

# GERMANY AND THE RHINELAND

A RECORD OF THE PROCEEDINGS OF THREE MEETINGS  
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# GERMANY AND THE RHINELAND<sup>(1)</sup>

By THE HON. HAROLD NICOLSON, C.M.G., M.P.

It is not my intention to make any ponderous or lengthy address. I have no desire to put across any single interpretation or theory of the present crisis. All I want to do is to suggest certain apparent consequences of Herr Hitler's action, and to leave it open to others to suggest other aspects of the subject, and other interpretations of what has occurred.

At the outset I must admit that by using the words 'certain consequences' I am embarking at once upon the conjectural. Far be it from me to deny that it is the unaccountable in human, and above all, in international affairs which is determinant, and not the accountable. I am perfectly aware that in the affairs of the world what ought to happen does not occur; and that what occurs ought not, by any system of reason or probability, to have occurred at all. I am perfectly aware that any prediction, any forecasts in the realm of foreign politics, are foolish and very often illusive, but I do think that it is an extremely good method of clearing our own minds at this present confused moment if we think not quite so much about what has happened, not quite so much about what is happening, but concentrate a little upon what is likely to happen. The discussion, therefore, that I wish to open to-night, is a discussion not of probabilities, but of possibilities. I think that if we had a greater awareness of the possibilities of this present situation we might attain to a greater clarity of view as to what ought to be done.

I think that there are possibly three main angles of approach by which, and through which, this subject could be discussed. There is in the first place the legal point of view, the diplomatic point of view. We might discuss what, exactly, are our obligations in terms of precise documents, how far we are involved, and what the execution, or the non-execution, of those obligations would entail. There is also the political aspect. We might discuss what particular course of action is in the actual imperial interests of the British Commonwealth of Nations. We might even discuss, were we so cynical, what actual course of action would be in the electoral interests of the National Government in Great Britain. We might even question whether there is any definite British political interest involved in this appalling confusion.

(1) Address given at Chatham House on March 18th, 1936, with the Viscount Astor in the Chair.

I do not think, however, that we should approach the matter from such narrow grounds. I think that what we want to discuss is *what does it all really mean?* What is the real moral issue involved?

We all know that the first consequence of Herr Hitler's action is to produce a conflict of thought and feeling as between France and Great Britain. We know the average man-in-the-street's point of view, whether it be in the street, let us say, of Lyons, or the street, let us say, of Leicester. I think we can define even at this stage more or less, what the man-in-the-street is thinking, in France and in England, and I should like to start from that definition and then elaborate it. I think the man-in-the-street in France is thinking as follows:—"This was a guarantee of our security. It has been violated with the utmost brutality. It is an occasion for us to show, not only to our own people, but to those who sympathise with us and are joined to us in Eastern Europe, that a violent denunciation of a contract on the part of Germany meets with opposition, more powerful than any violence which Germany herself can advance." And at the back of that statement, in the mind of the ordinary man-in-the-street at Lyons, is this great question. "Is England going to betray us?"

Now we pass from that to the street of Leicester. What is the point of view of the man-in-the-street in Leicester on this question? I think it is this. "The French are obviously frightened. They have tried for years to keep the Germans down by force; that is flying against nature; they cannot do it. The Germans may possibly have committed an act of hostility, but they have not committed an act of war. And therefore, we must, with all calmness, with all resolution, do something to alleviate the extreme nervousness of the Germans." In other words (because I don't suppose the man-in-the-street in Leicester would express the problem in such complicated terms) what he would really say is this:—"Well, after all, the Germans have only occupied what was their own country, and we are not going to war with them for that." That, I do not suppose anyone would deny, is a perfectly acceptable statement of the average point of view. And I want to expand those points of view, not merely in terms of England and France, but also in the terms of Germany, because I am perfectly certain that what is determinant, and what will be determinant in this issue is not treaties, not politics, not economics, but the states of mind in the three main countries concerned.

