

MATERIALS FOR THE STUDY
OF THE WORK AND THOUGHT
OF ARNOLD J. TOYNBEE

by Teodoro Tagliaferri (University of Naples Federico II)

No. 28 (September 22nd, 2023)

WRITINGS ON THE EMPIRES IN WORLD HISTORY, XXIV

1916

28) Arnold J. Toynbee, *The «Central Europe» Idea – The Reverse Side of the Shield*, in «The Nation», XVIII, 20 (February 12, 1916), pp. 698-699. «Communication», dated «February 10th, 1916».

Toynbee's communicated article (text below) was a reply to *The Mid-Europe Idea* (*ibid.*, 19, February 5, 1916, pp. 675-676), an anonymous review of Friedrich Naumann's *Mitteleuropa* (Berlin, Georg Reimer, 1915). See Appendix 1.

See also the reviewer's rejoinder, *The Central-Europe Idea*, in «The Nation», XVIII, 2, February 19, 1916, p. 730, dated «February 15th, 1916» (Appendix 2).

Central Europe was the title given to the English translation of the book, which was published later in the same year (F. Naumann, Member of the *Reichstag*, *Central Europe*, with an Introduction by W.J. Ashley, translated by Christabel M. Meredith, London, P.S. King, 1916).

THE «CENTRAL EUROPE» IDEA

THE REVERSE SIDE OF THE SHIELD

By Arnold J. Toynbee

Sir, you published in your last issue a review of Friedrich Naumann's *Mitteleuropa*, which succeeded admirably in conveying the attractiveness of this remarkable book. It is difficult, indeed, not to sympathize with Herr Naumann. He is idealistic, he is imaginative, he is liberal-minded. He comes not to destroy but to fulfil – to blend the centripetal structure of the Prussian State and the centrifugal structure of the Austrian in the grander economic superstructure of «Central Europe». Under the magic influence of economic co-operation, nationalistic intolerance is to be transcended after the war of 1914, as intolerance of creed was transcended after the Wars of Religion. The book breathes a most un-German spirit of harmony and forbearance, which is all the more gracious because it is a surprise.

All this your reviewer has reproduced, and I only quarrel with him because he has refrained from doing more. «It is more important to summarize a book of this type than to criticize it», he writes; yet in the same paragraph he pronounces that «the idea of Mid-Europe, as Herr Naumann expounds it, is not an aggressive policy, or a policy aimed at this country». Now this is a very comprehensive criticism indeed, and he ought either to have shown grounds for his verdict, or else to have preserved his attitude of noncommittal interpreter to the end. As it is, he rather abruptly begs the question; and that is an especially hazardous way of treating so eloquent a pleader as Herr Naumann, for the greater the charm of the book the more essential it is to realize its omissions and limitations to the full. It is this that has led me to discount the liberalism of Herr Naumann and his reviewer, and try my hand as *advocatus diaboli*.

Is this concept of «Central Europe» really so innocent of any «aggressive» tendency? As Herr Naumann unfolds it, it is so radiant with peace and goodwill, that one only asks why it should be confined to Germany and Austria-Hungary. Is not this a gospel for the whole world? After such emotional advocacy of economic fraternization (a kind of inspired

Norman-Angellism), one expects an appeal for universal free trade, or, at any rate, for some policy of mutual concession among all the independent politico-economic units in the world. «Germany and Austria-Hungary are each too small to stand by themselves»; then what more natural remedy than co-operation, not merely with each other, but with the rest of humanity? But no, that is not Herr Naumann's point. Germany and Austria-Hungary are too small to exist in isolation simply because they are at war with the rest of Europe, and likely to remain so in perpetuity. After the war, «new Roman walls will arise, new Chinese walls of earth and concrete. Europe will be endowed with two permanent lines of trenches from north to south, one from the Lower Rhine to the Alps, the other from Courland to the left or right of Roumania. That will be the grand and inevitable tripartition of the Continent» (pp. 7-8).

So peace and goodwill, economic co-operation and national toleration, are not, after all, the ultimate inspiration of Herr Naumann's idea. Rather, the incentive behind it is a permanent background of war, and the superstructure of fraternity is only a secondary object – a device for enabling two militant empires to preserve their existence under conditions of unbroken feud with their neighbors east and west.

