have a roaring good time setting to work on any nation lost in cynicism, doubt, apathy'.⁹⁰ This is a rather dire forecast, but the next line of reasoning he provides makes more sense, politically, and thus serves as a more believable admonishment:

For my part I do not trust the man who promises to do everything for me after the war so long as nothing is changed or even discussed now. I suspect that once Hitler is out of the way and the danger to property is past, he will ask me not to talk nonsense about reconstruction, but to go and mind my own business. (If you are a writer, instead of being a banker or a brewer, it is not your business to meddle in politics.)⁹¹

It is folly to keep quiet until the current predicament is over, in the hope that societal problems will be addressed once normality returns, according to Priestley. To do so would be to allow business as usual, as it was before the war as well as during, and to end up with no change at all. In fact, it will be worse, Priestley states, as the old guard will have new powers if the war ends quickly: 'If we are not careful we shall find ourselves back in August 1939, with the same old voices talking the same drivel, all as it was before, except that now the government will have a good deal of unrepealed wartime legislation to help it quieten any real opposition'.⁹² And, if the war turns out to be a long

one, like the First World War, the situation is even more dire: 'If the war lasts as long as the Great War, and we have done no planning for reconstruction, then disaster will follow the peace, as it did last time, simply because nobody will be lively and up-and-doing but the crooks[...]while the good folk are wearily searching for ink and paper for the blueprints of the new world, the gangs will have moved in again and will be posting sentries'.⁹³ In order to keep the same old thugs out, and prevent new ones from taking their place, it is thus a necessity, Priestley argues, to make the post-war world a priority regardless of the current state of the war. In March 1941 that situation indeed seemed especially perilous, after months of near constant bombardment and the ever-present threat of invasion.

The good news, says Priestley, is that such plans are already well under way, being constantly formulated by those most qualified: 'The people must be told that they already exist, that disinterested men and women have been at work on their behalf'.⁹⁴ These 'disinterested persons,' Priestley says, are those 'whose first care is the quality of life lived by the community,' unlike the regular wrong sorts 'who want to acquire power in order to further the interests of a small group'.⁹⁵ These 'disinterested people' are 'not working any racket' and 'honestly on [the people's] side'.⁹⁶ The people have begun to realise this, he says, and that is the 'reason why some of us, who make no claim to have exceptional experience of or insight into public affairs, are read and listened to so eagerly and widely by the people'.⁹⁷ Priestley locates himself in this group, both by referring to 'us' and in mentioning being 'read and listened to': he was both a widely read writer and, for most of the war, a popular broadcaster as well. At one point he was touted by the

BBC as having ‘the biggest regular listening audience in the world’ and was broadcast both sides of the Atlantic.⁹⁸

He connects this idea of an unbiased group making decisions to the series he is introducing, saying that ‘churchmen, scientists, technicians, educationists, thinkers,’ ‘certain’ to also be ‘disinterested persons,’ have been asked by *Horizon* to contribute their own thoughts on how ‘to win the war and the peace’.⁹⁹ They will demonstrate ‘a combination of intelligence and good will,’ and will provide ‘guidance’.¹⁰⁰ Priestley stresses that this ‘guidance’ will not be ‘leadership,’ as he is ‘rather suspicious of these cries for “leadership”, if only because I am disinclined by temperament either to lead or be led, preferring, as a genuine democrat should, to cooperate’.¹⁰¹ ‘People,’ he continues, ‘who cannot pull together to get something done but can only scream for a leader deserve all that comes to them, and we know what that is’: the authoritarian nightmares on the continent.¹⁰² So, despite the fact that those who should be trusted to plan are those possessing both ‘intelligence and good will,’ those ‘thinkers’ and writers whose disinterestedness best prepares them for the task of planning ‘to win the war and the peace,’ Priestley believes the effort will be cooperative, with these ‘disinterested persons’ providing ‘guidance’ instead of suspicious ‘leadership:’ leading, in this sense, is what those only out for themselves are guilty of, he implies, thus managing to connect the self-interested old guard to the dictators of the Axis. The contributions to the series Priestley introduces, and by extension the magazine and its contributions as a whole, is the ideal ‘disinterested’ medium in which to hammer out details: thus, *Horizon* will itself be a ward against the threats posed by those ‘gangsters’ of the past, as well as proof against the more vicious sort of the present, against whom the war is being fought.