Let us consider in greater detail the states of mind which

Herr Hitler's action has aroused. Let me begin with Germany. On the first occasion when I had the great privilege of addressing this Institute, some four years ago, I spoke about the state of mind of modern Germany. I had recently returned from three years' residence in that country. I indicated to my audience that the fact must be recognised that modern Germany, as it then was, in 1932, was in an extremely neurotic frame of mind. The Germans have always been nervous, they have always had a strain of instability in their characters. That strain was tautened and extended during the War ; during the inflation it became inflamed ; and I think we must recognise—and this is not meant to be an insult, but a sympathetic comment—that in the German temperament of to-day there is a strong strain of insanity. We have got to get that into our heads. It was inevitable that this should have occurred. You have an heredity already unstable. You expose the product of that heredity to a strain such as human history has never known. They had to face the War, inflation, the blockade, a series of strains and stresses such as we have never conceived of in our own history. Then at the end comes this revivalist—this gentle, imaginative, unreliable man, who tells them that all their sorrows were purely due to some strange lack of confidence in himself. If they will put themselves entirely into those firm and tender hands, then the bleeding heart of Germany will again be sound. He tells them deliberately that they did not lose the war ; that there was no humiliation in their catastrophe. They were betrayed by the Jews. He tells them that they did not lose the inflation battles. That was purely a muddle on the part of the banks. He tells them that he and the Nazi system will restore prosperity, and above all opportunity, to the middle classes. He tells them that he will be able to give them back, if they will only trust him, equality of status. He tells them that he will restore to them their national honour.

For some extraordinary reason which we cannot understand (which no German, even, can honestly or fully explain), this mysterious, fantastic formula has carried the whole country with it. Hitler has mesmerised his people. And he now leads them, as he himself said only a week ago, with the "certainty of the somnambulist" along the path of destiny which he believes to be his.

Now, do not interpret what I say as a criticism of Germany. I think anybody will realise that I have the utmost, the most heartfelt, sympathy for the sufferings of the German people ; that I have a very warm understanding of the German mentality ;

that I have a very passionate desire to see all that is best in German civilisation—and there is surely a great deal that is good—brought into the common stock of human progress ; but I do not hesitate to affirm here with the utmost deliberation, that I consider the Nazi system a blot and a scourge to humanity. That I consider Hitler as a factor in world affairs—he may be an admirable man, he might be a great religious teacher, he might be a great humanist, he might be a great philanthropist—but as a factor in world affairs he is a factor of appalling instability and of the very greatest danger.

I go back to this problem of the German mentality. I say that under this religious revival, which Hitler has managed to create and evolve, under this mystic Wotanic conception of a Germany marching blindly towards the abyss, under this extraordinary evocation and excitation of all that is most neurotic in the German soul (for I contend that this neurosis has reached a sort of paranoiac stage), Germany has become, and let us say so with all sympathy, a mental case. We must realise this, and we must realise that this mental case has become symbolised and personified in the individual, in Adolph Hitler. We must realise and recognise that Germany *is* Hitler at this moment, and that Hitler *is* Germany. It is gratuitously foolish for those of us who know, or used to know, Germany to suppose that the reasonable elements in German life will be able, in the next year, to exercise any influence upon the course of German policy.

Therefore we have to take Hitler as Germany, and let us do so. He has great virtues and great weaknesses. Let us consider those elements in his character which are most operative to-day, most applicable to-day to this appalling crisis with which we are faced. I will, among many, select only two. I would select first his irresponsibility. There is no doubt at all that Hitler imagines that he is guided by some destiny, be it God or Wotan, which has selected him as the symbol, as the prophet, as almost the deity of a great race. He believes mystically, blindly, that he is guided by this deity, this destiny which dictates for him the actions which he should take. We must realise that Hitler in his blindness is prepared to call upon his people to advance into orgies of self-sacrifice, and to fling themselves in droves from the precipice of suicide. I stress that because all those other arguments about Hitler bluffing—which are quite true, he *is* bluffing—omit that great capacity for self-immolation which is one of the most strange and curious inheritances of the German race. Therefore, with Hitler, as I say, the first quality we have to take into account is his irresponsibility.

He is prepared to go to any lengths, quite honestly—it is not a question of honesty or “trust Hitler,” or anything like that—because he believes that he is guided from on high. He has “voices,” and his voices, at any moment say to him :—“ You must make a treaty for twenty-five years for peace.” He will do so with the utmost conviction that he is behaving according to the dictates of his destiny. But if two and a half months later those same voices say : “ You must make war,” he will also believe he is being guided by his destiny. This is a perfectly tenable analysis, and I am sure that all those who have studied the mentality of Hitler will agree.

