The Bond that Must Never be Broken

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> *. . . he is an ex-corporal of the Linz Regiment, which opposed my Regiment under Messines Hill on Christmas Day, 1914. We made a truce then, which must never be broken.*
>
> Henry Williamson speaking of Adolf Hitler[1]

By the time the Nazi party under Adolf Hitler came to power in the early nineteen thirties, there was already considerable sympathy for the German nation. The Great War was now fifteen years away and many in Britain had come to see Versailles as an unjust peace. They believed the French had been too harsh, with their great desire for revenge. This sympathy covered the whole of the political spectrum in this country — left wingers and liberals, which included such well known figures as Lloyd George, had been denouncing the Treaty of Versailles and were expressing their admiration for the 'new' Germany under Hitler, while those on the right, who had perhaps always seen Germany as an ally, saw what the conditions of peace were doing to this once great nation. Thus with the appearance of the Nazi Party, and particularly Hitler, these sympathies were heightened greatly and contact with the Germans increased considerably. In England numerous pro-German bodies were formed; the 'Anglo-German Fellowship Group' and the 'Link' are but two examples. Individuals also travelled to either see the effect of the Nazis' policies or even were able to have an audience with Hitler themselves. For instance, Lloyd George travelled to Germany in the 1930s and met Hitler. They expressed great mutual respect and Hitler saw the former Prime Minister as the 'man who had won the war'. However, predominant in all forms of contact with Nazi Germany in the 1930s was that enacted by British ex-servicemen. For the difference, it was perceived, with the Nazi government from that of any other in Europe was that the majority of those who now controlled the country were themselves ex-servicemen who had fought in the Great War. Hitler had served as a Corporal in a Bavarian Regiment, winning the Iron Cross and was gassed in 1918.[2] Goering was a well known air ace and almost all of the others, including Hess, were veterans of the Western or Eastern Fronts. This was a significant factor, for those in England who had fought in the War often held their former enemy in higher esteem than the civilians they had been fighting for. The divide between ex-soldier and civilian in British society was a great one. Thus those who had held high hopes of their generation making a new world — the infamous 'land fit for heroes' — when the war was over now looked to Germany as a possible realisation of that dream. Perhaps the most well known of these in this country, apart from Oswald Mosley, was the author Henry Williamson and I therefore propose to examine the reasons behind his great support for Hitler and the Nazi Regime, and also his involvement with T.E. Lawrence and Mosley and the British Union of Fascists. The support he gave to such causes never wavered because ". . . his conscience would not let him alone . . . to do nothing would be a betrayal"[3] and like many others not only a betrayal of themselves but of their comrades who had died in the trenches. Williamson's work will then be compared with his contemporaries, other ex-servicemen, to establish whether he was a maverick figure or in fact typical of his generation.

"I salute the great man across the Rhine, whose life symbol is the happy child."[4]

Henry Williamson's pro-German sympathies can clearly be dated. On 25th December 1914, his regiment took part in the now well known Christmas Truce of that year and

with his fellow soldiers of the London Rifle Brigade, Henry met the 'enemy' for the first time in his life. Men of both sides came out into No Man's Land, shook hands and exchanged gifts, food or souvenirs. This event perhaps changed Williamson more than any other during the war. He wrote about the Truce on numerous occasions and later recalled, "Discussing the word Freiheit with some German soldiers, I learned, to my startled dismay and then happiness, that they believed they were fighting for the same causes and ideals as we were. It was a great mistake, that was clear to me: and if only the people in England could learn what I had learned . . . the war could not possibly continue."[5] It was clearly a shock to the young Williamson. Here was the enemy and in reality they were no different from himself and his comrades. It was the foundation of a great respect and admiration for the German soldier; ". . . the German troops were brave men, who believed in the righteousness of their cause, in the same way as ourselves."[6] Indeed, when taunted about his sympathies towards the German nation in the 1930s he retorts "If spirit is reality, and body the illusion, then certainly I was often among my brave friends in feld grau."[7] Henry became almost obsessed with this event and later entertained the idea that he had met Hitler in No Man's Land on that day. This seems historically unlikely. Adolf Hitler's regiment, the 8th Bavarian, was indeed in Flanders on Xmas Day 1914 but he took little part in the truce, preferring to stay in his own trench.

