

severing of diplomatic relations without war) was greeted with loud applause, there was no applause at all when, towards the end of the speech it became clear that Germany had actually declared war, though the German radio later pretended that there had been. Hitler himself invited comparisons with April 1917 and its aftermath by his references to "this paralytic professor," President Wilson, and his broken promises, but the full implications of being at war with the United States as well as with Britain and with Russia—this time far from exhausted, or convulsed with revolution, as she was in 1917—will tend, when they dawn upon most adult Germans, to inspire uncomfortable forebodings. The fact of being at war with the United States, combined with the failure to invade Britain and with the admitted stalemate, which may well turn out to be a check-mate instead, on the Russian front, may well produce a state of profound *malaise* in Germany before the winter is out. Up to now, Germany's morale has at no time been bad, despite some wishful thinking on the part of her adversaries, because the conditions which must precede a break in morale have never really existed. A substantial defeat on land is an essential prerequisite, and, despite all official explanations of the episodes on the Russian front, the German people may well be constrained to regard them as real defeats. They are now unlikely fully to believe their own propaganda on the subject, as they have blindly done in the past, for, from Hitler downward, their mentors and masters have patently misled them. Hitler's promises of early and certain victory in his speech of the 3rd October will be fresh in the memory, and it was of little avail to hold over a hundred meetings in the Vienna district on the subject of "the collapse of bolshevism" between the 24th and 28th November, when the evacuation of Rostov had to be admitted on the 29th. Such guarded admissions as that from "German military quarters" on the 10th December that "it is not at all impossible that German troops have evacuated Tikhvin in the process of 'ironing out' and straightening the eastern front" are but thin gilding to a bitter pill. It is very significant that Hitler's promise on the 11th December, regarding the advance against Russia: "The beginning of winter will only now check this movement. At the beginning of summer it will again no longer be possible to stop the movement" was cut out by the Propaganda Minister in the *Deutsches Nachrichten-Büro* version of the speech released to the German press. Even Hitler did not, on second thoughts, speak of victory in the spring!

Hitler's latest computation of German losses in the war against Russia appears to be over-ingenuous, for the figures of 158,773 killed, 563,082 wounded, and 31,191 missing up to the 1st December amount to only 3 per cent. of the 5 to 6 million German troops which Hitler himself admitted (on the 3rd October) to be engaged. Few Germans who know anything about warfare, or who have personal knowledge of losses in any particular unit or from any individual district of Germany, can be expected to accept such figures, though none, on the other hand, are likely to credit the Russian counter-claim that the Germans have suffered upwards of 6 million casualties. A recent neutral visitor to Germany, who is by no means anti-German, has reported the impression as existing among people there that up to the 1st November the number killed on the Russian front was about 300,000, including a high percentage of officers and a very high proportion of the nobility, to which the obituary notices in the *Deutsches Adelsblatt* bore witness. It has, indeed, long been believed that the German nobility as a whole will in this war share the fate of Uriah the Hittite. From another source it has been reported that, while the extent of the losses in Russia is a common café topic in Germany, nobody had anything very definite on which to base estimates, though it was generally accepted that they exceeded those of the whole of the last war on all fronts. The deaths of many well-known figures, particularly sportsmen, are especially remarked upon, leading to wild speculation and exaggerations. Hitler's method of dealing with such rumours, and with enemy propaganda regarding Germany's losses, is likely only to increase uncertainty and guesswork on the subject.

Though the German people would not in all probability have taken much heart from the mere entry of Japan into the war, the mode of her entry and her initial successes cannot but be expected to have had a tonic effect. The sinking of the *Prince of Wales* and the *Repulse* is likely to have created a great impression in Germany, where a general inferiority complex on the subject of sea-power *vis-à-vis* Great Britain exists. It is said that the news of the sinking of the *Hood* caused greater rejoicing throughout Germany than any other success since

the fall of France—and the loss of the *Bismarck* correspondingly deep depression—and it may now be thought that at last the Axis deficiency in naval power will be made up by the new partner in arms. It is, incidentally, not very likely to be publicly noticed in Germany that "Japan's air force has produced results which Göring's air force never even dreamed of," as a Swedish newspaper put it, though *Transocean* has hastened to point out that the German expert, Niessel, is adviser to the Japanese air force.

The advent of Japan may have a profound effect upon Germany's strategical and political plans, and Germany is not likely to content herself with a period of relative hibernation such as occurred last winter and the winter before. Climatic considerations alone would probably turn her eyes toward Africa and the Middle East during the next few months, and it is probable that the alternatives of a south-western thrust into North and West Africa—using Vichy France and also possibly the Iberian Powers as her unwilling though probably acquiescent tools—or one south-eastward into Asia Minor, where Turkey represents a somewhat more tangible stumbling-block, are both being actively explored or even simultaneously prepared, against all eventualities. A number of fresh reports, for which see "Spain and Portugal," would appear to indicate that there is something in the wind in that direction, and that Portugal has some cause for alarm. Señor Suñer, while protesting his personal friendliness toward Germany when he visited Berlin recently, is believed to have warned the Germans that Spain did not share his enthusiasm and could not in any circumstances be reckoned on as an ally. This factor may help to persuade the Germans to attempt to put their plans for North and West Africa into operation without openly violating the territorial integrity of the Peninsula. The moment for action in French Africa still, of course, depends upon the length of time that General Rommel can continue to hold up our forces in Cyrenaica.

It is reported that Hitler's return to Berlin last week was not a purely temporary move from his field headquarters, and that he intends to remain in the capital throughout the winter. He may in consequence be giving more attention to non-military matters. He has already received the Mufti of Jerusalem, who listened to his speech from "the front row of the first balcony," and the Spanish General Moscardo in private audience since his return, and he may well by now be applying himself to the delicate task of concocting a New Year Message rather less unfortunate than his last one, which promised the German people final victory in 1941.

Kerrl, the Reich Minister for Religious Affairs, has died of heart failure. It is not yet known whether a successor will be appointed. Kerrl, who was previously Prussian Minister of Justice, is most likely to be remembered as the man who enforced para-military training as part of the course for prospective judges.

CZECHOSLOVAKIA.

The press campaign, to which for some weeks past it has seemed necessary to make brief allusion, still continues to run with unabated vigour. Its wholesale abuse of "the war-monger Roosevelt and his mighty democracy," controlled by Jewish plutocrats and Freemasons, feebly re-echoes the German propagandist machine, but behind all the shouting and the insistence that the Czechs must collaborate before it is too late and throw off the illusion of the "semi-intelligentsia" there is the constant preoccupation with the "whisperers," and the almost plaintive appeal that, if they are incapable of "understanding the New Order," they should at least take account of realities in the modern world. "If we want to gain the confidence of the Reich," so the old Agrarian organ *Venkov* was made to write, "we must chiefly think of our duties towards the Germans. Only if we fulfil our duties honestly will the Germans be willing to discuss the second chapter, namely, our rights." Behind this there is special effort, inspired by Heydrich himself, to wean the peasantry from the once powerful Agrarian Party.

There are grounds for believing that there has been a systematic concealment of stocks and an issuing of false returns in the country districts; and the period within which the revised declarations must be handed in has been extended to the 15th December. There have been further death sentences for sabotage and for