The second quality, or defect, in Hitler, which is applicable at the present crisis is his sensationalism. I think that that is a very important thing to keep in mind. It is, I think, a mistake to approach the Führer with the idea that he will agree to do anything commonplace or dull, anything that is not astonishing. He feels—with Aristotle I think it is—that “ the surprising is the sweetest of all human emotions.” And it is very essential in the conduct of diplomatic negotiations with Hitler to proceed from the assumption that although he may, at any moment, resort to the extremely dramatic in terms of menace, he might also, at any moment, resort to the extremely dramatic in terms of conciliation. We have got to realise that we are not dealing with a Foreign Office expert. We are dealing with an exhibitionist. It is a question much more of the great impresario, the approach is much more the approach to the prima donna ; it is not the approach to the scholar, the man of reason, a man as admirable as M. Van Zeeland, a man as sensible as M. Beck. We are dealing with something which is terribly dangerous, but which if treated as a mental specialist treats his patients, with kind firmness, with secure gentleness, might produce very valuable results. It is a question, on our part, of getting away from all the old conventions, and approaching somebody whom we fear, whom we disapprove of, whom possibly we despise, but who happens to be a man of a vital importance to us, in his own terms and not in ours.]

I think I have said enough about the German point of view, and now I wish to turn to the French state of mind, which I shall be able to examine much more shortly, because it requires far fewer qualifications. The French state of mind is quite stable and quite clear. The French have no desire whatsoever to go to war with Germany. I cannot believe that the French General Staff would ever advise M. Flandin to drive the German troops out of the Rhineland. The French are a profoundly pacifist race ; they

are not militarist, but they are shot through and through in every fibre of their souls with fear. Their minds, moreover, are affected by that terrible thing which we are taught at the university to call logic, and which, I am glad to say, we have done our own best subsequently to forget. But the French argue logically as follows:—"Such an opportunity will never occur again. Germany in her blindness has torn up the only treaty which we ever expected her to keep, which the English ever expected her to keep. She has torn up the only treaty which was given to her as a great concession, as the price of our withdrawal from the Rhineland." People are not always aware of the immense background to the Locarno Treaty, and I would like to give a little space to that background. It is important because what makes me most ashamed when I read the English newspapers is this complete ignorance, or complete disavowal, of the actual proportions of Locarno, and I trust you will let me establish those proportions as shortly as I can.

Let us get back to the beginning. There was the War; it was not provoked by France. The French were invaded and suffered terribly. At the end of the War, they won, and they said, "All we desire on earth is absolute security. We don't want to attack anybody in the world. We want to be safe." So they asked Foch, and he said that there was only one way in which they could be safe. "You must have the Rhine frontier, that river settles everything," were the words he used. We and the Americans, for reasons that were quite justifiable, said "You can't do that, you can't have your Rhineland Republic on the left bank of the Rhine, you cannot restrict Germany to the right bank of the Rhine, we cannot agree to that, it is against the Fourteen Points." The French said, "But we ask for nothing else. Let the Germans keep their colonies, we will give them everything they want if you will only give us that line of defence, that ditch, that moat around our castle." And we said, "No, we cannot do that: but we see your point of view"—we always saw their point of view. We said, "We will give you instead something far better than the Rhine frontier. We will give you the whole force of America and England. We will sign with you a guarantee treaty by which your security will be protected for ever by the force of our arms." We signed that treaty; the Americans repudiated it; and then we, to our eternal shame, repudiated it also. The French were left alone. What did they do? They saw that America was out of it, that England was terribly unreliable, and they, therefore, inevitably and quite rightly, created in the liberated States of Eastern Europe, in the



Succession States, a network of alliances, the Little Entente, by which they could compensate themselves for this great desertion in the West. And they did it. That created in the French mind an idea which might never have arisen—an idea which it will be difficult to get rid of; the theory that somehow French security is bound up with that of those little countries to the east of Germany. That is one of the points which this crisis, and the action of Herr Hitler, has brought to a head.

But I return to our moral debt to France of which I am speaking. Having refused them the Rhine frontier, having then repudiated the treaty which we gave them as an alternative to that frontier, and in consideration for which they surrendered it, we then also refused the Protocol of 1924. Sir Austen Chamberlain, who is a just and wise man, felt that this was intolerable; he saw that our complete denial of French rights only led France to create combinations in the East, which in their turn led Germany to imagine herself to be encircled. He and Briand and Stresemann, men of first class quality, said "This is really ridiculous, we are all building up against each other. Let us make Locarno," And they did; and we did. But do not let us forget that Locarno does not represent just one treaty; it represents a residue of the moral responsibility which was left over to us from the repudiations of the other treaties. Do not let us forget that our moral responsibility for Locarno is cumulative and enormous. Let me go further. How did Locarno work out? It worked out in this way—I am not exaggerating, though I am tempted to do so because I feel very bitterly about this—that because Locarno existed, because Germany had Great Britain's guarantee that she should never be invaded by France, Germany was able to build up, under that guarantee, a new system of armaments, a new and secret process of general mobilisation, and thus to render herself strong enough when the moment came to say "Locarno, this screen behind which I have built up my own strength, is now no use to me, and I throw it away." This is true; no one can deny it.