«The book», says your reviewer, «seems less menacing for what it is in itself, than because it is the ripened fruit of war. But the fruitfulness of war is the very burden of Herr Naumann's vision. «The war is the unifying force» (page 11). «With this war behind us, we can remove mountains. It is now or never» (page 32). In fact, Herr Naumann's thesis is that the war is no catastrophe, but a creative force, a heaven-sent opportunity for good. He is a prophet of enlightenment riding the whirlwind of battle. Yet other prophets are riding it too – prophets of militarism, who deliberately raised the storm (which Herr Naumann never did), in order that it might bear them and him and all of us to a very different and most unidealistic goal. Which of these will really control the tempest? Or, rather, in which direction will the tempest bear all these who airily bestride it? Take Herr Naumann's own particular scheme, which, in bald terms, is the grafting of Austria-Hungary upon the German Empire. Is it really desirable that these two countries should draw together in opposition to the rest of Europe? And even granting that it were, is the war the most beneficent of conceivable means for accomplishing this object? Herr Naumann addresses two arguments to Austria-Hungary: first, that if she does not throw herself into Germany's arms she has now no chance of surviving; and,

secondly, that this is Austria-Hungary's critical moment, and that fusion with Germany is the crown of her evolution. The first point may be only too true, but it is hardly compatible with the second; for it surely implies that the Hapsburg Monarchy has made a desperate failure of its individual career. And that, again, is true enough. The really critical phase in the Monarchy's history – the period when decisive success or failure was in the balance – did not begin with the ultimatum to Serbia in 1914, but with the peace signed at Prague nearly half-a-century before. The events of July, 1914, brought this phase to an irrevocable close.

In 1866 the political genius of the Hapsburg Monarchy (and the greatness of its tradition is brilliantly characterized by Herr Naumann, p. 78) was cleared of its mistaken commitments in Italy and Germany, and set free to express itself in its proper sphere. In the Danubian basin it had at last found geographical and economic equilibrium – an equilibrium and a self-sufficiency so perfect in themselves that it is hard to see what the populations which co-operated to obtain them could gain by any wider economic co-operation, short of some world-union, or of universal free trade. Yet these populations of the Hapsburg Monarchy, so interdependent in their economic life, were riven asunder by differences of nationality, which might drive them, in passion, to pull down about their ears the house that sheltered them all. The Monarchy, during this half-century before the war, was actually grappling, within its own frontiers, with the problem Herr Naumann sets out to solve, in consequence of the war, on a Central European scale. It was attempting, as a State, to transcend the anarchic struggle of its nationalities for existence, and to persuade its jarring elements to harmonize in a corporate economic activity. «Mutual national tolerance!'. «A more kindly attitude towards national minorities!». These, according to Herr Naumann, are to be the lessons of the war. Yet this very spirit and very policy were alive in Austria-Hungary during those fifty critical years – fighting all that time for the Monarchy's soul against the spirit of hatred and disunion that was striving to drag her into the gulf. It is irrelevant here to recall the vicissitudes of the struggle – how social harmony seemed to have conquered in Austria, while in Hungary the national antagonisms grew steadily more acute. Only the result need be emphasized – that this conflict of good and evil ended with the war, and that the war was a crushing victory for the forces of evil. The war may have been Germany's deliberate misdeed: it was Austria-Hungary's tragic failure.