The war ended. It was a time of great promise for Williamson and his generation. They had fought the good fight, won, and in return politicians now talked of 'homes fit for heroes' upon their return to civilian life. Yet this return held nothing but empty promises. The 'homes fit for heroes' were never built and the men who had broken the Hindenberg Line or crossed the Canal du Nord, now found themselves on the poverty line, with no job. Williamson escaped from London, to the West Country, and sought sanctuary in his memories of the war. He felt the old order, in both England and Germany, had let the men who had fought in the Great War down, for when he first visited Germany in the 1920s he remarked "It was terrible."[8] His comrades on both sides of the Rhine had been betrayed.

Considering this image he had of Germany in the 1920s, it is not surprising that a new Government, in the form of Hitler and the Nazis, interested him. Indeed, for now here was a new regime made up, he believed, of men who had fought in the trenches. He remarked ". . . surely Hitler wants to be friends with us? Like all other ex-servicemen who fought in Flanders."[9] For the ex-servicemen angle was the key to the whole problem, Williamson thought. As long as one had such men in power in Germany, there would never be another war; such men would not want to inflict their own terrible experiences in the First War on another generation. Europe would be safe in the hands of the 'front-line men', for Hitler was ". . . a phoenix from the chaos of the battlefields, a messiah."[10] Indeed, a messiah for he ". . . had perceived the root-causes of war in the unfulfilled human eye and was striving to alter this by creating a new, truly human world."[11] Thus when Williamson made a second journey to Germany in 1934, he was greatly impressed. This visit was later described by Williamson,

> *There were no beggars in the streets. There was work for all who applied for it. Nine million unemployed had found work.*[12]

In *A Chronicle of Ancient Sunlight*, his autobiographical hero, Phillip Maddison, travelled round Germany and saw ". . . faces which looked to be breathing extra-oxygen: people free from mental fear."[13] It was as if the nation had been reborn and that the German people were no longer as martial as they had been in pre-1914 days. Again, it related

to the 'old soldier' or 'ancien combattent' theme. Maddison meets a young Nazi Party member, Martin, who tells him, "You are an ex-serviceman. Good! You, like our Führer, are a phoenix from the flame and steel of those days!"[14] And later he talks to an S.A. man who remarks to Maddison ". . . we are the same sort of people. That last war was a terrible mistake, but we feel we have learnt from it." And, when asked if there would be another war, the S.A. man replied "Our Führer will never make war. Would you ever make war? You, a front-line soldier?"[15] To Williamson, it convinced him that everything he had believed in, hoped for, in Germany was now nearing realisation through the 'Great man across the Rhine', as he called Hitler, who had reconstructed his country from the rubble of Versailles and who would never wage war in Europe intentionally. Indeed, he quotes Hitler, saying "Whoever lights the torch of war in Europe can hope for nothing but chaos. . ."[16] With what he saw as ". . . almost universal affection and even love for Hitler,"[17] it seemed as if there was much to learn from Germany, much England herself might take note of.

Yet what of Williamson's beliefs when the Second Great War came around in 1939? He still, even then, supported, believed in, Hitler and the ideal of old comrades, working together for peace. But the British Government wasn't the Nazi one and the opinions of ex-servicemen had been stifled in the post-war world. Williamson realised that a war in Europe was imminent but when it came in 1939, Maddison/Williamson remarked,

> *It's a phony war, Hitler won't fight, why should he? He's not just a bloody fool with a Charlie Chaplin moustache as the cheap newspapers make out. He knows if he sits still and builds up his trade in Europe . . . our financial system will just fall to pieces.*[18]