Appearing alongside Priestley's introduction in the March 1941 issue is H G Wells's 'Fundamental Realities,' in which the author offers his own 'threefold way':

The first necessity can be met only by the establishment of a federal world control of the air and its associated services and supplies; the second by a federal conservation of world resources, and the third by accepting such a statement as the Sankey Declaration of Human Rights as the fundamental law of the world.¹⁰³

Wells states that 'there is hope for mankind' only if these 'essentials can be presented forcibly and clearly to men's minds,' calling forth an argument for international federation similar to that espoused by Read earlier in the year, albeit with a more militant emphasis on transmission, for which he advocates 'a lucid and vigorous educational propaganda'.¹⁰⁴ He also more explicitly makes the connection Priestley attempted in the introduction to the series, without the same fear of the utility of authority figures: 'The world at large wants a clear lead, and it is from the artists, writers and teachers, to whom *Horizon* appeals, that plain directives must come, if they are to come at all'.¹⁰⁵ The vehemence of Wells's message is extreme, but despite this difference, Wells's brief essay is simply a more didactic, radical restating of sentiments already endorsed in the essays of Priestley and Read. Wells also restates his belief in progress and technology as solutions to the world's problems, including Hitler. George Orwell would take aim at Wells's naïveté in his essay 'Wells, Hitler and the World State' in the August 1941 issue.

Pessimism concerning Britain's chances of winning, or even surviving intact, the war continued to colour the political discussion taking place in *Horizon* in 1941. 'Wells, Hitler and the World State' is a formidable example of this cynicism concerning the talk of post-war ideals during a period when the war was quite possibly being lost. While Orwell's main target is H.G. Wells and his recent newspaper articles concerning the exhaustion of the German forces, his essay also illustrates the faults inherent in the views and concerns expressed by the leftist intelligentsia in general, particularly the blind faith in the power of reason and a dangerous disregard for the persistence of 'ideas appropriate to the Stone Age'.¹⁰⁶ The idea of a world government, militantly espoused in Wells's essay, but also proposed and supported by many other regular *Horizon* contributors such as Spender, Read, and even, to a limited extent, the editor, Cyril Connolly, is critically examined in the essay, with Orwell concluding that it is unworkable in the near future.

The essay begins with a recap of several statements Wells had made in various newspaper articles, all to the effect that German forces were overreaching and soon to be 'spent,' along with their insufficient materiel and munitions.¹⁰⁷ Orwell notes that since the articles appeared, early in 1941, Germany had begun the Russian invasion and overtaken the Balkans, demonstrating that the Nazi general staff, at least, believed otherwise regarding their remaining ability to wage a war of conquest. Regarding what Wells believed would ultimately defeat Hitler and the Nazis, Orwell states:

What has Wells to set against the 'screaming little defective in Berlin'? The usual rigmarole about a World State, plus the Sankey Declaration, which is an attempted definition of fundamental human rights, of anti-totalitarian

tendency. Except that he is now especially concerned with federal world control of airpower, it is the same gospel he has been preaching almost without interruption for the past forty years, always with an air of angry surprise at the human beings who can fail to grasp anything so obvious.¹⁰⁸

Orwell's description of the central tenets of Wells's message conveys his opinion that they are, at least currently, unobtainable ideals, pie-in-the-sky hopes that are falsely grounded in a miscalculated belief in the reasonableness of the general populace and of world leaders. In order for Wells's ideals to be effective in combating both Hitler and totalitarianism in general, this reasonableness must be taken for granted, and in this particularly Orwell sees wishful thinking:

What is the use of saying that we need federal world control of the air? The whole question is how we are to get it. What is the use of pointing out that a World State is desirable? What matters is that not one of the five great military powers would think of submitting to such a thing. All sensible men for decades past have been substantially in agreement with what Mr. Wells says; but then sensible men have no power and, in too many cases, no disposition to sacrifice themselves.¹⁰⁹

Thus, according to Orwell, Wells's sole offensive against brutality and despotism is to repeat a decades-old message concerning the necessity of international federalism under the leadership of just, 'sensible' men.¹¹⁰ In Orwell's view, these things are

impossibilities, no matter what truth or appeal they possess, because of their faulty foundations in a overly-charitable and dangerously naive worldview that places too much faith in the widespread power of reason, and takes too little notice of the resilience of hatred, fear, aggression, patriotism, and unthinking emotion in general.

