

does not necessarily presage the end of warfare. The collective mentality of nations—the mentality which reasonable adults have to adopt, when making important decisions in the field of international politics—is that of a delinquent boy of fourteen, at once cunning and childish, malevolent and silly, maniacally egotistical, touchy and acquisitive, and at the same time ludicrously boastful and vain. When the issues involved are of no great weight, the adults in control of a nation's policy are permitted, by the rules of the curious game they are playing, to behave like adults. But as soon as important economic interests or national prestige is involved, this grown-up Jekyll retires and his place is taken by an adolescent Hyde, whose ethical standards are those of a boy gangster and whose *Weltanschauung* seems to have been formed by a study of Houston Stewart Chamberlain and the more sanguinary comic strips. And let us remember that this same delinquent boy who, concealed in the middle-aged body of a politician, decrees that millions shall do and suffer the utmost in scientifically organized malice, resides within us all, ready and waiting, whenever some crisis makes us forget our surface rationality and idealism, to come out into the open. To this boy gangster in our midst, the natural reaction to the atom bomb is not an impulse to put an end to war by getting rid of its causes in nationalism, economic rivalry and the craving for power. Rather it is an impulse to make use of the new powers provided by science for the purpose of establishing world dominion for his particular gang. It is a highly significant fact that people love to talk about a war to end war, or a war to preserve democracy; they do not love to talk about peace to end war, or self-governing democracy (which is the polar antithesis of militarism) to preserve democracy. Like the adult, with whom he is associated, the nationalistic boy-gangster

is frightened of what atomic power may do to him and his world. Nevertheless he continues to think in terms of gang rivalry and his own supremacy. "If," he argues, "our gang can get its scientists to perfect the rocket and the atom bomb, if it can get its manufacturers to produce enough plutonium and uranium 235, to build enough launching ramps and robot planes and V2's, then all that need be done is to press a few buttons and bang! the war to end war will be over, and I shall be the boss of the whole planet." Because of the boy gangster in every Foreign Office, every war department and every private home, we may expect that, in the years immediately ahead of us all the (technologically speaking) advanced nations will spend vast sums upon armament research and the manufacture of new weapons capable of more indiscriminate destruction at ever greater distances. This research will be secret—an affair of "Manhattan Projects" and "Tube Alloys"—and much of the manufacture will be carried on at the bottom of mines and caverns. And at some moment—unless, by a miracle, Jekyll should contrive to get the upper hand—the temptation to press those buttons will become irresistible; the juvenile delinquent in some Ministry for Foreign Affairs will call up his colleague at the Ministry of National Defense and bang! the war to make the world yet safer for delinquency will have begun.

In discussing the possibility of abolishing war, another important point to be remembered is that the preparation for war and sometimes even war itself are things which a highly centralized government finds very useful for its own totalitarian purposes. Thus, peacetime conscription is always justified on the ground that it constitutes an insurance against war, or at least against defeat in war. In actual fact, of course, nations which have adopted peacetime conscription have fought just as many wars as