Furthermore, even at such a late stage, Williamson ". . . still could not believe that such a regime was inherently evil."[19] And that "if it continues like this, the only hope for peace is to withdraw from the war, and let Germany and the barter system consolidate a self-sufficient central Europe, with a raised standard for all."[20] However, then came Blitzkrieg and the whole evil, destructive, power of another war was unleashed on the people of Europe. Maddison mourned "Ypres — Loos — Somme — Passchendaele — and now this —."[21]

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> *To me he was and is the personification of honour, which is clear sight, and the courage to maintain it.*[22]

Like Williamson, T.E. Lawrence had served in the Great War. Commissioned a Second Lieutenant, he served in Palestine, rising to the rank of Colonel and achieving much recognition as 'Lawrence of Arabia'. Such recognition he neither liked nor enjoyed; after the war he became almost a living legend, and there was wild speculation about him being a 'super-spy'. To escape from it all he joined the Royal Air Force as an uncommissioned Aircraftsman, where, as Williamson later remarked, he ". . . sought peace in the ranks . . . striving to become normal, that is content."[23] However, even then he was developing his political ideas; ". . . an undercurrent of his mind was running on the problems of peace among nations . . . seeking for the truthful way to continue rigid understanding."[24] He knew that at that stage he had to remain in the ranks of the Royal Air Force, for ". . . he must become an ordinary man in order to be the idea of an ordinary man."[25]

Williamson first met Lawrence after the publication of *Tarka the Otter* in 1928. He had received a long letter from Lawrence relating what he thought of the book and thus

Williamson had asked him to come up from Plymouth (where he was stationed) to Georgeham, for a meal. Even before they had met Williamson wrote in anticipation, "I knew we saw many things alike. Perhaps he was the friend I had always longed for."[26] Their correspondence had reinforced this belief for Lawrence had written to Williamson remarking that he ". . . thought I was a better writer than himself: whilst I knew myself for a pretty poor specimen compared with himself, a world famous man."[27] Therefore both had much to live up to on this first meeting; Williamson was nervous but found solace in the encouraging Lawrence, "Never before and never since have I felt so free from myself . . . happiness beyond the consciousness of happiness . . . this man understood a thought before it was uttered."[28]

Yet what of Lawrence's politics and how did they fit in with what Williamson himself believed? The answer to the former is a difficult one, as Lawrence's family appears to have tried to disassociate T.E. Lawrence from any right wing/pseudo-fascist connections he may once have had. For example, none of the collections of letters, published after his death, have any material in them relating to this issue and correspondence with Williamson is conspicuous by its absence. Thus one has to rely largely on what others have written about Lawrence, and in fact information comes chiefly from Williamson himself. There are, of course, problems in this and as Griffiths points out, ". . . it is possible that Lawrence shared Williamson's views, and even possible that he already held them independently."[29] And after his death it may even be the case that "Williamson . . . was projecting on to him [Lawrence] all that he had hoped he would stand for."[30] However, Griffiths does admit that the Williamson/Lawrence friendship was ". . . one of the most amazing stories of this period."[31] The main source comes from Williamson's article in the *Anglo-German Review* of January 1937. He informs us that Lawrence had been considering a scheme for the "pacification of Europe." It becomes apparent that he had pro-German sympathies and saw much to praise in the new Nazi Regime:

> *. . . he saw how Adolf Hitler was gradually realising and reaffirming the aspirations of the ordinary man in Germany, and so gradually converting a nation in the image of himself.*[32]

Williamson draws parallels between Lawrence and Hitler; both were ". . . vegetarian, neither drinking nor smoking, giving the dividends from his [Hitler's] one book to the German ex-serviceman's fund, owning nothing except a small retreat in the mountains — the equivalent of Lawrence's own cottage on Egdon Hill."[33] Furthermore, Lawrence's admiration of the Führer and the Nazis increased when he,

> *. . . read the speeches of Hitler, and was confirmed in his divination. A man who had served in the ranks of the infantry, been wounded, and blinded by mustard gas, a man who loved Beethoven and lived only for the resurrection of his country's happiness — a nation's honour — a man who was the ideal of youth, was one who not only knew the truth, but could speak it and convey it to the minds of others. He was the corner-stone for the new, the realistic pacification of Europe."*[34]