Let us return then to the French point of view. The French are aware of the force of our moral obligation, and to that has recently been added an even greater obligation. There arose the Italo-Abyssinian crisis, and we went to France with a great deal of uplift, with a great deal of nobility and said, "This is dreadful, the law of Europe is being defied. The League of Nations will fail if the Covenant isn't supported. We are very sorry for you, but you must throw over your friends, the Italians, and must enforce against them those sanctions which will compel them to

submit." The French answered, " But this is *your* interest, and it is *our* penalty. You lose nothing by humiliating Italy, it means nothing to you. To us it means a neighbour lost, a friend lost, trade lost, relations lost, security lost, while to you it means nothing at all, unless it means possibly an accession of strength in the Eastern Mediterranean, greater security in Egypt, and perfect happiness about the future of the Sudan."

It was very irksome for the French to support us then, but they did it in the end, and now they say to us, " We did not take the extreme course as we could have done. We did not send in our troops to the Rhineland when the Germans sent in theirs. If we had done so you would have been bound by a treaty immediately to send a detachment, an expeditionary force from England. There is no question about it. We did not do that. We went to the League. We appealed to the Locarno Treaty, and if in this issue you abandon us, then we leave the League, and then the League will cease for ever to be of any value to the future of the world."

Now that is the issue. Our sympathies are divided. We feel Germany is rather right, we feel the French are rather right. What are we to do? We are between two incompatible rights. I think I can indicate how far in my own conscience, and within the orbit of my own knowledge and experience, a middle way, a way between war and dishonour, can be found. I think in the first place we must convince the French, as I said in the earlier part of this discourse, that we are not dealing with a reasonable person, that we are dealing with somebody who is a pathological neurotic. I think we should say to the French, " We quite agree with you about all this, but we have got to treat these people carefully, or they will do something mad." I think that is the first thing to say. I think the second thing to say to the French is this. " It is all nonsense to talk about treason and treachery, we are not going to break our word. We are not going to let you down." As Mr. Eden said with great courage (I do not think that during the whole of this crisis up to this moment Anthony Eden has made a single mistake), knowing the feeling in the House of Commons, in his very first statement, " If France is attacked, we will come to her aid with all our forces." We can say that to the French again and again, and it has done a great deal of good. But we must do more. We must then say to the French, " We will stand by the Locarno Treaty. Locarno is shattered by the German action, but we British, although it is shattered, will keep it, as a triple alliance of Belgium, France and ourselves, for whatever period is necessary

before a new system is conceived. We do not say that that system must be conceived in the next few weeks. But as regards keeping Locarno we are adamant, and we will send you our troops, and our guns, and our aeroplanes, and our ships if you are attacked during this transition period before we can transform Locarno, the tripartite Locarno, into something more like a world organisation." I think most people must agree with that.

Then the third thing that is necessary, is to say to the French, "So far we are with you, with all our forces and with all our honour. But beyond that we cannot go. You must make quite clear in your own heads that the British public will defend you if you are wantonly attacked, but they will not defend you if you are drawn into conflict over Poland or Czechoslovakia, or the Eastern States." Then they will say to us, "Yes, but you do not realise that Germany is driving towards the East; that she will achieve a hegemony in Europe, and that this will be a world danger." I agree. They are right. It is a great danger. But we have got to deal with realities, and the whole tragedy of post-War Europe is that we have dealt so much in terms of theories and unrealities, and so little in terms of what we are prepared to do. We must say to France, "We, the British Government, agree that you are quite right; it is a terrible danger; but the British public will not understand it, and we are determined never again to promise something that our public will not allow us to execute. We are never going to get into that position again."

Then comes the question of the violation of the Locarno Treaty. I think we have got to go through a process, or stage, in which Germany is made, *at any cost*, to apologise for her action. I think it may be difficult for her to take the initiative in such an apology. She will not withdraw her troops. But, we shall be able to add, I hope, to those troops an international force which will render their presence less provocative. She will not apologise openly, but then I think we shall be able to do two things, only two, which are not exactly sanctions, but gestures. I think we could withdraw our ambassadors, and if possible all the League ambassadors from Berlin. There is a second thing we could do; it sounds a trivial thing, but to the German mind which is hysterical at the moment it would be a vitally important rebuke. I think we could refuse, all of us, to take part in the Olympic games. That would hurt them more than any economic action which would merely enable them to say, "It is not us, it is not our mismanagement, it is not the Nazi régime which is bringing starvation upon our children, it is the brutal allies,

and the brutal entente and the encirclement." That is what they want to be able to say, but if we are quite calm, and take no action which will lead them to give excuses for their own incompetence, if we just say we are very sorry, but we will not come to the Olympic games, if you knew the German mentality you would know that would be far more valuable than blockading Kiel.