Herr Naumann is under a fatal delusion. «By now», he writes, «the nationalist convulsions of Austria-Hungary have passed their highest degree of temperature, and the war will prove itself a potent educative moderating the claims of national particularism». It reads like mockery, in face of the actual situation. The shroud of the Censorship has covered the Monarchy now for eighteen months, but we catch glimpses, through the rifts, of the Rouman manhood of Hungary being set, like Uriah the Hittite, to die in the front of battle, for the increase of Judaeo-Magyar percentages in future nationality statistics; of South-Slavonic mayors and M.P.'s being mobilized into prison, while their constituents were being mobilized for the fratricidal campaign against their brethren the Serbs; of Tchech battalions deserting to the Russians *en masse*, of German being reimposed as the official language of Bohemia, and of German-Bohemians strengthening their organizations for dealing the Tchechs their *coup de grace*, of the rivalry between Slav and Italian on the Adriatic coast being fanned deliberately into racial war. It is idle for Herr Naumann to point out that the Monarchy has held together. That is not due to its «magnetic power», but to the dead weight of momentum accumulated by age. The war on the frontiers has unchained a more bitter war within, between nationalities that have cast away all restraint, and set themselves, in desperation, to fight out their differences by force. The momentum of the Monarchy will only aggravate the disaster; for the dominant nationalities have deflected it unscrupulously to their own ends, while the weaker races will no longer submit to be borne along in the general stream, now that it has swept them over the precipice of war, instead of keeping them in the quiet channels of the status quo. «The Austrian and Hungarian Slavs», says Herr Naumann (p. 19), «have mostly as little inclination towards Russia as towards Germany. They would much rather remain Austro-Hungarians, and lament any dispensation which compels them to identify themselves with either one or other of two such alien masses». That was exactly the state of mind of the Slavs, and indeed of most other nationalities in the Monarchy – before the war. But the war has brought, for all of them, the dreaded parting of the ways. For the lesser nationalities, it has definitely perverted the Monarchy from a social and economic kindergarten into a Germanizing or a Magyarizing reformatory, which can only be escaped by breaking loose from the Monarchy altogether. On the two dominant races it has imposed the task of preserving the Monarchy, if it is to be preserved at all, by sheer physical force;

and, as they are not strong enough, unaided, to impose their will upon minorities which in aggregate are more numerous than they, they are driven inevitably to take into partnership their mighty and violent-handed brethren of the German Empire.

When Herr Naumann enunciates that Austria-Hungary must now coalesce with Germany or succumb to disintegration, he means, in effect, that the Slav and Latin peoples of Austria-Hungary must henceforward be held in bondage and exploited by the united strength of the German race, unless the Germans and Magyars (the real beneficiaries of his «Central Europe») are to lose their allegiance completely. It is not for nothing that «Central Europe» was born of the trenches. «If goodwill fails in all these nationalities», exclaims the author in his liberal mood, «even the Archangel Michael himself could not drill them into a united army» (page 60). Perhaps the celestial militarist would be wise enough not to try, but there are plenty of earthly militarists in Central Europe who will not shrink from making the attempt by all the barbarous means in their power. Central Europe may be created, or it may not (that depends on the result of the war); but if it is created, the work will assuredly be done by the militarists with fire and sword and national oppression, and not by Herr Naumann with peace and goodwill and economic co-operation. Herr Naumann hopes that the German Empire will learn from its Austro-Hungarian partner more liberal methods of dealing with Alsatians and Poles. It is infinitely more likely that, in a partnership born of this war, the Austrians will take lessons from the Germans' treatment of Lodz and Kalisch and Louvain and Aerschott, or from the still cruder procedure of their other comrades in arms – the Bulgars and the Turks.

If the dilemma created by this war is a «Central Europe» of this complexion in the one alternative, or the dissolution of Austria-Hungary in the other, then dissolution is the less baneful course, both for the populations concerned and for Europe as a whole. «It lies with the Hapsburg Monarchy», writes our incorrigible optimist, Herr Naumann, «whether the war is to herald its autumn or its spring», and he does not discern that with the war came winter – the winter of failure after half a century of hope. Austria-Hungary is no longer in a condition for Herr Naumann's enlightened homeopathy; it «craves the knife».

Appendix 1

THE MID-EUROPE IDEA¹

Every nation seems in wartime to lead a life shadowed and inspired by history. A massive atavism reveals itself in our actions, our words, our policy. There is something in the act of girding on the sword which seems in all our features to emphasize the resemblance to our grandfathers. It is partly that tradition consciously inspires us, partly that old situations recur, partly that emergency and excitement make us more fundamentally ourselves. We have lived through our Napoleonic memories once more in this war, as the Russians thought perpetually of 1812. In Germany the model is more recent; the atavism goes back only to the fathers. On a vaster scale, and with many new facts about him, the enemy is living again in the days of 1870. The parallel to the English mind may seem strained, and we shall not have fathomed the thoughts of our adversary until we have realized how closely this half-conscious ancestral creative instinct is shaping events on a familiar pattern. Thomas Paine

¹ Review of Friedrich Naumann, *Mitteleuropa*, Berlin, Georg Reimer, in «The Nation», XVIII, 19, February 5, 1916, pp. 675-676.