In order to justify his criticism of Wells and demonstrate the persistence of unreasonable traits in humanity, Orwell offers the current militaristic motivations of both Germany and Britain:

Hitler is a criminal lunatic, and Hitler has an army of millions of men, aeroplanes in thousands, tanks in tens of thousands. For his sake a great nation has been willing to overwork itself for six years and then to fight for two years more, whereas for the commonsense, essentially hedonistic world-view that Mr. Wells puts forward hardly a human creature is willing to shed a pint of blood[...]What has kept England on its feet during the past year? Partly, no doubt, some vague idea about a better future, but chiefly the atavistic emotion of patriotism, the ingrained feeling of the English-speaking peoples that they are superior to foreigners.¹¹¹

‘Commonsense’ and reason do not motivate nearly so well as these more primal urges, whether they be based in territoriality, aggression, fear, or xenophobia, according to Orwell. If British society was more like Wells’s imagining, says Orwell, then the war may have indeed ended quite sooner: ‘For the last twenty years the main object of English leftwing intellectuals has been to break this feeling [patriotism and anti-foreigner

bias] down, and if they had succeeded we might be watching the SS-men patrolling London streets at this moment'.¹¹² Orwell exposes Wells's misappraisal regarding the Soviets, recalling a debate between Wells and Winston Churchill during the Bolshevik revolution in Russia:

Wells accuses Churchill of not really believing his own propaganda about the Bolsheviks being monsters dripping with blood, etc., but of merely fearing that they were going to introduce an era of commonsense and scientific control, in which flag-wavers like Churchill himself would have no place. Churchill's estimate of the Bolsheviks, however, was nearer the mark than Wells's. The early Bolsheviks may have been angels or demons, according as one chooses to regard them, but at any rate they were not sensible men. They were not introducing a Wellsian Utopia but a Rule of the Saints, which, like the English Rule of the Saints, was a military despotism enlivened by witchcraft trials.¹¹³

This false pretence of a scientifically rendered, socially utopian society in Soviet Russia is demonstrable in the present as well, according to Orwell, and the actual age-old reliance on emotion is revealed in the Russian motivation to fight: 'Similarly, why are the Russians fighting like tigers against the German invasion? In part, perhaps, for some half-remembered ideal of Utopian Socialism, but chiefly in defence of the Holy Russia (the 'sacred soul of the Fatherland,' etc., etc.), which Stalin has revived in an only slightly altered form'.¹¹⁴

Orwell's appraisal, as compared to Wells's strident certainty of an Allied victory and disregard for the menace of the Nazi degenerates Wells, is markedly cynical. As appealing and sensible as Wells's proposals are, their inherent reasonability is no match for reality on the ground, and Orwell believes this lack of a critical eye demonstrates the outdated nature of Wells's beliefs. According to Orwell, Wells is simply unable to take into account the developments in the first four decades of the century, nor is he able to react meaningfully to the present war, because his belief system has become petrified and incapable of changing in the presence of new information. Indeed, states Orwell, while it was fresh and radical in the Victorian period, the views espoused by Wells and others like him had long ceased to be prophetic, precisely because they failed to take into account the barbarous inclinations that always remained behind the scenes, and had 'come marching into the present'.¹¹⁵ These 'creatures out of the Dark Ages' could not be slain by mere appeals to sanity, and Wells's continuing failure to realise this dated his views, and made his repetitive prophesies stale: 'Because he belonged to the nineteenth century and to a non-military nation and class, he could not grasp the tremendous strength of the old world which was symbolized in his mind by ignorant fox-hunting Tories[...]he was and still is quite incapable of understanding that nationalism, religious bigotry and feudal loyalty are far more powerful forces than what he himself would describe as sanity'.¹¹⁶

As for castigating a paragon from his youth, Orwell admits that it might well seem to be 'a sort of parricide for a person of my age (38) to find fault with H.G. Wells[...]Thinking people who were born about the beginning of this century are in some sense Wells's own creation'.¹¹⁷ Orwell refers to Wells's belief in science and reason

triumphing over superstition, emotion, and religion, and the change in worldview for 'thinking people' like himself that this fomented. Orwell judges, however, that:

Just the singleness of mind, the one-sided imagination that made him seem like an inspired prophet in the Edwardian age, make him a shallow inadequate thinker now. When Wells was young the antithesis between science and reaction was not false[...]traditionalism, stupidity, snobbishness, patriotism, superstition and love of war seemed to be all on the same side; there was need of someone who could state the opposite point of view.¹¹⁸

