ously delayed or rendered impossible. As [former] Israeli Foreign Minister Abba Eban once observed, "Human beings and nations only begin to act wisely, after all other possibilities have been exhausted." A civilization, once destabilized in this way, will naturally have a difficult time adequately ensuring its future survival. . . .

Facing up to the future

It makes no sense for us to keep our eyes shut. In the course of a probable dramatic upcoming transitional period of threats, which we must jointly show that we are ready to stand up to, the big opportunities will probably only arise toward the very end. The key to the door of peace in freedom, however, will remain, poorly guarded, in Moscow. We are not yet at the end-point or end-phase of a snowballing development in Russia, but rather we are only now entering the second part of a torturous process of social dissolution. It is so torturous, because a type of state similar in mentality to the ancient state of Sparta (a rather rare occurrence in world history), where blood was drunk for breakfast and the children raised away from their parents, is not easily broken up, given its rigorous militarist norms and grounding in the collectivity. In Cambodia, the anti-human Pol Pot system is still holding on around the edges. . . .

The world's security-policy perspectives in the period immediately ahead require much foresight among leaders, a loyal solidarity in the security alliance, and a rejection of all isolationism, rivalries, and political blackmail. The possible threats to peace in continental Europe can easily develop into attitudes of conflict along the north-south axis of greater Europe's central hub, as the latter has been identified by French geographers. Namely, the center lies not in Germany or in Poland, but rather in Lithania. . . . The pressing, unsolved problem of NATO reform and of creating the appropriate preconditions for ensuring peace in [the Baltic, Belarus, and Ukraine] is now creeping into people's consciousness—not suddenly, but all the more oppressively. And this time, inactivity and lack of leadership—a disappointing repetition of the rabbit's paralysis before the snake, as is the case in the Balkans—is threatening our very existence.

In our overall evaluation of the risks, it would be dishonest to ignore the fact that chaotic shifts in the Russian situation could also pose an extreme threat to the people of continental Europe, even without a third world war. In our examination of the test scenarios of western intelligence services and think tanks—especially in the capitalist strongholds of United States and Great Britain, as they are so viewed from the standpoint of the cultivated enemy-image of the West—we must reckon on a higher degree of threat. For, no one really knows how strongly social paranoia, amid the possible chaos in the wake of the upcoming processes of change, may animate individual actors, or interlinked groups, on the Russian stage to take up the available weapons and direct them outward.

Robert Becker

Our resistance to National Socialism

Robert Becker is a member of the resistance organization Reichsbanner Schwarz-Rot-Gold (National Flag: Black, Red, Gold).

It is usually the practice to study the resistance against National Socialism only during the Nazi rule and especially during the war; but the Nazi regime did not come suddenly out of nowhere on Jan. 30, 1933. If the Hitler putsch is left out of consideration, then the danger of National Socialism starts to gain definite importance during the end phase of the Weimar Republic, from 1929-30 on. One has to look at what program the NSDAP [Nazi party] was advocating, what its political terrorist activity looked like, and what counter-strategies had been developed by the democratic parties, trade unions, and other groups. The powerful Communist Party and its militant organizations at the same time had started an attack against the republic—in competition with the Nazi organizations—to build their own dictatorship on the ruins of the republic.

The politics of the democratic parties was unclear, contradictory, and indecisive. This also created hardship for the large, militant mass organization Reichsbanner Schwarz-Rot-Gold, which had been founded in 1924, tolerated by the "Weimar parties" (Social Democrats, Center Party, Democratic Party), to defend freedom and democracy in the republic. Coming from many different groups, it became the biggest militant organization within a short period of time to block the way to power for nationalists, communists and right-wing extremists, who were "hiding behind a disgraceful stirring up of hatred against Jews" (appeal of April 15, 1924). Hundreds of thousands, even millions fought self-sacrificingly for years, but the political leadership prevented an ultimate confrontation for fear of a civil war, especially "shortly before the end," around June 20, 1932, the so-called *Preussenschlag,* and when Reichschancellor Kurt von Schleicher, at the end of 1932, offered to form a coalition of all opponents of Hitler (except the communists), irrespective of their different worldviews, and, supported by the Reichswehr, to eliminate the National Socialists totally. This was the last chance, or maybe the last straw.

The entire situation is highlighted by a statement of the last leader of the Reichsbanner, who fled from persecution in 1933, first to Prague and later to England, and who did not

return to Germany after the war: "Never again I will stick out my neck for people who do not want anyone to fight for them!"

