

Hate Wins Few Victories

THE strength of America's unexpended balance of common sense was impressively demonstrated by the wave of indifference which greeted the recent effort of a small group of super-duper-patriots to make the rest of us feel guilty for not hating the enemy enough. More hate, it was urged, was needed if we were to win the war. The idea seemed to be that hate was not a primary emotion, but an attitude of mind which could be adopted after a season of intellectual deliberation. The spectacle of a nation solemnly asking itself, "Let's see, are we hating hard enough?" was too grotesque to be taken seriously.

Undoubtedly, there are plenty of reasons to hate our enemies. The people in the occupied countries of Europe who live under the Nazi terror, which has murdered more than 3,000,000 innocent people, can be relied on to hate their oppressors. Those who know what the Japanese have done to captured soldiers and civilians could not exclude hate from their hearts if they wanted to.

But this has not much to do with winning the war, and certainly nothing at all to do with making the peace. In the last war, for example, the German war effort was distinguished by a highly professionalized hate campaign. There was a "Hymn of Hate" and the slogan "Gott Strafe England!" designed to stimulate the population to struggle harder. Whether they did or not does not make much difference, because the war was won by the Allies, whose ideas of the enemy were derived from "The Better 'Ole" and Ellison Hoover's cartoons. There were, to be sure, atrocity stories, most of them of dubious authenticity, but the mood of the Allied peoples responded far more to Woodrow Wilson's interpretation of the war as a crusade in behalf of democracy for friend and foe alike.

Unfortunately, at the Versailles peace table considerable hate got into the deliberations, and that hatred and humiliation, probably more than the peace terms themselves, account for the rise of Hitler and the Nazis. But even Hitler got the point of the futility of hate as a force for winning wars. All his early campaigns were conducted with the semblance of high regard for the peoples of the conquered countries who were represented as the victims of stupid warmongering leaders. German soldiers took Denmark and Norway with their bands playing festive music. In France and Belgium they distributed chocolate to the children and were meticulously polite to the civilians. Of course, the Nazis adopted more brutal methods when the conquered peoples refused to be hoodwinked, but Hitler's early conduct reveals his understanding that hate was not enough. In Russia the Nazis from the first adopted ruthlessness, thereby arousing in the Russians the fanatical zeal which has proved Hitler's undoing.

It seems to us that the American people deserve a lot of credit for keeping their part in the war with the least possible expenditure of futile emotion. If the Japanese or the Germans were in control of our states and cities, we should hate enough to satisfy anybody, but it is hardly likely that we should win the war any sooner on that account. War is a grim and unpleasant business, and hate blazes up inevitably before it is over. But the words of Mme. Chiang Kai-shek, whose country has ample cause for bitterness, that "recrimination and hatred will lead us nowhere" are a telling rebuke to those who urge hate, even synthetic hate, as a national policy.