said that the great skill of the English ruling class of his day was «the art of conquering at home». The secret of the Prussian tradition is precisely this knack of using foreign war for domestic conquest. The annexation of Alsace in 1871 was a mere incident of the war. The real fruit of victory was the absorption or assimilation of the South German States by Prussia. There are crude strata of German public opinion which hope in this war for vulgar conquests on the Alsatian model. The subtler German thinkers have planned a scheme of expansion at once more modern and more traditional than this. The two ambitions are not exclusive, but the second is by far the abler and by far the more statesmanlike scheme. It is still to «conquer at home», and to absorb the allies of a dominant Germany, if not in a political, at least in an economic, sense. The war of 1870 made the German Empire. The war of 1914 must make a «Central Europe», which shall be an economic and military unit under German leadership.

The idea is already a commonplace in the German press. Three congresses of industrialists and economists have met to hammer it out. Even the trade unions are inspired by it, and one learns casually from a grudging small-print report in «Vorwärts», that Austrian «comrades» have been sitting as delegates to discuss the scheme with the National Executive in Berlin. The professors in both the Allied Empires have already produced a whole literature on the question. In Friedrich Naumann it has found its prophet. An ex-pastor, a Radical Deputy, a colleague of Brentano and Barth in their free-trade campaigns, he belongs to the outer Left of German politics. He is the master of a popular and somewhat emotional style, and his advocacy of the scheme lifts it out of the sordid region of Real Politics and Militarism. It is for him a species of Internationalism within the limits of the practicable. The international ideas of Christianity and Philosophy, of Socialism and Free Trade, lie shattered to ruins by this war. He would begin to build again on the basis of the limited fraternity which has united Germany to her allies. This idealistic treatment of a scheme which turns out on a close view to be hard practical business, is typical of the man, with his impressionable nature. There are fervent passages in which he hopes that the little nationalities within its frontiers will enjoy a new tolerance when «Mitteleuropa» is founded. There are frank confessions of the sins of Prussianism against Danes, Alsatians, and Poles, and hopes that closer association with Austria will teach the North Germans how to handle such problems. There are warnings to his countrymen against the effects of a rasping and domineering

manner. There are several passages in which it is argued that the consolidation of Central Europe will raise the workman's standard of life. The tone of his references to us and to the other Allies (sometimes excepting Russia) is calm, reasonable, and in places even kindly. Let us note these passages, not to gloat upon confessions which do their author credit, nor yet to accept them as proof that the Mid-European idea is a Liberal growth. Their significance lies in this, that the advocacy of the doctrine by a man who was a free trader, and is still, emotionally at least, a Liberal, may help to make it palatable, not merely to the German democracy, but also to the non-German races whose fate is in the balance. In every country the idealist patriot throughout this war has been busy persuading us all that we can gather figs from thorns and olive-branches from machine-guns. The dominant emotional note of the book is, however, one of creative excitement, a sense of power, a vision of limitless possibilities.

«I write purposely in the midst of the war, for only in war are men's minds receptive to large ideas of transformation. After the war there will return to us very quickly from its hiding place the humdrum mood of our day-to-day life (*Alltagsseele*), and with the day-to-day mind Mid-Europe cannot be created. As Bismarck established the German Empire in the war of 1870, and not after the war, so in rivers of blood, while the nations surge like billows, must the foundations of the New Model be laid. Later would be too late».

So our own *exaltés* talk of Conscription and Protection.

The main lines of Herr Naumann's argument are extremely simple. The war, he argues, has altered all our notions of magnitude in national life. We live in an era of world-wars and world-politics. Even big Germany alone is small. It is partly trade which has brought this about, for the basis of any great world-trade must be a large and secure home market. It is partly modern strategy. Trench warfare, he reasons, spells the doom of the small State, for if you must hold all your frontiers by continuous lines of trenches, the advantage lies with the great State with a large area and a numerous population relatively to the length of its trenches. A little State with two frontiers like Roumania can exist only on sufferance. So, too, when the epoch of tariff-wars arrives, the neutrals will be driven into one camp or the other. A neutral, in short, is a planet which has not found its sun. The ideal «small and alone» (*klein und allein*) is impossible for Germany. It might pay economically for a time to link up with