1933 and after

The collapse of traditional, old, and powerful parties and groups, which took place from Jan. 30, 1933, when Hitler was appointed Reichschancellor, until May, with little resistance, is astonishing. Almost without obstacles, the National Socialists were able to force into line, demoralize, or simply dissolve important parts of the political and social spectrum. This was achieved through the instruments of power of the secret police, the appointment of SA groups as assistants through open street terror, concentration camps from the very beginning, and the use of the mass media.

During the Nazi period, there was no centralized or planned resistance. There was a church fight in the 1930s; then an unorganized assistance for politically and racially persecuted persons. Certainly, there was private cohesion among members and friends of the old parties, desperate leaflet-printers and writers, sometimes also conspiracies with those abroad. But the Nazis were in control, and thousands went to concentration camps. "Why didn't he keep his mouth shut?" was the common talk of neighbors of the "deportees."

The upswing of the world economy after 1933, from its catastrophic low, helped Hitler and Germany; the huge unemployment vanished through this and other means. This and foreign policy successes covered up the Nazi terror. In the first years of his regime, Hitler pursued a strategy of playing down his true intentions in foreign affairs. Constant declarations of peace, the big peace speech in the Reichstag in 1933 with the support of all parties, the concordat with the Vatican at the end of 1933, the non-aggression treaty with Poland in early 1934, and the widely hailed Olympic Games in Berlin 1936 (one year after the Nuremberg race laws!) were without any doubt foreign policy successes for Hitler. The fact that the western powers tolerated the lifting of the conditionalities of the Versailles Treaty—which had been previously denied to the democrats of the Weimar Republic—enhanced Hitler's reputation.

However, Hitler's further drive for expansion led to an ever greater threat of war, and consequently, after 1938-39, to thoughts of resistance among conservatives within the military and diplomatic corps. Preparations for a military coup in 1938 and 1940 were stopped for lack of interest and political support from abroad, which also led to the tragic end of the coup attempt of 1944.

Abroad: fear, conflict, and support

Abroad, as within Germany itself, there were many who welcomed Hitler as a defense against Bolshevism. Lord Rothermere wrote in the London *Daily Mail* in the fall of 1930: "He [Hitler] is heading off the danger that the Soviet campaign against European civilization will make headway in Germany." In 1931, the British military attaché in Berlin, Colonel Marshall-Cornwell, hailed the "German military spirit" as a defense against Bolshevism, and said, "Most decent Britons, were they Germans today, would be 'Stahlhelmers.' "

The persecution of Jews in Germany hardly caused any concern abroad. Nor did the invasion of Austria. The crisis over Czechoslovakia did create fear of war. Many countries had their own anti-Semitism to deal with. Hitler's constant declarations that he had no further territorial claims, threw many into confusion and hope. This gave rise in England, for example, to a powerful peace movement. The student club "Oxford Union" became famous, refusing ever again to fight for king and fatherland. Led by Lord Cecil, they did a door-to-door poll, which became world-famous as the "Peace Ballot," in which 11 million Britons supported their policy of collective security, in the sense of the League of Nations. The "Peace Pledge Union," which until shortly before the beginning of the war, had 1,150 local affiliates with 130,000 members, promoted understanding for the German claims, since the territories in Czechoslovakia and in Poland allegedly were German rather than Polish, and Danzig [Gdansk] was German anyway. At the same time, in France, the popular question was: *"Mourir pour Danzig?"* ("Why Die for Danzig?")

George Lansburg, a leading English pacifist, Labour MP and Labour chairman until 1935, had visited Hitler in Berlin. Lansburg left the Chancery highly satisfied, and announced in British newspapers and on the radio that he was convinced of Hitler's love for peace. German youth were educated in the spirit of peace, he said. Hitler loved England's non-interference, and counted on it.

The domestic German opposition, which later included even old Nazis among its ranks, had no chance against a man who was demonstrating his sense of mission with such good results.

The Comintern's support for Hitler

The notorious Hitler-Stalin Pact was probably the high point which initiated the Second World War. Moscow called the declaration of war by the western powers an imperialistic war, and called upon them to make peace immediately. The Communist International (Comintern) called upon its associated parties in all countries to commit sabotage against the imperialists and help Hitler to win. In the Comintern newspaper *Welt,* among whose writers was Herbert Wehner [later a leader of West Germany's Social Democratic Party], Walter Ulbricht of the Politburo of the Communist Party in exile in Moscow called upon the German Communists to join with National Socialist and Social Democratic workers and work for victory against the imperialists. From the Communist Party of France, there were numerous acts of sabotage in the French Army and against military installations.