

MY EDUCATION, PART III*

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MI6

When, after the Somme offensive in November 1916, I obtained leave and went to London, I put up at the Ivanhoe Hotel, Bloomsbury, where an excellent service was in operation for just such a miserable and vermin-ridden trench-rat as I was at the time. The management collected all my clothes and belongings, fumigated and cleaned them, and provided bathing arrangements for ridding men fresh from the Front of all lice and other vermin. Thus, to the great credit of the establishment, I very soon felt a new man. But not for long. Before forty-eight hours had elapsed I was running a high temperature and was taken to the officers' hospital at Milbank, where I stayed three weeks. My disorder was trench fever, and it left me very weak. After a brief convalescence, Mackenzie the heart specialist forbade my immediate return to the Front, and I was posted to the Ministry of Munitions in Northumberland Avenue. But not very much later, after I had faced three medical boards, I was told to report to the OC MI6 at the War Office, where my languages could be put to some use and where I contrived to make myself sufficiently useful to be retained. And after two years' work in intelligence, in 1919, as General Staff Officer, third grade, with the rank of Captain, I rose to be the head of my department (MI6 A).

I considered myself lucky. I had escaped the inferno and slaughter of the Somme offensive almost unscathed. It seemed little short of a miracle, for again and again I had left a spot in a trench, at the gun position, or along the road to and from the wagon-line, only to see or hear a shell crash down on it a moment later. I often asked myself whether the prayers I knew my woman friends were offering up for me had anything to do with this extraordinary good fortune, but, although I used

* Selections from Anthony M. Ludovici, *Confessions of an Anti-Feminist: The Autobiography of Anthony M. Ludovici*, ed. John V. Day (Atlanta: Counter-Currents, forthcoming), ch. 5, "My Education, Part III." Unless otherwise indicated, all notes are by Ludovici. John V. Day's notes are marked JVD, and additional notes are marked TOQ. The section headings were added by TOQ.

often to joke about these supplications and boast ironically about the immunity they procured me, secretly I suspected their efficacy.

The two years spent at the War Office gave me a good insight into the working of a large government department and, above all, into the mentality cultivated in the staff personnel by the duties they had to perform. It was interesting, too, to witness the complexity of the intrigues which preceded the King's birthday and the compilation of the honors list, which in the official mind was its principal feature. I was duly awarded the MBE, but, with no wish to slight my superiors who had recommended me for it, as soon as I got out of uniform I resigned from the Order. I could not help feeling that there was something degrading about accepting an honor which was an appeal to vanity alone, especially as the award placed me on a level with hundreds of typists, munitions workers, and clerks who, after all, had only done their duty in callings in which millions live and die without gaining any special distinction whatsoever. The light that genial writer, Miss E. M. Delafield, shed on the wartime worker, especially of the female sex, should suffice to temper anybody's raptures about war service at home performed by both civilians and *embusqués*¹ in uniform, and expose the sentimental stupidity of the politicians who in the post-war period thought that women's war service entitled them to be enfranchised.

When in World War II I was working under Colonel W. F. Stirling, he said I had made a mistake in resigning from the Order of the British Empire, because such awards are indications not merely of merit but also of capacity, and help subsequent employers to assess one's suitability for a particular job. But I do not regret my action. Owing to the vast number who nowadays are included in an Order of the kind in question, it ceases altogether from being a distinction. One's mind boggles at the thought that so many people, especially in the low-grade populations of the West, can have been capable of conduct so distinguished as to justify so wide a distribution of honors, and the esteem in which the award is held must suffer accordingly.

RETURN TO CIVILIAN LIFE

I was demobilized in the late autumn of 1919, and from that time to this have been engaged in literary work of all kinds, from freelance

¹ French soldiers who had a safe or easy posting—JVD.

journalism, translation (from both French and German), and novel-writing to the compilation of treatises on such unpopular subjects as anti-feminism, conservative politics, sex psychology, health, and even mythology.² But of all this I shall speak in a later chapter. In 1920, however, my education was still far from finished. For not only did I marry in the March of that year, but in the course of the three ensuing decades I also had abundant opportunities, through lecturing and debating in public and by making and losing friendships, of learning yet more about what Fontenelle called "the danger" of "le commerce des hommes."