Russia, but when Russia had been developed by German brains, she would soon break loose, and the inevitable conflict would begin. It would be sentimentally much less repugnant to ally oneself to England and work with her, but Germans follow a bigger aim, and prefer to revolve on their own axis. Bismarck fixed the true lines of German policy once for all in 1876, when he saved Austria from Russia. To save her again in 1914 from the dissolution threatened by Panslavism was loyalty, but it was also self-interest working on inevitable and traditional lines. The only possible policy for Germany is to develop the Austrian alliance in all its limitless possibilities. Herr Naumann says little about Turkey, Bulgaria, and Poland, for he wrote during last summer, before the *Drang nach Osten* was a completed military fact. These extensions of Mid-Europe float on the fringe of his argument, but he insists in every chapter that a closer Austro-German union must be the nucleus of any further crystallization. The aim is primarily *Weltwirtschaft*, world-economics, world-trade, world-politics. The meaning of this is not so much world-dominion as the acquisition of a status as a leading world-Power. The lesser Powers are not truly independent. Only in three places in the world is there truly sovereignty, London, New York, Petrograd. Mid-Europe, in its own peculiar German way, must become an international and truly sovereign structure, as the British Empire, the United States, and Russia are. The argument addressed to Austria is simple, frank, and brief. She cannot survive alone. Without the German alliance she would be «a crumbling Balkan state». If she turns to Russia, Panslavism will break her up. France and England could not save her if they would. Choice she has none. To maintain the Alliance is for her a simple question of self-preservation. Mid-Europe, with all its satellites and colonies, including Turkey, will be big, but not inordinately big. It will include a tenth of the earth's surface, while the British Empire has a quarter, with a population of 200 millions, against the British 425, the Russian 170, the American 107, and the French 95 millions.

It is time to turn from this summary of the superficial aspects of the idea to a closer inquiry as to what in detail it means. The leading idea is, in vulgar words, that Austria must be "speeded up". Germany's aim, after the successful cultivation of her own garden, is to enlarge her estate, and apply to it her own intensive methods. Austria must learn the German *Arbeitstempo* and *Arbeitsrhythmus*, or, in plain words, awaken from her medieval slumbers, learn quick and methodical methods of work, and submit to what Herr Naumann calls in one

place *Arbeitsmilitarismus*. He has some eloquent pages on the modern German spirit. It is a spirit of corporate work in industry as in science. It represents a second phase in the development of capitalism, an impersonal or superpersonal phase, as opposed to the individualism of British trade, which still continues the tradition of the isolated merchant adventurer. This war is, indeed, an inevitable conflict between these two stages of capitalism. The appeal to Austria to allow herself to be "speeded up" is put on simple lines of self-interest. Her population is miserably below the German level at present in wages and comfort. The tremendous annual emigration proves the lack of opportunity at home, and this phase, familiar in the old days in Germany, can be met by expert organization. Hungary ought to be the granary of Mid-Europe, but at present it produces per acre one-half the yield of Prussian agriculture, and requires more hands to turn out this pitiable result. The second line of argument-is that unless the Dual Monarchy calls in the aid of German organization, it will be unable to bear the ruin and debt of this war.

What, then, is meant by this Militarism (*Arbeitsmilitarismus*) which sleepy, dignified, genial Austria is invited to adopt? Our own alarmists have fastened on the Zollverein, the adoption of a common tariff, as its central idea. That is because our alarmists are really very much behind the age. German methods of economic penetration are much subtler than mere tariff-mongering, and can at need dispense with it. What Herr Naumann really lays stress on is the adoption of a common industrial organization, or rather, perhaps, the extension to Austria of the German institutions – banks, cartels, trusts, insurance companies, and the like. There must be some assimilation of the commercial legislation of the two countries. But the war has opened even further vistas. It has made for a great extension of State Socialism. The organization of production improvised under the stress of the British blockade must, if only for military reasons, be built up after the war on a more scientific and permanent basis. Industries will undergo a further crystallization into regulated syndicates. With these the State will deal directly, when it has to impose a tax on their produce. He contemplates something between the American Trust and the Continental Monopoly or Régie. Further, the State must accumulate, against the needs of war, great stores of grain, copper, wool, cotton, rubber, and petroleum. It ought to use these stores in times of peace to regulate prices, opening and closing their doors so as to keep prices level, thus making an end of the old

anarchical economy of fluctuating supply and demand. If Austria and Germany are to make the most of their Alliance, they must adopt this regulation of industry and supply in common.

