Editorial
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HITLER'S LAST ARGUMENTS

Introduced by an hour's overture of Wagnerian music as his only identification, Adolf Hitler has delivered another speech. The occasion was the eleventh anniversary of that day of infamy on which treachery to all that was best in Germany and in our civilization brought Hitler and his foul gang to power. And the place from which this customary anniversary speech was broadcast was not the ruined German capital, where he and his cohorts used to strut, but Hitler's hidden headquarters, where he presumably felt himself safe from Allied bombs. The musical selections have not been announced, but they fell short of historic fitness if they failed to include the swan song in which the Wagnerian knight whom Hitler fancied himself to be bids farewell to the world of men and women. For if the confident predictions of General Eisenhower and other authoritative spokesmen are realized, this was Hitler's last anniversary speech, and the much-enduring world will not have to concern itself with another.

In point of fact, that was also the leitmotif which Hitler struck. There was no longer any confident prediction of victory. "Victory," said Hitler, "is not an article of faith, but an innermost certainty." In other words, one more of those Hitlerian intuitions that are now at a great discount. And what could this man tell his disillusioned people? They see their ruined cities; they feel the moral and physical exhaustion of the war; they know that defeat is staring them in the face, and they dread the vengeance of an outraged world. National Socialism, says Hitler in his defense, has solved all social and economic problems and established equality of opportunity. To the war-weary Germans that must sound like supreme mockery. For Hitler solved the social problems by ruthless murder and regimentation. He solved the economic problems by a reckless plunge into war preparations. And the only opportunity and equality he established is the opportunity of loot for the leaders and the equality of death for the masses. The only promise he can make them now is further "pain and suffering." The only appeal he has left is to warn them of the coming punishment in case of defeat.

There is no denying, however, that for a man in his desperate position Hitler made the most of arguments which might still appeal to some Germans and some Europeans. "In this struggle," he said, "there can be only one victor, and that will be either Germany or Soviet Russia." And he proceeds to warn all and sundry of the terrible consequences of a Russian victory, and what it would mean to the European states which he crushed under his heel and to European civilization, which he has befouled. He tells Great Britain and the United States that the Bolsheviks will get them, while at the same time suggesting to Russia that Britain will lead the fight against Russia after this war. He mocks the conquered nations that Britain's promised aid was ineffective, and he taunts the British Dominion soldiers that they are fighting England's battles. Finally he does his best to hurl renewed anti-Semitic propaganda in the midst of all of them.

This is, of course, his old method of divide and rule. It helped him to conquer Germany before the war and to conquer Europe in the war. Most of these arguments will only raise derisive laughter among those to whom they are addressed. As for his principal argument, the role which Russia will play after victory, it should be obvious even to him that after the conferences of Moscow and Teheran the remaining differences between Russia and the Western allies can no longer affect the conduct or the outcome of the war.

But a drowning man grabs at straws, and his argument will be echoed by other drowning men among his satellites. The one conclusive answer to it is, of course, the demonstration that there is an alternative to Hitler's policy of rule or ruin—namely, cooperation. A firm basis for such cooperation between Russia, Great Britain, China and the United States has already been painstakingly laid, and they are pledged to continue it in war and peace. But the way to begin cooperation is to cooperate, and on the manner in which that cooperation develops will depend the effectiveness of Hitler's argument in the future.