It was during these thirty years, moreover, that I had three experiences of outstanding importance – my membership of the political society known as the English Mystery; my two visits to Hitler's Germany and the chance this gave me of seeing a good deal of the leaders of the National Socialist Party, including, above all, Hitler himself; and my eighteen years as a smallholder in Suffolk, during which I contrived to be self-supporting to the extent of growing all my own fruit and vegetables, most of the grain for my fowls and the hay for my goats, and supplying all my dairy needs, including our butter and cream.

I have already spoken of my membership of the English Mystery and how it introduced me to a particularly virulent form of the Anglo-Saxon infirmity, the lack of solidarity – a defect which may account for most of the less attractive features of the English way of life, from its multiplicity of religious sects to the absence of any public spirit in the general population. "Chacun pour soi et Dieu pour tous"³ would be the most appropriate motto to inscribe beneath the Lion and the Unicorn, and it should long ago have been adopted. For, at bottom, it is this spirit that makes it difficult for the Anglo-Saxon even to understand, let alone to practice, the principle of freedom. In no country is more empty verbiage expended on the desirability and blessedness of freedom than in England. Yet in his own, and especially in his womenfolk's, social behavior, an utter failure to grasp what freedom means is daily, if not hourly, displayed.

In their incurable habit of spreading litter wherever they choose to rest; in their reckless soiling of any pitch, whether on a beach or on

² Ludovici mentions later in this same chapter (see p. 50 below), that he was dismissed from intelligence work on August 14, 1940. Thus it appears that Ludovici continued working for MI6 until then – TOQ.

³ "Everyone for himself and God for all" – JVD.

field, which they temporarily occupy; in their fouling and disfigurement of public library books (in the Ipswich Public Library I have repeatedly found whole pages torn from dictionaries, railway timetables, and even encyclopedias); in the damage done by their offspring to public property in parks, on railways, and in institutions (for their children are never trained in habits of public-spiritedness); and in the creation of distracting noise and clamor – to mention but a few of their asocial traits – the English manifest, quite unconsciously no doubt, their inability to grasp what is implied by freedom and the practices it enjoins. I say “unconsciously,” and this, alas, is true, for unconscious activities being based on instinct are naturally more difficult than conscious ones to eradicate.

It is surely obvious that, if people are to be free to enjoy any natural or artificial amenity, those who precede them in enjoying these amenities must not behave as if they were the only people on earth. Yet in England the majority of the population, whether on the highway or elsewhere, whether they are young or old, behave precisely as if they were their Maker’s unique creation, and it is probable that their lack of any capacity for solidarity and loyalty is also due to this failing. I shall return to this evil in due course; for the time being, it must suffice to point out that all the least pleasant consequences in both English politics and social intercourse are probably accounted for by this same defect. “Après moi le déluge”⁴ might thus be added as a supplement to the motto already suggested for the national coat of arms.

All this I had indelibly imprinted on my mind during the years in which I was a prominent member of the English Mistery, and, if I owe this society nothing else, I am at least indebted to it for having confirmed the lessons I had learned about “le commerce des hommes” when I was connected with the Nietzscheans and the *New Age* clique respectively.

Still, the English Mistery brought me some valued friendships. Many of these have of course by now been removed by death; but a few have endured until this day, and for this blessing I shall continue to feel grateful to the founders of the group.⁵

⁴ “After me, the deluge” – JVD.

⁵ In the 1970 typescript Ludovici names these friends as the Earl of Portsmouth (previously known as Lord Lymington), Major Fitzroy Fyers, Jack Burton, Charles Challen, and Geoffrey Wilson, MP for Truro – JVD.

HITLER AND THE THIRD REICH

To them I am also indebted for opportunities I had of becoming acquainted with the leading government personalities and the social conditions of Germany during the Hitler regime, for, had I not through the Mystery become known to the personnel of the German Embassy in London, I should never have enjoyed this unique experience.

The movement certainly attracted the attention of many of the foreign diplomats in London. Thus I met Signor Grandi, with whom I often had long talks. I cannot say that he impressed me very favorably; nor could I help being astonished to discover that Mussolini's chief emissary in England could hardly express himself coherently in English. Our dinners were also frequently attended by members of the German Embassy staff, as well as by the representatives of many political parties in France, Holland, and Sweden, all of whom wished to learn something about our aims and outlook. We were, therefore, not altogether surprised when in the spring of 1936 the so-called Chancellor of our society, William Sanderson, received an invitation from the authorities in Germany to come to Berlin as a guest of the Nazi Party. The idea was that he should meet the leading members of the government and become acquainted with some of the reforms and innovations introduced by the National Socialists since Hitler's advent to power.