But this need had become less pressing in the intervening decades, and Wells inability to adapt, or change his perspective, rendered his beliefs unworkable. Orwell states at the end of the essay, quite simply, that 'Wells is too sane to understand the modern world'.¹¹⁹

George Orwell's criticism of H.G. Wells's wartime essays is easily extrapolated into an indictment of the whole class of leftist literati clamouring for world government. Wells's naïveté can thus also be considered a shared trait, in Orwell's view, amongst the many contributors to *Horizon* who believed that a statement of war aims, specifically with an eye to the post-war future of the country's governmental institutions as well as the formation of a world government, was crucial if the war was to be won, for only then would English society know what it was fighting for. The idea that the reason most British fought was a result of more primeval urges and emotional states governed by 'racial pride, leader-worship, religious belief, love of war' and other unreasoning ideals was unpalatable to Read, Spender, and Priestley, who concentrate in their essays on variations of the same theme, including a reasonable approach to war and post-war

conduct.¹²⁰ This explains their refusal to acknowledge that wartime reasoning amongst most British citizens mirrored in many ways the driving force behind the mass behaviour of Nazi subjects, if Orwell's points are accepted. These other essays mention the importance of educating the masses so that they may themselves understand the benefits of a socialist model of democracy. When they do reproachfully refer to those unsavoury tendencies of xenophobia and patriotism existing at home, they find fault mainly, if not only, with the British ruling class and/or those who would preserve capitalism and imperialism in order to maintain their power, and, Orwell argues, fail to realize how deeply ingrained in the common man these feelings actually are.

Not that Orwell's reading of war aims should be taken as the most perceptive. Indeed, his own views changed during the war, from a patriotic socialism to a more revolutionary perspective in such works as *The Lion and the Unicorn*. More important than the correctness of any position was *Horizon's* role in publicising and recording developing ideas about the estate of Britain at different times in the war, and the changing ideas about what a post-war world could or should be like. Stripped of the certainties that hindsight confers, these speculations offer a rich and revealing take on a war in which nothing was certain, and so much was unknowable. By providing a forum for contesting views, plans and counter-arguments, *Horizon* performed its small part in the larger wartime debates in Britain, while also offering possibilities for the world beyond the cessation of the conflict.

By necessity, because of the British wartime situation, most of the contributors to *Horizon* discussing war aims and the future of Europe were British, and their beliefs and opinions, varied as they were, arose from an upbringing, outlook and national perspective

that was somewhat common at its most basic. The essay 'War and Peace in Western Europe,' which appeared in the May 1943 issue of *Horizon*, shares some of the same leftist values of many other contributions to the magazine dealing with post-war issues and politics. As the subject is Western Europe rather than Britain alone, and its perspective that of a Frenchman, the opinions and political discourse follow a subtly different course. Pierre Maillaud was an expatriate French journalist and political writer who regularly broadcast for the BBC French Service throughout the war. The name Maillaud was actually a pseudonym chosen by M. Pierre Bourdan to protect his family in occupied France, and he later served as a deputy and minister in the French National Assembly.¹²¹ This essay was written during a different point in the war which sets it apart from the numerous essays on the subject appearing in the first two years of *Horizon's* run. Maillaud begins the essay by commenting on the complex state of war-related discussion:

Seldom have the questions raised by the prosecution of a war been debated more freely and generally than in the present conflict. Yet never before has the discussion been attended by such confusion. If ever there was a clear case for taking up arms, September 1939 supplied it. Today, however, the basic factors of the war seem to be less in evidence than they were at the time, in spite of the fact that three and a half years have gone to show the appalling proportions of the threat which has been met and, in so far as we can see, successfully checked[...]the instinct of self-defence which acts at the outbreak of a war, is clear enough. Less clear is the notion of finality in

a war, especially when the course of events has so often changed that it has repeatedly compelled us to revise our practical conceptions of the world situation at the end of the conflict. What that situation might be, we cannot guess even now. According to the duration of the struggle we may see a resurgent Europe or a Continent so exhausted physically and mentally that the problem of political reconstruction may be dwarfed by that of biological salvation[...]We cannot therefore know today what we shall be able to do tomorrow and any detailed plan for future action can only be a draft on the Unknown or, at best, the expression of an intention. The wider the plan, the more precarious its accomplishment must be.¹²²