Lawrence planned to put over the German viewpoint to the British people through ex-servicemen. For after all, was it not the case that "The English ex-serviceman respected the German ex-serviceman; and the German ex-servicemen were in power in Germany?"[35] Lawrence therefore decided to hold a large meeting of British ex-servicemen in the Albert Hall, followed by a radio broadcast and also to exploit his 'fame'

to get maximum publicity and media coverage, to correct the way the British press has "misrepresented Hitler the new Germany."[36] Williamson wrote to Lawrence suggesting a meeting. It was as he was returning from sending a confirmatory telegram that Lawrence had his fatal accident, crashing his motorcycle on a road in Dorset, dying a few days afterwards.

There is a theory that if Lawrence had lived he could have become some sort of right wing/fascist leader of Britain. Indeed, Williamson called him ". . . our nearest approach to Hitler."[37] And Hamilton informs us that ". . . the British Fascists had tried to get hold of him but he refused to help them: only if they came to power, he added, would he agree to be 'dictator' of the press for a fortnight."[38] Williamson may well have believed that ". . . had he lived, Lawrence could have confirmed the inner hopes of every ex-serviceman in Europe,"[39] though whether, in the cold reality of European politics of that time, this meant anything is another matter and as Griffiths concludes, the Williamson/Lawrence episode shows ". . . at its extreme, the view that all one had to do was put 'front-line men' into contact with 'front-line men' for all misunderstandings to be cleared up."[40]

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'To a Greater Britain!' cried Phillip.

Oswald Mosley had, like Williamson, served as a subaltern on the Western Front. Initially joining the Royal Flying Corps, with whom he served in France in 1914, after an accident he transferred to a Cavalry Regiment and saw limited service in the trenches on the Loos Battlefield. He stood for parliament as a socialist candidate in 1926, was elected but resigned in 1930, later forming the British Union of Fascists.[42] The BUF was well organised and numerous rallies and speeches were held. Mosley played heavily on the 'ancien combattent' aspect, calling for old comrades to unite and remarked at one speech, when he was being shouted down by hecklers in the crowd, "I fought in France for Great Britain so that rats like you might live."[43] Such sentiments attracted Williamson, and he became involved with Mosley and the British Union of Fascists in the late 1930s. Diana Mosley observed many years later that Williamson was "intensely loyal to my husband,"[44] and indeed he was. In the post-World War Two Britain when it was not popular to discuss such matters, Williamson's enthusiasm and support for Mosley was unflinching, and even as late 1966 he felt no compunction in dedicating his novel *A Solitary War* to "Oswald and Diana Mosley in friendship".[45] Yet where did Mosley's and Williamson's politics and ideals coincide and what aspects of the British Union of Fascists attracted Williamson?

Mosley appears in Williamson's fifteen novel sequence *A Chronicle of Ancient Sunlight* as the character 'Sir Hereward Birkin', of the Imperial Socialist Party. The hero, Phillip Maddison, had read much about him and even had records of Birkin's speeches, which he listened to often. He first meets him in the late 1930s and we are told that "Birkin gave Phillip an immediate impression of great and controlled strength."[46] The importance Birkin had attached to ex-servicemen had impressed Phillip and he remembered Birkin's resignation speech,

> *I believe that all the hopes of all the soldiers of our nation who lived for a better world and died on the battlefields of the Great War — on the rolling downlands of the Aisne and the Somme — upon the vast and featureless crater-zones of Flanders — in the March retreat across the wastelands of nineteen sixteen — in the last Summer-time advances to the Hindenberg Line, which they finally breached and led the way to victory, leaving nearly*

a million dead on these and other battlefields — dying in the hope, in the belief of a better life for their children — and the years drift by, and those children are on the dole.[47]