Sanderson accepted the invitation, and as I was the only German-speaking member of the Mystery, and was in other respects the best qualified to be his companion, it was arranged that I should go with him.

We crossed over to the Hook of Holland on the night of the 30th of April, but neither of us was able to enjoy the luxury of our first-class deck cabins, for a dense fog enveloped us soon after we left Harwich, and the constant hooting of the ship's fog signal throughout the journey prevented us from getting a wink of sleep. Owing to the slow pace at which our ship had been forced to travel, moreover, we reached the Hook too late for the boat train to Berlin, and when ultimately we reached the capital, shortly before midnight, instead of being in time for dinner, there was nobody to meet us, and it looked as if our hosts had given up all hope of seeing us that day. We were not too well impressed by this poor reception, especially when some time later we heard that no government official had heard about the heavy

mist in the North Sea and the serious delay it had inevitably caused.

We were both famished and exhausted, and it was pelting with rain. However, I managed to find a taxi which drove us to the address I had been given by the embassy staff in London—i.e., at the *Englischer Klubb* near the *Tiergarten*⁶—and there we found a rather peeved and perplexed remnant of the company with whom we should have dined that evening, who, having given us up, were on the point of dispersing. We were astonished to hear that at the railway station they had heard nothing about the mist at sea, and that when the boat train had arrived they naturally inferred that we had not traveled on the night of April 30th as arranged. Incredibly bad management! For, even if the railway officials had been remiss in their duty, the party instructed to meet us at the station ought surely to have made exhaustive inquiries which would inevitably have elicited the facts.

They deplored our having missed the special dinner that had been prepared in our honor, ordered a snack supper which we found very welcome, and then drove us to the Hotel Splendide, a most luxurious hotel which was to be our headquarters throughout our stay.

As guests of the Nazi Party, who wished to introduce us to every aspect of the new Germany they were creating, we were not allowed much peace. Having given us a kind and considerate young Foreign Office official as a bear-leader, we were taken to all important meetings and driven round the country to inspect the various camps, training centers, and institutions which owed their existence to the new regime. As we had arrived just in time for the First of May celebrations, our first few days were pretty full.

In the course of our stay we were able to hear Hitler speak several times, and were always given such privileged seats at his meetings that we were able to get a close view of him and all his leading colleagues in the government. As Sanderson was partly blind and understood no German, I was compelled to be not only his visual aid but also his interpreter, and this compelled me to attend with particular care to all that was said and to all there was to see.

Of the whole bunch of men around Hitler, Blomberg—the C-in-C of that period—was by far the best and most distinguished-looking. The others—i.e., Goebbels, Himmler, Schirach, Hess, Funk, Ribbentrop, and Goering—all struck me as commonplace, if not actually common.

⁶ Zoo—JVD.

I disliked Hess and Ribbentrop, but little Goebbels, with whom I discussed Nietzsche, seemed to me rather attractive and the most intelligent of the lot. At a lunch Ribbentrop gave us at the English Club I tried repeatedly to convince him that the opposition to the Nazi regime, and above all to Hitler's often high-handed behavior vis-à-vis neighboring states, was much stronger in England, especially among influential Englishwomen, than he and his colleagues seemed to think; and I pointed out that women of all classes in England were inclined to resent any movement which, like the Nazi regime, was predominantly masculine in spirit. Incidentally, the unanimity with which Englishwomen subsequently backed the war party in England, often against their menfolk's views, abundantly confirmed my opinion of their attitude in 1936.

I had, however, little success with Ribbentrop, who seemed quite unconvinced. Before the luncheon party dispersed, therefore, I buttonholed his secretary and begged him to repeat my warning to his chief. But judging from the generally *protzig*⁷ attitude of many of the Party officials at that time, I doubt whether even he listened very sympathetically to my appeal. Captain Fitzroy Fyers, as he was then, who happened also to be among the English guests at the 1936 Party Rally and who spent much time with me in Nürnberg, will remember that on the afternoon of September 12th, the last day of our stay, I told him that the greatest danger of all in my opinion was precisely this *protzigkeit* of the leading officials or the Party. It was particularly marked in Himmler, with whom I spent some time that same afternoon together with the Duchess of Brunswick and her charming daughter. I thought him most objectionable, and much as I liked the two ladies I was glad to part company with him.