I think I have indicated, and completed the circle of, what I wanted to say in the way of provoking discussion. I desired to come to no definite conclusion, and I shall not do so. But I want to end on a note of reminiscence :—It was something which occurred to me once and which has been a most important motive in my life. It was a chance thing and it is connected with this Institute, so it is not irrelevant. I happened to be present at that dinner party in Paris in 1919 when the idea of this Institute was first mooted. It was an Anglo-American gathering at the Hotel Majestic. We never dreamed in our wildest moments that our idea would ever achieve that authority and that sanity, and that international force which this Institute has achieved, but we thought it would be a good thing. I remember on that evening Lord Cecil made a speech, a short speech, mostly about business matters and how, if we could get the finance, we might have a secretariat and later on we might get a building, and he said this :—" As regards the purposes and spirit of this Institute, I will say only this, that we here have been at the Paris Conference, Englishmen and Americans, and the treaty has been drafted, and we have got everything we wanted, far more than we ever wanted, in terms of material possessions. Yet we are all miserable. Let that discontent be the basis of our Institute." It is true. We have to admit things are going wrong. We have to accept solutions in terms of politics which are not ideal and which are not even satisfactory ; we shall have them over Abyssinia as we shall have them over the Rhineland. But let us always keep that discontent, that unflinching criticism, which in Lord Cecil's words was the primary motive for which this Institute was founded.

#### *Summary of Discussion.*

LORD CECIL said that he had been specially interested by Mr. Nicolson's account of Herr Hitler's personality and mentality, which he had every reason to believe was an accurate one. Having regard to that mentality, it was impossible to form any plan or policy as to such a personality ; you just had to do what you thought was best.

The part of the speech which seemed to him most interesting was the description of the attitude of the French to the Treaty of Peace and the subsequent difficulties. His conception of this was that the French looked originally to a tripartite treaty with the United States and ourselves which should guarantee to her the permanent possession of the advantages she had gained under the Peace Treaty. Failing that, she proceeded to build up a system of alliances in Eastern Europe, as legitimate compensation, with Locarno as a part of that scheme and as an additional security. Lord Cecil considered there was a good deal of truth in this view. There were really two theories with which you must approach all these questions of foreign affairs. There was the old theory, the "Treaty of Vienna Theory" if he might give it a nickname; this conception consisted in giving a nation such and such advantages, and safeguards to secure her in those advantages, building up such a strength by alliances and armaments that nothing could upset your edifice. A part of French opinion has always held to that view, but there was a considerable part which has taken up the new view, the view of the League of Nations, the conception that you were not going to rely on a series of alliances and particular settlements of Europe, but on the general obligation for all to help the victim of aggression. The latest expression of this philosophy was in the Briand-Kellogg Pact, which laid down in so many words (only as a principle, because nothing was done to enforce it), that war must not be used as an instrument of national policy, but that in exchange the assurance was given that if you were unjustly attacked the whole forces of the other Members of the League would defend you. This was the theory strenuously defended by French delegates at Geneva for a long time, and Lord Cecil himself believed it was the only chance of peace in the world. He interpreted Locarno, as indeed Sir Austen Chamberlain used to explain it, merely as a buttress to the League System, as an extra strength in case of any break-down of the League's strength; it did not operate in defence of Germany in particular, or of France in particular, but in defence of each of them in case of attack.

Lord Cecil considered that the danger of the present situation lay in the methods which the Germans had employed in re-asserting their right to occupy the Rhineland; they had thereby challenged that part of the Locarno system which was admirable. If they had gone into the Rhineland quietly, so to speak, there would not have been so much damage or injury to the general system of security in Europe. But they went in as a challenge, saying "The Versailles Treaty is iniquitous, therefore we have a right to set it aside," and that is a reversal of the whole system that we are trying to uphold. The German action appeared to be part of a general system of saying that "Force is the only thing that counts among nations, and just as we established our right to Universal Service a short time ago, so we now set aside this other part of the Versailles Treaty," and unless such a policy be abandoned, there could be no safety in any part of the present European arrangements. That seemed to Lord Cecil to be

the danger, setting aside altogether the particular nature of this particular change ; and although he entirely agreed with those who said that you could not go to war over a thing like that, he considered it equally impossible to leave the matter quite as it had been left by the Germans and not to mark our displeasure in some way. Whatever way was chosen, that must not be the end ; we must use this incident as the starting-point of a more sincere and vigorous attempt to establish a peace system. In his opinion the testing of this would be some general reduction of armaments, controlled and made effective by some kind of undertaking that if the level of armaments were exceeded by any nation accepting it, it would be exposed to the most serious sanctions to compel obedience. It was essential to get a new system, or at any rate to make the old system effective, or we should soon be on the road to war and destruction.