Maillaud attempts to demonstrate that, despite the constant state of flux caused by the war and, thus, the need unceasingly to reshape any post-war plans to fit newly revealed realities, planning must go on regardless. The intentions involved in the activity of planning for the post-war world are more important than any concrete schemes that may be created in the process, and possibly, eventually changed or disposed of. As Maillaud goes on to say, 'Ignorance of the future should not, however, deter us from trying to influence it; but our influence and our attempts can only be successful if we have a clear notion of the present and a sufficient knowledge of the past'.¹²³

The lack of understanding of both the background of the war, including the politics of its major players, particularly Germany, and the present situation is the primary obstacle to successfully discussing and planning for the post-war world. Maillaud states that this is not just a problem of the masses, but is demonstrably inherent

in the discourse occurring amongst the intelligentsia. He cites the constant labelling of the Second World War as an 'Ideological' rather than a 'National' conflict in various published views as symptomatic of a thorough misunderstanding of the current war, and of war in general: 'The only conflicts which could be held as purely ideological would be those in which no territorial changes or political domination is aimed at and in which the sole object of the war is a change of persuasion in one of the belligerents.' He argues that this type of warfare is historically very rare, if in existence at all, and acknowledges that 'temporal acquisitions' and the age-old pursuit of new territory and resources, or national interests.¹²⁴ What does set the current conflict apart, according to Maillaud, is that rather than being 'aimed at some territories' as in previous conflicts, German aggression was 'of a far greater magnitude,' aimed at all of civilization, and was in fact a 'war of extermination,' therefore differing from other conflicts 'in kind as well as in degree'.¹²⁵

In order to 'save' Europe, and civilization in general after the war, Maillaud believes that a thorough understanding of the war, and to an equal degree its effects on European peoples, is necessary.¹²⁶ Any attempts to make grand plans, including unification of European institutions, will have to wait on the more basic activity of reviving, clothing and feeding national populations brought to their knees by the conflict, and economies almost entirely perverted to the Nazi war machine or destroyed entirely must be reengineered or rebuilt from the bottom up. Only after 'salvation in the physical sense' is accomplished, can minds turn to changes 'in the political field,' he writes.¹²⁷ When the opportunity to engage in political discourse begins again, Maillaud is entirely in favour of European interdependence in government, starting with France, Britain and the low countries, and growing from there, with ties to both the Soviet Union and the

United States due to their status as Allies, and with significant influence in the developing world as previous holders of the majority of European colonies. But the internationalisation of politics must be tempered by national concerns, he writes: 'it is best to start with a system of international relations which is not too all-embracing and which does not unduly strain what sense of and desire for international solidarity may survive the war in Western Europe and generally in European countries. We know that national isolation is not practicable. Yet we must take the national feeling into account in our plans'.¹²⁸ He describes the importance of national sentiment for the survival of Britain at the outset and in the early stages of the war, and cites Orwell's *The Lion and the Unicorn* as a reference for the continued power of national sentiment without regard to class, and the danger in underestimating it.¹²⁹

Maillaud's essay differs from the others dealing with post-war planning and international relations in various ways, including its having been written later in the course of the war, when the tide was beginning to turn in favour of the Allies, and because his perspective as one of the 'Free French' gives his views a more continental outlook. The most significant difference, however, is that Maillaud takes into account much of what Orwell discusses in his essay and in many of his other *Horizon* contributions: the danger of disregarding the will of the masses and popular opinion. Rather than calling for the attainment of an immediate, pure and absolutely international federation of states after the war ends, Maillaud takes into account the realities that will be faced on the ground, such as starving refugees and whole nations rendered incoherent by the war, and that public sentiment will not follow the lofty ideals of the intelligentsia immediately.