Later that evening, however, I had the good fortune to come across the two ladies again, for I sat between them at the dinner Himmler gave us at the Police HQ, and I vividly remember something Frederika—the Kaiser's granddaughter, now Queen of Greece—said to me. We were discussing English schools, and she told me that when she was at her English school (North Foreland Lodge, near Basingstoke) after World War I, and the whole school assembled for morning prayers, they often sang the *Ancient and Modern* hymn which has the same melody as *Deutschland, Deutschland über Alles*, and, as often as

⁷ Truculent or arrogant—JVD.

this happened, so she would have to cry. Ultimately, this was brought to the notice of the headmistress, who at once forbade the singing of that hymn as long as Frederika remained a pupil at the school.

My two most pleasant memories of Nazi Germany are my meeting with this young lady and her mother and my visit to the Duke of Saxe-Coburg in the previous May. His Grace was a most charming personality and our talk during the tea he gave Sanderson and me at his house in or near Berlin was one of my most interesting experiences during that first visit to Nazi Germany.

I must have heard Hitler speak in public about a dozen times, but I met him to talk to only once, at the Englischer Hof Hotel in September 1936, where he gave the whole of the English visitors a tea. I was perhaps too much preoccupied in studying his features to do more than exchange a few words about Nietzsche with him, but I had time to have a good look at his hands and to observe his manner in private intercourse. He was extraordinarily self-possessed among us all and very gracious in the attention he paid to every one of his guests in turn. A moment later I heard him arguing animatedly with a man whom I believed to be Ward Price of the *Daily Mail*.⁸ But it all ended in a good laugh, so I assumed that the argument had been friendly.

One was easily carried away by the amazing eloquence, sincerity, and passion of his public utterances, and no-one who has heard him and who was capable of understanding what he said could fail to appreciate the reason of his irresistible appeal to all classes of the community. Many hostile critics, especially women, have led their English readers to believe that there was something hysterical and even pathological about his oratory and manner in public. But after watching him with particular care during many of his addresses, I saw no sign of anything of the sort. All about me in the audience were retired generals and field officers, professional men of all ages, and dignified sexagenarians who had had distinguished careers as judges, magistrates, university professors, etc., and I refuse to believe that they could have sat there, listening as reverently as they did, often with tears trickling down their cheeks, if they had been aware of any of the contemptible characteristics which hostile and bitterly biased English reporters imagined they saw in his public demeanor. Unfortunately,

⁸ Author of *I Know These Dictators* (London: George A. Harrap & Co., 1937; revised edition, 1938) and *Extra-Special Correspondent* (London: George A. Harrap & Co., 1957) — JVD.

the falsehoods these people fabricated for the consumption of the ignorant newspaper-reader in England were only too readily accepted as facts, and of course enjoyed, by all those who were anxious to disparage the German leader. How distant seemed the days when even a Russian general could punish a subordinate for sneering at Napoleon, and that century BC when a Caesar could praise his enemies!

One last word about Hitler and I shall not need to discuss him further.

In this intellectually servile and sterile age, when both the high and the low in the land are equally sequacious and subservient, propaganda pays handsomely, whether in commercial advertising or in inculcating upon the population the opinions which the Establishment think it good for us to hold. Now, among these opinions none has been more diligently dinned into us than that the German people's acceptance of Hitler must indicate some morbid and unpleasant flaw in the German mentality. And as in modern England it suffices for such a view to be stated only once by some recognized member of the Establishment for it to be immediately taken up and re-echoed by thousands of lesser people, it follows that today one can hardly open a book or listen to a BBC broadcast in which it is not emphatically stated that, in accepting with almost complete unanimity a "mental defective" such as Hitler, the German nation gave proof of its fundamental perversity.

A typical presentation of this view, which can now be found paraphrased in innumerable forms by prominent English people, from Mr. Robert Birley, the Head of Eton, to the most ignorant female journalist, is that made by Colin Welch in his review of William L. Shirer's *The Rise and Fall of the Third Reich*, when he asked: "Why on earth, for instance, did such a richly gifted people as the Germans prostitute themselves to become the tools of a maniac?"