LORD WINTERTON said that, speaking as a member of the Right, he would like to say that he agreed with the general conclusions reached by Mr. Nicolson, and found himself for the first time in recent years in almost complete agreement with Lord Cecil.

Lord Winterton had recently met a very distinguished Frenchman, the burden of whose conversation was " Il faut agir ! " He agreed with him that the time for action had come, and the time for juridical consideration and interpretation of this matter or of that was passed. Morally, legally and from the point of view of our own practical interests, we were bound to take action which would at any rate not condone what Germany had done. From the latter point of view, he believed that without French aid, and separated from the League of Nations, we in London would be very seriously threatened by the German Air Force.

He did not think that Lord Cecil's suggestion of a limitation of armaments was practicable at the moment. Whatever Hitler would do, he would not consent to reduce his armaments. So far as unemployment had been reduced in Germany, it had been reduced by the armament industry.

We could find plenty of arguments for not taking action. The capacity of the English for finding reasons for taking or not taking action was almost unlimited ; we were the most moral people in the world. But that was not the point at the moment. If Germany " got away " with a clear breach of a treaty, next year she might walk into Danzig or Memel, and eventually into Austria, and what should we do them ? Use the same arguments for not taking action ! " The British don't want to fight. It is a matter for discussion. There are a lot of Germans in Austria, after all." (There was nothing easier than to produce a movement in favour of Germany in Austria). And so it would go on. You would ultimately smash the whole system of collective security and the League of Nations itself.

Lord Winterton said that there came a time when talk ceased to be of avail and action became necessary, and he maintained that that

time had now come. If people were to say: "We are not prepared to act. We sympathise to a great extent with Germany. We think she has been badly treated by France" using the arguments used in so many British newspapers to-day, then indeed, we must go back to isolation.

Another matter was bound to affect the situation, whether we liked to mention it or not. To-day France could put more divisions in the field than Germany—a reason not for war, but for the avoidance of war. But it was unlikely they would be able to do so next year. Would the French be ready to sit down and do nothing in these circumstances? They would be fools if they did.

Therefore while we should act as a restraining influence upon the three other Locarno Powers, we ought to be prepared to act upon some such lines as were suggested by Mr. Nicolson.

DR. MAXWELL GARNETT said that he received a considerable number of letters from different parts of the country expressing the opinions of all sorts of people upon the matters presented so brilliantly by Mr. Nicolson. Dr. Garnett's conclusion was that Britain should try to persuade the League to do what Britain thinks right, but failing that, Britain should do what the League thinks right. That seemed to him to be the root of the principle of collective action. He hoped that Britain would not resist what the majority of the peoples in the League of Nations wanted to do.

When we came to the question of what we thought was the right thing to do, he agreed with Mr. Nicolson in dividing the question into two parts. First, an *ad interim* or transitional period; we had got to keep Locarno, but he felt hesitation concerning sanctions. The Covenant was wise in not setting out to punish nations. The result of attempting, perhaps unsuccessfully, to apply economic sanctions would be merely to exasperate Germany, not to teach her that treaties are sacred. The termination of the Italian-Ethiopian War would, Dr. Garnett felt, do more than such sanctions to make the eastern frontier of France secure, and in general to reinforce collective security. The letters received by Dr. Garnett reiterated "Why is it so strongly suggested that we should take such much more violent action—withdrawing ambassadors, and what not—in regard to Germany's breach of a treaty, than we are prepared to take about Italy's breach of a treaty, aggravated as that has been by the slaughter of Abyssinians?"

Secondly, Dr. Garnett agreed with Lord Cecil that we must rebuild the foundations of peace on the only sure foundation we knew, the Covenant of the League of Nations. We had got to make it mean what it said. We had got to get together to reduce armaments. We had got to provide justice and to remove causes of discontent by means of an adequate system of peaceful change, a development of Article 19 of the Covenant. Finally, all European States must become and must remain Members of the League with equal rights.