The essays discussed in this chapter were all written well before the Allied victory seemed obvious. Because of this, the aspects of focus they share, notably the discussions of a post-war future, and as a corollary, the reasons for the war itself, are evidence of the importance of politics in literature in general, and to the character of *Horizon* as a periodical. *Horizon* undoubtedly demonstrated a train of thought that can be deduced from the many similar ideals expressed in the essays by Read, Priestley, Harrod and, to an extent, Wells. Numerous others could be cited which, for reasons of space, could not be analysed here: like A.L. Rowse's 'Democracy and Democratic Leadership,'¹³⁰ C. E. M. Joad's 'The Face of England,'¹³¹ and 'Ours Not to Reason Why' by an anonymous 'Private.'¹³² But the essays included offer a decent cross-section of the politics that coloured *Horizon*'s wartime run, and demonstrate Connolly's willingness to include such contributions, despite the 'Ivory Shelter' policy espoused in many of his early 'Comments.' They also provide a sense of the wartime atmosphere of Britain in general, at least among those apt to be contributors to or readers of *Horizon*. Thus the similar topics of these essays demonstrate the popularity of the idea that the war might instigate social change, and offer a chance to rectify past wrongs as well as secure a safer, happier future, not just at home but throughout the world. It is also evidence that the ideals of the 1930s were not completely forgotten, and that there existed a real belief, among many of *Horizon*'s contributors and readers, that the written word, and literature in general, was still politically powerful. The war undoubtedly affected writers and British letters as a whole, but the level of similarity in post-war institutions to the ideas espoused in these essays and elsewhere is beyond mere coincidence, demonstrating that writing, in *Horizon* and elsewhere, had very real effects on politics and society as well.

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- ¹ Cyril Connolly, 'Comment,' *Horizon*, 1, No. 1 (January 1940) 5.
- ² Ibid. 5.
- ³ Ibid. 5.
- ⁴ Ibid. 5.
- ⁵ Ibid. 5.
- ⁶ Michael Sheldon, *Friends of Promise: Cyril Connolly and the World of Horizon* (London: Hamish Hamilton, 1989) 42.
- ⁷ Ibid. 42.
- ⁸ Ibid. 94.
- ⁹ Cyril Connolly, 'Comment,' *Horizon*, 1, No. 1 (January 1941) 5-6.
- ¹⁰ J.B. Priestley, 'The War—and After,' *Horizon*, 1, No. 1 (January 1941) 15-19.
- ¹¹ Ibid. 15.
- ¹² Ibid. 15.
- ¹³ Ibid. 15.
- ¹⁴ Ibid. 15.
- ¹⁵ Ibid. 15.
- ¹⁶ Ibid. 15-16.
- ¹⁷ Ibid. 16.
- ¹⁸ Ibid. 16.
- ¹⁹ Ibid. 16.
- ²⁰ Ibid. 17.
- ²¹ Ibid. 18.
- ²² Ibid. 18.
- ²³ Ibid. 18.
- ²⁴ Ibid. 18.
- ²⁵ Ibid. 18.
- ²⁶ Ibid. 18.
- ²⁷ Ibid. 18-19.
- ²⁸ Ibid. 19.
- ²⁹ Herbert Read, 'At the Moment of Writing,' *Horizon*, 1, No. 1 (January 1940) 20.
- ³⁰ Ibid. 20.
- ³¹ Ibid. 20.
- ³² Ibid. 20.
- ³³ Ibid. 20.
- ³⁴ Ibid. 20.
- ³⁵ Ibid. 20.
- ³⁶ Ibid. 20.
- ³⁷ Ibid. 20.
- ³⁸ Ibid. 20.
- ³⁹ Ibid. 20.
- ⁴⁰ Ibid. 20.
- ⁴¹ Ibid. 21.
- ⁴² Ibid. 21.
- ⁴³ Ibid. 21.
- ⁴⁴ Ibid. 21.
- ⁴⁵ Ibid. 21.
- ⁴⁶ Ibid. 21-22.
- ⁴⁷ Ibid. 21.
- ⁴⁸ Ibid. 22.
- ⁴⁹ Ibid. 22.
- ⁵⁰ Ibid. 23.
- ⁵¹ Ibid. 23.
- ⁵² Ibid. 23.
- ⁵³ Ibid. 23.
- ⁵⁴ Ibid. 23.