On the question of tariffs, one gathers from the book that Austrian opinion shrinks from complete internal free trade in Mid-Europe, and would prefer a system of preferential tariffs. Herr Naumann argues plausibly that this would work in reality rather to the benefit of German trade than to the protection of Austria. He pleads for a common tariff, mitigated by transitional duties, imposed on one German product or another to protect infant and struggling industries in the Dual Monarchy. His trump card is the argument that mere preferences would not involve the creation of a common industrial system. A Zollverein (even with transitional duties) would create this. Let it once be decided that Germany and Austria are a single industrial unit, with common interests, and the German system of regulation will at once intervene to protect the Austrian producer and ensure him his due share of trade. The Cartels, with their system of delimited markets and zones for each firm or group of firms, would alone ensure this. The Syndicates would do it even more certainly. Thus, for example, the Austrian industrialists dread German competition in their Balkan market. Let them enter the German Cartels and Syndicates, and each partner will have his own export market guaranteed to him. That is the kernel of the Mid-European idea, a common industrial system. For the rest, Herr Naumann sketches it briefly on its political side. It means a closer military alliance, and a common foreign policy. It does not mean any fusing of Ministries or Parliaments. The common work will be done between two Foreign Offices in the last resort, but mainly through joint commissions of experts and officials, sitting permanently to arrange the store system, the syndicate system, tariffs, railways, and commercial legislation.

It is more important to summarize a book of this type than to criticize it. The ideal appeals to the Western mind as the fruit of an unsanctified union between a Prussian Junker and a Frankfort Jew. A Mid-Europe governed by this regulated industrialism would be the finished product of Trust-Capitalism married to Militarism. It would have withdrawn the real affairs of the world from the control of democracy, to make them over to capitalists and the bureaucracy. In a vehement parenthesis Herr Naumann stipulates for guarantees for Labor. Certainly Prussian Capitalism understands an intelligent moderation in its methods of exploitation. When we turn, however, from a valuation of the ideal to the question whether

it is likely to be realized, the probabilities are all in its favor, on Herr Naumann's assumption of a German victory, or even perhaps if we suppose the avoidance of crushing defeat. It means unquestionably a further deepening of the gulf which divided Europe in the armed peace before this war. It means also a new problem for free traders, if only because it breaks down the old conception of "the most favored nation" in our dealings with Germany. But it must be emphasized that the idea of Mid-Europe, as Herr Naumann expounds it, is not an aggressive conception or a policy aimed at this country. It might even lower tariffs for our trade, by bringing down high Austrian duties to the moderate German level. It is a plan of internal organization, a scheme for cultivating a new and enlarged estate. It seems menacing less for what it is in itself, than because it is the ripened fruit of war.

Appendix 2

THE CENTRAL-EUROPE IDEA²

Sir, it is a pity that the moral and physical trenches which divide Europe forbid a direct discussion between Herr Naumann, who has written by far the ablest prophecy of the

² Reply by the reviewer to Toynbee's criticism in «The Nation», XVIII, 2, February 19, 1916, p. 730.

preservation of Austria-Hungary, and Mr. Toynbee, who has written by far the ablest argument for its destruction. Your Reviewer shares neither of their positions, but on one or two points of Mr. Toynbee's commentary I should like to touch. First, let me say (what I think I indicated in my review) that in spite of the charm and power of Herr Naumann's book, I am not satisfied that the mere creation of a united Mid-Europe must at once better the case of the non-German nationalities. Herr Naumann resembles all the idealists who on both sides have thrown themselves into the advocacy of this war. His facile belief that it will make for Liberalism in Mid-Europe is, to my thinking, a pathetic pragmatical delusion, comparable to the parallel hopes on our side, that it will of itself end militarism or reform Russia. It is, I think, more likely for some years that it will lead to the increased arrogance of Austrian-Germans, Magyars, and Young Turks, who will all look to Berlin for moral support – and get it. In the long run, however, other consequences might be expected, if Mid-Europe were firmly founded. In the first place its increased material prosperity must mean an improvement in the status of all the minor nationalities, whose weakness in the past was largely their poverty and deficient education. The renaissance of the Tchechs has proceeded step by step with their economic elevation. One may predict the same experience for South Slavs and Slovacks and Roumans. In the second place, the acuteness of the race conflict was due to external as well as internal causes. The ruling races dreaded, as some of the subject races desired, the "inevitable" war between the Hapsburg idea and the Panslavist idea. The shadow of the coming war inclined the rulers to persecution, and the ruled to an impracticable temper. Neither of them relied on a purely political solution of their problem, for both looked to war for its definite settlement. Remove this disturbing external factor by a peace which has some elements of stability, and you may hope that the wiser heads on both sides will realize that their common future depends on compromise and statesmanship. Lastly, one may expect that a more active economic life, by raising new and absorbing social problems, may diminish the morbid and fanatical emphasis which both sides have laid on race. I feel no assured confidence in this forecast, but I advance it as a reading of the probabilities which may be as plausible as Mr. Toynbee's. My own criticism of Herr Naumann on this score would be, not so much that he hopes, as that his optimism is purely sentimental. He carefully