Now, apart from the fact that the author of this rhetorical outburst, like all those who now obediently toe the Establishment's line, takes for granted that his readers, who in other contexts would pride themselves on demanding the evidence, will meekly accept the statement that Hitler was in fact a maniac, can the host of parrots who repeat this *rengaine*⁹ about the German people's turpitude in accepting Hitler ever have asked themselves what Hitler meant to Germany in the

⁹ Same old story – JVD.

decades following World War I?

The minute minority of Englishmen who happen to be well-informed do not need to be reminded of Germany's outstanding achievements in scholarship, science, music, philosophy, and poetry, or to be told that a nation possessing the record of which she could justly boast in 1914 must necessarily have her pride, her consciousness of high endowments, entitling her to feel a worthy example of what European civilization has so far produced. When, therefore, such a nation is humiliated, vilified, and degraded as Germany was after World War I, the pain it undergoes is naturally proportionate to the honorable position it knew itself to have reached in the family of Western peoples. The blow to its self-esteem must have been—could not help having been—staggering.

Let anyone, even outside this minute minority of well-informed Englishmen, imagine what England would have felt had she been similarly humiliated, or merely recall what England did feel after the retreat from Dunkirk, and the whole picture assumes a different aspect.

It was thus to a Germany still suffering acutely from the wounds of such a humiliation that suddenly someone appeared who contrived to restore the country's self-esteem and helped it to recover its self-respect and sense of worthiness. Naturally, inevitably, the response was one of rapturous gratitude and affection. Even if Hitler had really been the monster the Establishment wished us to believe he was, the enthusiastic response to his appeal would still be comprehensible.

Had not no less a person than Lord Lothian expressed his admiration for the conditions introduced by Hitler's regime? Nor, as we know, was he by any means the only Englishman who felt this way. In the *Times* of the 1st of February 1934, speaking of National Socialism, he had written that it has given "Germany unity where it was terribly divided; it has produced a stable government, and restored to Germany national self-respect and international standing."

These are the words of a sincere Liberal. Do they indicate that the charge of lunacy against Hitler and his administration was justified? Besides, we must remember that the German nation's humiliation after 1918 was not confined to the terms of the Versailles Treaty. There was also the degradation and deep injury inflicted on them by Allied troops, who occupied their country for years after the armistice. As a tourist it was not possible to learn the full magnitude of these injuries,

but I remember when I visited friends in Düren in 1922 that the account I was given of the behavior of the French black troops in the town appalled both my wife and myself.

"The Germans, a proud people," says Mr. Abel J. Jones, "were reduced to such a state of humiliation as to welcome anyone, however unlikely or dangerous, promising to restore their confidence and pride."¹⁰

The intelligence and understanding, not to mention the charity, revealed in this passage are admittedly quite exceptional in present-day "fair-minded" England, and show a defiance of the Establishment reminiscent of more creditable eras in British history than that covered by the last thirty years. But the fact that at least one Englishman can have been found to express such a view suggests that, in any case, as recently as 1945 some good sense and psychological insight still existed in the nation.

THE SECOND WORLD WAR

I can speak only briefly about my experiences during World War II, for they were too galling to be comfortably related in detail. The spirit of witch-hunting which suddenly possessed the English people after their humiliation at Dunkirk, and which, fomented by the authorities and the press, prompted everybody with a secret grudge to practice delation and slander quite free of any risk, led to a state of affairs when malice, envy, or merely the pleasure of twisting a neighbor's tail made life intolerable for anyone who had, however unwittingly, offended the sanity of those about him.

For after the unprecedented and wholesale defeat of the British army in northeastern France and Flanders in 1940, when 112,546 Allied and 224,585 British soldiers, most of whom had abandoned their arms and equipment, were evacuated from the beaches of Dunkirk, it proved an immense solace to the English people, and greatly helped to salve their wounded self-esteem, to be told that the Allied forces had not been beaten or outwitted by any superior military strength or genius, but had simply been let down. The inference being that, although militarily, everybody, including the politicians and the higher command, had been brilliantly efficient and that the advance into Belgium—an error subsequently exposed by all knowledgeable critics—

¹⁰ Abel J. Jones, *In Search of Truth* (London: Th. Nelson & Sons Ltd., 1945), ch. 3, 2.

had denoted no major deviation from modern scientific strategy, the whole disaster had been the outcome of quisling and fifth-column activities within the Allied ranks and populations.