That was the programme. How was it to be achieved? Not by

relying only upon "alternating governments," as Lord Balfour used to call them, governments very much pre-occupied with day-to-day events and with the next election. If you were going to have a long-range policy, you must have it in the hearts and minds of the people; there must be, for the world as a whole, a sentiment comparable with the sentiment of patriotism for one's own country. Lord Grey came to the conclusion at the end of twenty-five years' practical experience of international affairs, that what was necessary to keep the peace of the world was to educate and organise public opinion.

MR. POWYS GREENWOOD said that the question of basing your long-range policy in the hearts and minds of the people was probably the greatest lesson to be learnt from what was happening now.

Lord Winterton had said it was absolutely essential to prevent Germany from "getting away" with what she had done. Yes, but how? It was the ordinary man who was deciding the policy of the British Empire to-day. Mr. Nicolson had said that the ordinary man felt there was much to be said on both the French and German sides, and that we should mediate. But many ordinary people went much further, and took the view, almost incomprehensible to Mr. Greenwood himself, that we should make an alliance with Germany and at last "break with these French who have unfortunately messed everything up since Versailles." That view was taken by quite a considerable number of people, and because of that class of public opinion we were at the moment shilly-shallying. We could not help it. It was impossible to fight a modern war without the people behind you.

To the best of his belief there was no legal basis for applying sanctions against Germany under the League Covenant, and the only action we could legally take was to go to war, which we certainly were not going to do. Lord Cecil and Dr. Maxwell Garnett spoke of establishing a real peace system, which Mr. Nicolson said could only be done if Great Britain would back it up. That is to say, the ordinary man must really back it up. How were we to get the ordinary man to realise the danger that Germany may get away with one thing after another?

The only possible course was to try to get a fundamental settlement, to get down to brass tacks with Herr Hitler, to force him to put his cards on the table. The Germans might be unreliable, but we had to consider the Germans less than public opinion in Great Britain. We had got to make people feel that we had been fair, that is to say, we had got to *be* fair. Until then, opinion in Great Britain would not support any action in favour of the collective system, or any action against Germany if she should break out again.

For that reason, above all, Mr. Greenwood considered it essential to negotiate, even if we marked our disapproval. We should concentrate above all on the economic basis of the discontent, on the strain which is getting steadily greater. The Germans were not actually starving, but they were not comfortable, and therefore they took this kind of



action. We must make a real attempt at dealing with the questions of raw materials and international trade, as a part of the whole settlement which we hoped would arise out of the present crisis.

LORD ARNOLD said he was sorry to introduce a discordant note but that he could not do violence to his conscience by saying more than that he had listened with interest to Mr. Nicolson. He thought his remarks about Herr Hitler unfortunate, fantastic and even mischievous. He held no brief for Hitler, but they had got to face reality. The advantage of the happenings of the last few days was that they had forced us to face reality. Mr. Nicolson had suggested that the French man-in-the-street would describe the breach of Locarno as brutal. Lord Arnold appealed to the audience to look at the matter in a common-sense light. Germany had been extremely badly treated ever since 1919. Germany had now moved some soldiers from one part of her territory into another to establish the theory that she had sovereignty in her own kingdom at last. Everyone knew that this unfair provision in the Peace Treaties would come to an end before long; many people thought it ought to have come to an end before now. Hitler then had taken this step, which did not place France in the slightest danger. France had built herself an impregnable frontier. We were not called upon to do anything to help France, if the position remained as it was.

Mr. Nicolson had asked if we were going to "betray" France. France was always talking about being betrayed; she had got it on the brain. We were told that the Germans were suffering from neurosis, and Lord Arnold considered the same could be said of the French.

Lord Arnold submitted that the Locarno Treaty words did not apply to the present situation, and were never intended to apply to it. For instance, it was absurd to go to the assistance of someone who had not been attacked. It was impossible to say that Hitler's action was directed against France or anybody else; it was only an assertion of German sovereignty.

Germany had put about thirty thousand troops into the demilitarised zone, a territory inhabited by fourteen million, seven hundred thousand Germans. No one could imagine that that was done with the object of attacking France. Therefore we were not bound at all. The whole purport of Mr. Nicolson's speech was pro-French. But no British Government would be able to get a Franco-British Alliance through the British Parliament. Lord Arnold had not come across anybody who had taken the French attitude like Mr. Nicolson. The spectacle of France posing as the upholder of international law when they were mainly responsible for breaking the Fourteen Points when the Versailles Treaty was made, and for breaking the Disarmament Clauses—and they went into the Ruhr, an illegal action—the spectacle of France pointing the finger of scorn at Germany was putting an undue strain upon Germany's patience. It was particularly monstrous for Italy, who had been branded herself as an aggressor by the League, to sit at the same table and condemn Germany.