Furthermore, war profiteers would be treated with the contempt they deserved, no more Knighthoods for them, for their so-called valuable 'services' while ''. . . denying the workless ex-soldiers who had broken the Hindenberg Line and now were breaking their hearts on the dole.''[48] Maddison/Williamson was attracted by such rhetoric, for he had long ago convinced himself that the solution to many, if not all, the problems in Europe was greater contact and co-operation between 'front-line men'. In Germany such men ran the Government but in England one only had men like Birkin/Mosley ''. . . shouting his head off in the wilderness, preaching to the wind.''[49] However, Birkin saw the solution of much of Britain's problems through using the Empire to its full potential. He says that when the Imperial Socialist Party (BUF) came to power, ''. . . the first thing we shall do is to forbid the export of British capital abroad. Then we shall command the means, which is the finance, to develop our great inheritance [The Empire].''[50] Then one could deal with the terrible problem of unemployment for ''Man does not live by bread alone: But starving millions first must have bread.''[51] Such ideas would have been attractive to a depressed nation but Williamson believed the BUF never got a fair hearing or were correctly represented in the popular press. Indeed, Birkin remarks that ''. . . our opponents who control the money power . . . employ every device to discredit us as a party of thugs and crooks.''[52] British Union of Fascists meetings were marked by their violence and Mosley and his followers, when they openly supported the new Germany and the Nazis, were soon labelled anti-semitic. However, Birkin argues otherwise; ''We are not against Jews because they are Jews. We know many Jews are men of high achievement, and loyal to this country.''[53] Furthermore, he remarks that ''. . . we all know that many Jews fought for Britain and Empire in the Great War. How can we, ex-servicemen ourselves, be against our old comrades-in-arms?''[54] Those Jews who acted in no way different from any other citizen had nothing to fear, there was to be no persecution. However, Birkin warned that those ''. . . who refuse to observe these requirements will be treated exactly as other enemies of the people.''[55] At this stage Birkin envisaged a collapse of the Labour Government, the unemployed would take to the streets in a revolution, the communists would attempt to seize power and then, and only then, would the British Union of Fascists step in and take over. Birkin states, in a more ominous tone, ''. . . that is what we are organised for.''[56]

However, by the late 1930s a second war is almost inevitable. Birkin was by now being heavily criticised; one character in *A Chronicle of Ancient Sunlight* remarks, ''Birkin was born with a silver spoon in his mouth and yet he pretends to be the friend of the working man,'' but Phillip replies, ''He is the friend of the working man . . . surely? His generation led them in battle, after all.''[57] Yet, all agreed that his generation had been betrayed in the post-war world and that by 1939, the policies, hopes and aspirations of his party, the British Union of Fascists, had failed, ''. . . because the survivors of the war had no power to overcome 'the hard-faced parliament' of the early twenties.''[58] Phillip remarks that what hope had Birkin ''. . . against the clamours of the golden giants?''[59] However, one of the characters raises the interesting point, when speaking to Phillip, that ''Birkin isn't Hitler. Don't you see that all these ideas spring from the death of your generation in the Great War?''[60]. The political situation, the mood of the people, had not created a situation whereby the British Union of Fascists could have come to power. In many ways, Birkin/Mosley had alienated himself by resigning from parliament in 1930, for it had clearly been difficult to obtain accurate press reportage after that, and being merely a 'movement' rather than a real 'party' (although many BUF members