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- ⁵⁵ Ibid. 24.
- ⁵⁶ Henry Phelps Brown, 'Sir Roy Harrod: A Biographical Memoir,' *The Economic Journal*, 90, No. 357 (March 1980) 28-29.
- ⁵⁷ R. F. Harrod, 'Peace Aims and Economics,' *Horizon*, 1, No. 3 (March 1940) 155.
- ⁵⁸ Ibid. 155.
- ⁵⁹ Ibid. 155.
- ⁶⁰ Ibid. 155-56.
- ⁶¹ Ibid. 156.
- ⁶² Ibid. 156.
- ⁶³ Ibid. 156.
- ⁶⁴ William L. Shirer, *The Rise and Fall of the Third Reich* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1960) 51.
- ⁶⁵ R.F. Harrod, 'Peace Aims and Economics,' *Horizon*, 1, No. 3 (March 1940) 156.
- ⁶⁶ Ibid. 156-57.
- ⁶⁷ Ibid. 157.
- ⁶⁸ Ibid. 157.
- ⁶⁹ Ibid. 157.
- ⁷⁰ Ibid. 157.
- ⁷¹ Ibid. 157.
- ⁷² Ibid. 158.
- ⁷³ Ibid. 161.
- ⁷⁴ Howard Evans, 'Communist Policy and the Intellectuals,' *Horizon*, 1, No. 3 (March 1940) 163.
- ⁷⁵ Ibid. 163.
- ⁷⁶ Ibid. 165.
- ⁷⁷ Ibid. 165.
- ⁷⁸ Ibid. 165.
- ⁷⁹ Ibid. 165.
- ⁸⁰ Stephen Spender, 'Comment,' *Horizon*, 3, No. 14 (February 1941) 89.
- ⁸¹ Ibid. 89.
- ⁸² Ibid. 89.
- ⁸³ Ibid. 89.
- ⁸⁴ Ibid. 89-90.
- ⁸⁵ Ibid. 89.
- ⁸⁶ Ibid. 90.
- ⁸⁷ David Leeming, *Stephen Spender: A Life in Modernism* (London: Duckworth, 1999) 136.
- ⁸⁸ D.L. Prynne, 'Commonwealth—A British "Third Party" of the 1940s,' *Journal of Contemporary History*, 7, No. 1/2 (January-April 1972) 169.
- ⁸⁹ J.B. Priestley, 'Prologue to Planning,' *Horizon*, 3, No. 15 (March 1941) 168.
- ⁹⁰ Ibid. 168.
- ⁹¹ Ibid. 168.
- ⁹² Ibid. 169.
- ⁹³ Ibid. 169.
- ⁹⁴ Ibid. 169.
- ⁹⁵ Ibid. 169.
- ⁹⁶ Ibid. 169.
- ⁹⁷ Ibid. 169.
- ⁹⁸ Quoted in Angus Calder, *The People's War: Britain 1939-1945* (London: Jonathan Cape, 1969) 138.
- ⁹⁹ J.B. Priestley, 'Prologue to Planning,' *Horizon*, 3, No. 15 (March 1941) 169-70.
- ¹⁰⁰ Ibid. 170.
- ¹⁰¹ Ibid. 170.
- ¹⁰² Ibid. 170.
- ¹⁰³ H.G. Wells, 'Fundamental Realities,' *Horizon*, 3, No. 15 (March 1941) 171.
- ¹⁰⁴ Ibid. 172.
- ¹⁰⁵ Ibid. 172.
- ¹⁰⁶ George Orwell, 'Wells, Hitler and the World State,' *Horizon*, 4, No. 20 (August 1941) 137.
- ¹⁰⁷ Ibid. 134.

¹⁰⁸ Ibid. 134.

¹⁰⁹ Ibid. 134.

¹¹⁰ Ibid. 134.

¹¹¹ Ibid. 134-35.

¹¹² Ibid. 135.

¹¹³ Ibid. 136-37.

¹¹⁴ Ibid. 135.

¹¹⁵ Ibid. 138.

¹¹⁶ Ibid. 138.

¹¹⁷ Ibid. 137.

¹¹⁸ Ibid. 138.

¹¹⁹ Ibid. 139.

¹²⁰ Ibid. 135.

¹²¹ W. McC. Stewart, 'Review of *Over to France* by Pierre Maillaud,' *International Affairs (Royal Institute of International Affairs 1944-)*, 24, No. 3 (July 1948) 437.

¹²² Pierre Maillaud, 'War and Peace in Western Europe,' *Horizon*, 7, No. 41 (May 1943) 299.

¹²³ Ibid. 299.

¹²⁴ Ibid. 302.

¹²⁵ Ibid. 304.

¹²⁶ Ibid. 306.

¹²⁷ Ibid. 307.

¹²⁸ Ibid. 311.

¹²⁹ Ibid. 311.

¹³⁰ *Horizon*, 3, No. 18 (June 1941) 384.

¹³¹ *Horizon*, 5, No. 29 (May 1942) 335.

¹³² *Horizon*, 3, No. 15 (March 1941) 176.