refrained from advocating any structure in his Mid-Europe which might have guaranteed his dreams of racial tolerance.

Mr. Toynbee challenges my statement that the Mid-Europe idea, arid and materialistic though it is, is «not an aggressive policy, or a policy aimed at this country». I had in mind the economic scheme which is its chief meaning – an aspect of it which Mr. Toynbee leaves untouched. One may fairly say that any policy of fiscal protection or of preferences within a political unit is bad economics and bad internationalism. But one cannot fairly call it aggressive when the motive is simply internal development. Herr Naumann's Zollverein, judged by that standard, is no more aggressive than Mr. Chamberlain's. If one wants to see the aggressive idea at work in commercial thinking, examples of it may be found nearer home. The people who want to push German trade «to the bottom of the list», to arrange that it shall never «get up its head again», and to impose an avowedly punitive tariff on German goods on a higher scale than they impose on the wares of other foreign trade rivals (*e.g.*, the Americans), seem to me to pursue an aggressive policy. They aim, not merely at protecting our trade, but at destroying Germany's, and their motive is avowedly resentment, or, as they would say, moral reprobation. Mid-Europe, open as it is to many criticisms, is not fairly charged with this particular sin. I do not understand Mr. Toynbee's argument that Herr Naumann must be meditating aggressions, because he predicts that after this war the Germans, like everyone else, will protect themselves by drawing permanent trenches on their frontiers. A Chinese wall may display distrust, but it is useless for offence.

Mr. Toynbee concludes with his familiar thesis that Austria-Hungary must be destroyed. I do not know whether this seems to him a typically unaggressive programme. To my thinking it is the aptest device which the brain of man could conceive for prolonging this war indefinitely. A point must come when some moderate settlement is in sight, and that settlement might even include the easing of the Austrian racial problem, not by partition, but by some further developments of autonomy or federalism. The advocates of the ruthless maximum will then be inviting us to slaughter for the satisfaction of their thesis more Englishmen and Frenchmen in the further prosecution of the war, than there are Slovaks and Slovenes in the world. If commonsense prevails, their extravagant programme will still work as a *perpetuum mobile* of strife, and, because it remains unrealized, we shall be

persuaded to arm for the still necessary act of surgery in the future. There is no end to such crusading, and if Austria-Hungary has deserved the death penalty for a record partly good and partly bad, but always improving, there is another Empire whose handling of its subject races might, on the same principles, be held to call even more imperatively «for the knife». The Dual Monarchy had no easy problem on its hands, and before the war had made objectivity difficult, even such authorities as Dr. Seton-Watson wrote of Austria's record and promise in friendly and hopeful terms. Hungary was another matter; but was Hungarian oppression on the average worse than Unionist coercion in Ireland thirty years ago? If «the knife» had been used to us then, it might have liberated Ireland, but it would have prevented our national conversion to a Liberal view. A slow cure by self-treatment is in such cases a better remedy than violent surgery, for it implies the moral development of the ruling race as well the liberation of the oppressed. It is easy on paper to break up Austria-Hungary into a chaos of little "independent" kingdoms; it is much harder to provide guarantees for their security. They could live in this dangerous world only by becoming the satellites of another Empire. Nominal independence might not in the end promise more liberty than autonomy within Mid-Europe. That guarantees for this autonomy might be introduced as an essential element in a moderate settlement is the hope which a reading of *Mitteleuropa* stimulates in the mind of Your REVIEWER³.

³ Our Reviewer speaks, of course, from his individual knowledge and point of view (The Editor of the «Nation»).