The general public did not of course know, and were never told, that the debacle had been due, as Captain Liddell Hart subsequently pointed out, to “the essential misunderstanding of modern warfare by the Allied leaders, political and military,” and that “the French army paved the way for its own defeat because it failed to adopt or develop a defensive technique suited to modern conditions.”¹¹ The common people, therefore, especially in England, eagerly swallowed the canard about fifth-column activities as the major cause of the defeat. Their cruelly outraged self-esteem was thus salved, and the authorities were able to conceal from the nation the enormity of the reverse and the culpability of those responsible for it.

The cry of “quisling” and “fifth columnist” had, however, the inevitable result of giving every knave, every failure, every fool envious of another’s way of life or of his gifts, the opportunity to vent his venom. With his hand on his heart, everybody thenceforth had a patriotic excuse for injuring a fellow-citizen. Suspicion alone was enough.

I, for one, was soon made aware of the speed with which many of my dear neighbors in Upper Norwood who had resented my anti-Christian attitude or my hostile criticism of feminism and democracy, together with many of my former associates in the English Mystery, seized the chance of maligning and casting suspicion upon me, and by the 29th of May 1940 two detectives from Croydon Police HQ called to question me about my “anti-Allied” opinions. I managed to appease their apprehensions, and they left.

PURGED FROM MI6

A little later, at the office where I was engaged in intelligence work, however, I gathered that searching inquiries were being made concerning my ideological suitability for the post, and, despite emphatic protests and even apologies from my two chiefs, Colonel Stirling and Colonel Backhouse, these inquiries culminated in my being summarily dismissed on the 14th of August 1940.

From Colonel Backhouse I learned that the gravamen of the charges against me was my membership of the Right Club, a group professing

¹¹ Liddell Hart, *Dynamic Defence* (London: Faber & Faber, 1940).

political views of the extreme Right and directed especially against communism, to which, in view of my record, I naturally felt myself affiliated. But in expressing his regret for what had happened, Colonel Backhouse said: "It all shows how careful we should be in choosing our associates."

In vain did I retort both to him and the naval head of our branch of the intelligence service that among these very associates was none less than the Duke of Wellington, the president of the club, and that an ordinary commoner like myself might surely be excused if he thought that a group thus led must be above any suspicion of national disloyalty. I also pointed out that, as every fellow-officer in my department knew, I had openly displayed the badge of the Right Club, a silver spread-eagle, on my lapel and had explained to both Colonel Stirling and Colonel Backhouse what it stood for. Was this the sort of conduct that might be expected of a member of a seditious organization? Both merely shrugged their shoulders and, whilst admitting the cogency of my pleas, professed themselves unable to alter the decision of the authorities. As I was then due for promotion in my department and had even had an interview with Colonel Backhouse about it (for by that time Stirling had left), it has often struck me that among those who may have had a share in maligning me there may have been one or two who aspired to the position I was due to fill.

Meanwhile, under Regulation 18B scores of people as innocent as I was myself of any seditious activities or intentions, including Captain A. H. M. Ramsay, MP, had been arrested and sent to prison without trial. What had happened to *habeas corpus*, which Dr. Johnson said was the one feature of English life which made England superior to any Continental country?

But no sign of protest came from the nation at large, and even in Parliament the protests against arresting and imprisoning people on the grounds of suspicion alone and for holding views unsympathetic to the authorities were both feeble and unsupported. Historically, however, the dictatorial methods of the authorities acting on the strength of Regulation 18B were a complete innovation. Everybody knew perfectly well that at the end of the nineteenth century, when the Liberals, including Lloyd George, had, as Sir Sidney Low and Lloyd C. Sanders maintain, denounced the Boer War "as a crime and a blunder committed not by the Boers, but by the imperial Cabinet at the instigation of the Rand financiers," and had been dubbed "Little

Englishmen," no disaster had overtaken them, any more than it had overtaken the many prominent people who had opposed the war policy of the government in Napoleon's day. Again in 1914, we had seen men as distinguished as Lord Morley and John Burns oppose the Government of their day on the question of war with Germany, and they had done so with impunity. They were no more suspected of disloyalty to the nation than Lord Lansdowne was when in 1917 he had wisely but ineffectively pleaded in favor of making peace.