would argue otherwise), the newspapers could easily ignore BUF meetings. Furthermore, associations with Nazi Germany and Fascist Italy had brought down the British Union of Fascists in many people's opinion. The wearing of a uniform had frightened off many intellectuals and caused others to leave even, and attacks on Jews, despite what Mosley might have said, were frequent and brutal. Despite all this Williamson still chose to support Mosley and the British Union of Fascists, and being the idealist he clearly was, perhaps tried to turn a blind eye to such matters, happy in the belief that it was the minority who conducted themselves in such a way. For the clear and obvious difference between Williamson and Mosley was the whole question of idealism. Henry could never have addressed BUF rallies, the way Mosley did, for as Farson puts it, "Henry . . . would never have dared to be so presumptuous."[61] Similarly, Mosley's attachment to the war and old comrades was much more superficial and as his wife Diana later said, "My husband had no such romantic feelings";[62] romantic feelings about dead friends, men who had fought with you in the trenches, even such feelings about the actual places where these battles had been fought — such sentiments remained with Williamson all his life whereas Mosley, the cold, realistic, politician used them to attract ex-servicemen to the British Union of Fascists. However, in the minds of the popular press, and thus perhaps the people, both have been tarred with the same brush. Mosley was a fascist, so Williamson must have been one as well. Accordingly, after the fall of France, both were arrested as suspected traitors under Regulation 18b. Mosley, with numerous other members of the BUF, spent several years in prison. Williamson was immediately released when it was realised that he was nothing but an idealistic nature writer, for as Mosley later said, he would ". . . take it all so seriously."[63]

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In many ways, all this would fade into nothing if Williamson was alone in his ideals. If he had just been, as has been said, an idealistic nature writer, obsessed with the Great War, who played around with fascism simply as an intellectual exercise. Although perhaps there is some truth here, it is far too simplistic a view. For Henry was not the only ex-serviceman to have sympathies with Nazi Germany, or even Germany in general. Although the *Official History of the British Legion*[64] attempts to play the issue down, clear pro-German bodies existed within it. Perhaps the best example is when the Prince of Wales addressed a huge meeting of the British Legion in 1935. He remarked,

> *I feel that there could be no more suitable body or organisation of men to stretch forth the hand of friendship to the Germans than we ex-servicemen.*[65]

Such sentiments were greeted with much applause, although the Prince was summoned next day by his father, wanting to know why his son had expressed views that were then contrary to the policies of the British Government of the day. Elsewhere, others noticed an increasing interest and contact with Germany amongst many ex-servicemen's organisations. Lord Rochdale, a Liberal MP prior to 1914 who had served as a Lieutenant-Colonel in the Lancashire Fusiliers, said in the *Anglo-German Review* that he had ". . . never met an ex-serviceman who took part in the great war who has anything but friendly feelings for the German ex-serviceman."[66] Similarly, Lieutenant-Colonel Alfred Hacking reported in a letter to *The Times* in February 1936 that, "There is, I find, a universal respect for a very gallant ex-enemy."[67] More well known people, like Williamson, also expressed admiration for the new Germany. Bruce Bairnsfather, the by then famous creator of the 'Old Bill' cartoons, who had served as a subaltern on the Western Front in 1914 and 1915,

wrote in an article entitled 'Old Bill Would Be Delighted' in the *Anglo-German Review*,

> *To my mind there is so much for England to admire, and even envy about the Germany of today . . . Above all, Europe has in Germany the most vigorous champion against the inroads of Bolshevism.*

Furthermore, he examines the 'ancien combattent' aspect and concludes,

> *It occurred to me . . . what a mistake it was for England and Germany to have found themselves angled in such a row with each other.*[68]

The journalist F.D. Bone summed the whole attitude up when he remarked that "Thomas Atkins and Fritz have no wish to point their rifles at each other again."[69]

Thus it is clear that Williamson was certainly not alone in his beliefs. One could add to the list A.K. Chesterton, J.F.C. Fuller and Graham Seaton Hutchison,[70] all veterans of the Great War and all involved with the British Union of Fascists or similar right-wing bodies. However, in many ways Williamson differs in that his views never changed, his loyalty to the BUF and Mosley never diminished. Whereas others, like Bairnsfather, soon changed their views when it became clear that to hold such views was rather unpopular. Bairnsfather, in contrast to that quoted above, writes in his memoirs some years later that Hitler was,

> *. . . a terrible nuisance . . . with an unnecessarily exaggerated patriotic ambition . . . a fanatic from birth.*[71]

Thus, in this sense, Williamson was indeed a maverick. He stuck to his convictions and paid the price, intellectual isolation during the war years and never any official recognition of his work as an outstanding author of the twentieth century.

As Ruth Tomalin remarks, historical hindsight gives Henry's ideas ". . . a ring of sheer folly."[72] Folly indeed, but the key to the whole issue of pro-German attitudes, from Williamson and his contemporaries, clearly emerges — the idea of 'old comrades', of 'front-line men' curing all the ills of a depressed post-Great War world. To a certain extent, such contacts would indeed have been of value in aiding and securing peace in Europe but they could not have solved the situation alone. It was naive to think otherwise. Hitler wanted to encourage *any* form of contact between his country and others in Europe, especially Britain whom he saw as a nation sympathetic to the Germans, despite the Great War. Thus for Hitler, the fact that there was such a strong pro-German feeling among ex-servicemen in Britain was a political god-send, for Hitler himself was an ex-serviceman. The Nazi press machine exploited this all they could and those ex-servicemen who visited Germany in the 1930s were really nothing but pawns in a huge political game. This must also include those like Williamson, and indeed others like Bairnsfather, who simply wrote about a better Germany; for they were merely an extension of the German press machine, doing their job for them and at no cost, monetarily or politically. There was no need to inject propaganda when such men existed.

So how does one classify Henry Williamson, 'patriot' or 'traitor'? In many people's eyes he is sadly the latter. Peter Robins remarks even as recently as 1984 that, ". . . to this day the word traitor is formed on the lips of most whenever Mosley or Williamson are mentioned."[73] Yet Farson tells us that Henry was, ". . . one of the most fiercely patriotic men I have known. But his patriotism was frequently misunderstood."[74] For Farson, Williamson was ". . . guilty only of sincere belief," but he admits he was

". . . politically naive."[75] Furthermore, E.W. Martin thinks that

> *. . . writers who followed their own vision, true or false, would always be at odds with those who had no vision.*[76]

For Williamson all these visions stemmed from one thing — his experiences in the trenches of the Great War. For as Diana Mosley had remarked, the war had ". . . crippled him,"[77] but if he had learnt one thing, that was the value of comradeship. In a post-war world which confused him, he tried to extend that ethic to society and politics but it did not work. It was a fallacy to think that just because the German government was run by ex-servicemen like himself, that there would be no more war. In any case this was not true, as by the mid-1930s several members of the British Cabinet had served with distinction as front-line soldiers in the Great War.[78] In simple terms, the whole concept of 'old comrades', 'ancien combattent', was a myth, a myth exploited by the Nazis. The 'bond that never must be broken' never really existed, except in the imagination of a minority of men deeply affected by a war which destroyed their souls, if not their bodies. Eric Hiscock was right when he said Williamson was,

> *. . . an odd-ball. Always, like Byron, saying 'I want a hero'. He found him in T.E. Lawrence, then Hitler and Mosley. The 1914-18 War scarred his soul . . . Flanders was no place to be at seventeen.*[79]

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NOTES

1. Williamson, H. *Lucifer Before Sunrise* (London 1967)
2. For further details on Hitler's early life see, for example, Bullock, A. *Hitler: A Study in Tyranny* (London 1952)
3. Tomalin, R. 'Patriot's Progress' in *Henry Williamson: A Symposium* (Cornwall 1980)
4. Williamson, H. foreword to *The Flax of Dream* (London 1936)
5. Williamson, H. *The Children of Shallowford* (London 1936)
6. Williamson, H. *A Solitary War* (London 1966)
7. Williamson, ibid.
8. Williamson, H. quoted in Farson, D. *Henry Williamson: A Portrait* (London 1982)
9. Williamson, H. *The Phoenix Generation* (London 1965)
10. Williamson, ibid.
11. Williamson, ibid.
12. Williamson, ibid.
13. Williamson, ibid.
14. Williamson, ibid.
15. Williamson, ibid.
16. Williamson, H. *Lucifer Before Sunrose* (London 1967)
17. Williamson, H. *The Phoenix Generation* op cit.
18. Williamson, H. *A Solitary War* op cit.
19. Farson, D. op cit.
20. Williamson, H. *A Solitary War* op cit.
21. Williamson, ibid.
22. Williamson, H. in *T.E. Lawrence By His Friends* ed. A.W. Lawrence (London 1937)
23. Williamson, H. 'Lawrence of Arabia and Germany' in *Anglo-German Review* January 1937
24. Williamson, ibid.
25. Williamson, ibid.
26. Williamson, H. in *T.E. Lawrence By His Friends* op cit.
27. Williamson, ibid.
28. Williamson, ibid.
29. Griffiths, R. *Fellow Travellers of the Right* (London 1980)
30. Griffiths, ibid.
31. Griffiths, ibid.