Thus, to all my friends and myself there appeared to be nothing calling for either secrecy or fear in our openly disagreeing with the government over the policy of war with Germany in 1939, and as the Right Club was particularly determined in this matter we were anxious to support it.

What was my surprise, therefore, when on the 14th of October 1940 I suddenly became aware of the fact that I must have more formidable enemies conspiring against me than some of my Norwood neighbors and my colleague at the office, for, on returning home in the evening of that day, I found my wife and Alice Cook (our faithful retainer) in a state of extreme agitation, and was told that three detectives from the Special Branch, Scotland Yard, had spent the whole day searching our house from top to bottom.

What they expected or hoped to find, I cannot imagine. But they must have felt confident of pouncing on some incriminating evidence, for their search had been prolonged and exhaustive. To say that, like Tolstoy, when his house, Yasnaya Polyana, was searched by the police, I was "insane with rage,"¹² would be an understatement. For the outrage committed against me was not only quite gratuitous, but also completely and flatly contradicted by everything I had since my early childhood been led to believe about the English way of life, with its alleged freedom of opinion and judgment.

Never could I have imagined that such a Terror could arise against any minority group in England of the twentieth century on the score of their opinions alone. Having as a young man read with agreement and conviction Buckle's *History of Civilization in England*,¹³ where, much too hastily as it has now proved, he proudly drew the conclusion that henceforward no man in this country was ever again likely

¹² Tikhon Polner, *Tolstoy and his Wife* (New York: W. W. Norton & Co., 1946), ch. 4, 3.

¹³ Volume I, 1857, Chapter 7.

to be persecuted for his opinions, I was now faced with the disquieting truth that, after all, the whole of England's alleged respect for private judgment – the whole of the democratic boast, in fact – had never been more than a fair-weather policy. The much vaunted tolerance, by virtue of which England had for centuries been basking in the admiration and envy of the Continent, had proved no more than a pretence, and its greatest dupes, like Montesquieu and Voltaire, had unfortunately not lived to discover its hollowness.

"Yes," says the defender of Regulation 18B, "but do not war conditions create an emergency situation and justify a tightening of the attitude towards deviationists who in peacetime may be ignored?" Surely the reply to this is that a principle that is observed only when no claim is put upon it is nothing but a fair-weather expedient. It is like a sheet-anchor of papier-mâché, carried along to give a crew a factitious sense of security. Unfortunately, both Continentals and the more knowledgeable among English people had for centuries believed that this sheet-anchor could be put to the test.

But to recover the thread of my narrative, soon after breakfast on the morning following the search of my house, the Special Branch, Scotland Yard, telephoned to say that I must doubtless be anxious to know why my house had been ransacked, and, as they wished to interview me, they would like to see me at the Yard as soon as possible.

It was five minutes past eleven am on Friday the 8th of October 1940 when I was invited to sit at a bare table in a bare room on one of the upper floors of the building, and found myself facing a dark young man who had in front of him what appeared to be my dossier. In a gloomy corner of the room to my left sat another young man, fair and distinguished looking and about the same age as my vis-à-vis.

I felt pretty sure that these two fellows were not going to be my only listeners and that by some secret device all I said would be heard and weighed by a more senior officer in another room. Little purpose would be served by my attempting to give even a brief summary of all that passed between me and my examiners. I need only say that I was asked to give an account not only of my opinions on current affairs and of my political views, but also to describe the whole of my career as an adult.

I spoke almost uninterruptedly from 11:05 am to the close of the interview at 12:40 pm, and spent much of the time disentangling the political views I had held since writing my *Defence of Aristocracy* from the

complex of Fascist and Nazi doctrine. For apart from the absurd identification made by most superficial English men and women at that time of Fascist and Nazi views with the traditional attitude of the English Right—a confusion largely engineered and encouraged by the communists who wished to discredit conservative politics—there prevailed at this period in the war much more popular sympathy (especially among influential women) with Leftish views than with opinions consistent with the English Right.