32. Williamson, in *Anglo-German Review* op cit.
33. Williamson, ibid. 34. Williamson, ibid. 35. Williamson, ibid.
36. Williamson, H. quoted in Griffiths op cit.
37. Williamson, H. *Goodbye West Country* (London 1937)
38. Hamilton, A. *The Appeal of Fascism* (London 1971)
39. Williamson in *Anglo-German Review* op cit. 40. Griffiths op cit.
41. Williamson, H. *The Phoenix Generation* (London 1965)
42. Further details of Mosley's life, Skidelsky, R. *Oswald Mosley* (London 1975) and Mosley's own *My Life* (London 1968) are useful.
43. Mosley, O. quoted in Farson, D. *Henry Williamson: A Portrait* (London 1982)
44. Mosley, D. 'A Tribute To Henry Williamson' in *Henry Williamson: A Symposium* (Cornwall 1980)
45. Dedication in Williamson, H. *A Solitary War* (London 1966)
46. Williamson *The Phoenix Generation* op cit.
47. Williamson, ibid. 48. Williamson, ibid.
49. Williamson *A Solitary War* op cit.
50. Williamson *The Phoenix Generation* op cit.
51. Williamson, ibid. 52. Williamson, ibid.
53. Williamson, ibid. 54. Williamson, ibid.
55. Williamson, ibid. 56. Williamson, ibid.
57. Williamson, ibid. 58. Williamson, *A Solitary War* op cit.
59. Williamson, ibid. 60. Williamson, ibid.
61. Farson op cit. 62. Mosley, O. op cit.
63. Mosley, O. quoted in Farson, D. 'Recognising Henry Williamson' in *Daily Telegraph Magazine* February 1975
64. Wootton, G. *The Official History of the British Legion* (London 1956)
65. Quoted in Griffiths, F. *Fellow Travellers of the Right* (London 1980) 66. ibid.
67. *The Times* 24th March 1936
68. Bairnsfather, B. 'Old Bill Would Be Delighted' in *Anglo-German Review* November 1936.
69. Quoted in Griffiths op cit.
70. Chesterton and Fuller were well known members of the BUF. See, for example, Chesterton's *Oswald Mosley: Portrait of a Leader* (London, 1937), Fuller's *Memoirs of an UnconventionalSoldier* (London 1936) and Hutchison's *Challenge* (London 1935) or *Truth: The Evidence in the Case* (London 1939)
71. Bairnsfather, B. *Wide Canvas* (London 1939)
72. Tomalin, R,. 'Patriot's Progress' in *Henry Williamson: A Symposium* (Cornwall 1980)
73. Robins, P.K. 'Henry Williamson and the BUF' in *Henry Williamson Society Journal* number 10 October 1984.
74. Farson, D. *Henry Williamson: A Portrait* (London 1982) 75. Farson, ibid.
76. Martin, E.W. 'Henry Williamson: The Power of the Dead' in *Henry Williamson: A Symposium* op cit.
77. Mosley, D. 'A Tribute to Henry Williamson' in *Henry Williamson: A Symposium* op cit.
78. For example, the British Cabinet in December 1935 contained one man who had won the Distinguished Service Order and five who had been awarded the Military Cross, for bravery in the Great War. Among these was Anthony Eden who had served with the 21st King's Royal Rifle Corps for most of the war. Several other members of the Cabinet had also served as officers.
79. Hiscock, E. quoted in Farson op cit.