By referring to my own books, I was fortunately able to show that I had never once departed from the old Tory position, and I told my examiners that when I had been a member of the Mistery I had repeatedly warned my associates against confusing our attitude with that of the Continental Fascists. I was moreover able to tell the two young men before me something about the motives animating those whom I suspected of having informed against me. For during the interview one of my examiners had said: “I think we ought to tell you that quite a number of important people have testified against you.” This led me to explain why I, together with such old associates as Lord Lymington (now the 9th Earl of Portsmouth), had seceded from the Mistery and to point out that, although we felt we could no longer support the movement, quite a number of important people not sympathizing with our reasons for quitting it—or, what was more probable, never having been told what these reasons were—still belonged to it. And I added that, among these important people (one of whom I actually named), there must naturally be a few who, having accepted the hostile explanation of our defection, would imagine they were performing a patriotic duty in denouncing me.

I think this explanation, together with the fact that I had been able to name one of the VIPs who was already probably known to the Yard as having informed against me, rather impressed my examiners, but, at any rate, precisely at 12:40 pm I was told I could leave the building as a free man, and I was never again either questioned or importuned by any member of the Special Branch. Indeed, with the detective, Mr. Mann, who was my examiner-in-chief at this deplorable interview, my relations subsequently became quite friendly.

Like the less fortunate of the examinees—I refer to those who were ultimately imprisoned without trial—I was asked about my attitude to the Jews. I could not readily see the relevance of this question in connection with any suspected disloyalty to England. For what had a

man's private views about the Jews to do with his national loyalty? However, I replied by pointing out that I was no more anti-Semitic than I was anti-English. But, as I regarded both the English and the Jews as essentially particularists in Henri de Tourville's sense,¹⁴ I feared they were both inclined to behave in an asocial manner and to abide too rigidly by the principle, *après moi le déluge*—the Jews owing to their nomadic, and the English owing to their Northern and Scandinavian, ancestry.

As I strongly suspected that Scotland Yard had been told of my anti-Semitic views by my old associates of the Mistery, who were well aware of how damaging in 1940 the charge could be, I took the opportunity, when later on Detective Mann paid me a friendly visit, to lay a strange document before him. It consisted of a letter addressed to me in 1918 by the very man, the head of the English Mistery, whom in 1940 I suspected of having instigated the conspiracy against me, and it contained his severe rebuke to me for having depicted with too much fairness and favor the Jewish character of Dr. Melhado in my first novel, *Mansel Fellowes*.¹⁵

Mann asked me why on earth I had not brought this letter to Scotland Yard in October 1940. I explained that I had only recently turned it up among my papers, otherwise I should certainly have done so. However, I think Mann must have reported the matter to his superiors, and the Mistery testimony must have suffered accordingly.

INTERNAL EXILE

My education, though not yet finished, was nearing completion. I had yet a long, new and grueling experience to undergo, and that was my life as a smallholder in the heart of rural Suffolk from April 1941 to June 1959. It was a valuable experience for a townsman born and bred like myself and I do not regret it. For during those eighteen years, although the work was hard, the life was wholesome, and it enabled my wife and me to enjoy the great luxury of eating fruit and vegetables fresh from the garden and of supplying all our needs in milk, butter, cream, and eggs.

But all this, together with many other experiences of rural life is

¹⁴ The point is explained in "Transform Society's Values," my contribution to *Gentile and Jew: A Symposium on the Future of the Jewish People*, edited by Chaim Newman (London: Alliance Press, 1945), 165–85.

¹⁵ Anthony M. Ludovici, *Mansel Fellowes* (London: Grant Richards, 1918).

related in my book, *The English Countryside*,¹⁶ so that I need not dwell any longer on our life at The Homestead, Rishangles, and on all we learned and did there. Suffice it to say that, although in those eighteen years of comparative exile I never obtained many lessons from my grandmother in the art of sucking eggs, I was certainly able in the end to give her one or two useful hints about the performance of the operation.

*Anthony Mario Ludovici (1882–1971) authored nearly forty books, including eight novels, and hundreds of articles, essays, and reviews setting forth his views on metaphysics, religion, ethics, politics, economics, the sexes, health, eugenics, art, modern culture, and current events. An excellent sampling of his writings is **The Lost Philosopher: The Best of Anthony M. Ludovici**, ed. John V. Day (Berkeley, Cal.: Educational Translation & Scholarship Foundation, 2003). See also Day's online archive of Ludovici's writings: www.anthonymyludovici.com.*

¹⁶ Although Ludovici left money in his last will for *The English Countryside* to be published after his death, along with these *Confessions*, the book has never appeared in print. Typescripts of these two works are held by the Special Collections Division of Edinburgh University Library – JVD.