DR. ARNOLD TOYNBEE said he was particularly interested in Mr. Nicolson's sketch of Herr Hitler, as he had had the privilege of seeing him for the first time a short while previously, at a very interesting moment. It was the very day after the French Chamber had ratified the Franco-Russian Treaty, and the Chancellor and Herr von Ribbentrop had gone off immediately afterwards to the country, where they had probably decided upon the plan of entering the Rhineland.

Undoubtedly Herr Hitler believed that he had a mission to be the saviour not only of Germany but of Europe from Communism. He had explained to the speaker what sacrifices he had made in order to carry out what he felt to be his European task—for example, in his policy towards Poland; and he was undoubtedly sincere in his belief.

The real crisis was not so much the immediate problem in the Rhineland as that of Eastern Europe. It was because France had made a treaty with *Russia* that Hitler had gone into the Rhineland.

Mr. Toynbee considered that British policy towards Eastern Europe might be a decisive factor in determining German policy in that quarter at the present moment. It was certain that Hitler wanted our friendship, and he might even be prepared to pay a rather high price in order to get it.

It was also true that Hitler was on strong ground with his own people when he was able to say that he was demanding the restitution of Germany's rights; but he would be on much weaker ground if he were to go out frankly to acquire something which Germany had never possessed before, as would be the case, for instance, if he were to take up the Rosenberg Plan. It would be more difficult to carry his people with him over the non-German regions of Eastern Europe, and the backing of the people is of even more importance with a dictatorial government than it is with a democratic government. In this matter, he would be much more likely to be swayed by the general attitude of Europe than he would be in anything that touched the restitution of German rights. His policy towards Eastern Europe was probably not yet decided, and the line we took would make a great deal of difference.

What we all wanted to know was "What is Germany's limit?" You might take the view that Hitler's system required him to have about two stunts a year, and if he were to govern Germany for another twenty-five years, this would mean about fifty more stunts! But if you took the other view—that Germany might stabilise and settle down—then there might come a point, as it had come in 1922 with her old ally Turkey, when she might say that she had now got restitution and would therefore now stop.

Mr. Toynbee considered that many Germans felt like this. One German, who was rather in the public eye at the present moment, had recently put the matter to Mr. Toynbee in this way: "A widow woman has four children and they are kidnapped by bandits. She screams and she screams, until the bandits say to each other: 'Let us give her back one child to stop her screaming!' So they give her back the one child,

but she goes on screaming for the other three, and the bandits say again that she is very unreasonable, but they finally give her back two more. Then she still goes on screaming for the fourth, and the bandits say ' This woman is impossible ; we have given her back three children out of the four, and still she goes on screaming for the fourth child ! ' ” The point of the parable was that if you did give her back the fourth child, she would not go on screaming for a fifth, which would be, of course, not hers, but somebody's else's !

Were the Germans going to take that view, which would make it possible to settle with them, and to live in the same world with them ? Or was there going to be no limit to their ambition ?

Mr. Toynbee thought that the present rulers of Germany were extraordinarily undecided themselves ; they seemed to make up their minds on the spur of the moment, and our actions might be the deciding factor in the shaping of their policy. Supposing Hitler said to us : “ What terms would you English propose in the East of Europe ? ” Our answer should be “ Come back to the League, but please don't run away with the idea that we English are going to pay mere lip-service to the League when it is a question of the East of Europe. Don't imagine that, if you break out eastward, we shan't mind ! ” If we did not take this attitude, we might wake up one day to find the Germans masters of Europe, and thereby able to dictate to us. If we said “ No ! ” then, it would mean war. The time to say “ No ! ” was the present—to make it clear that in the East, as in the West of Europe, we intended to take the Germans at their word by negotiating with them on their offer to stabilise the whole of Europe on the basis of the Covenant of the League of Nations.

MR. NICOLSON, replying to the discussion, spoke of Lord Cecil's valuable contribution, saying that he brought to it a knowledge, an authority and integrity of purpose such as few statesmen on earth could bring. He agreed that it was not the German action they were condemning so much as the manner of it ; the Germans were right in principle and wrong in practice. It was a question of preventing ill-conduct in international affairs ; if we let this pass without censure, others might follow the German example for less justifiable reasons.

Dr. Maxwell Garnett had raised the question, which was in all our hearts, of what was *right*. Was it less right or more right that Abyssinians should be slaughtered than that a vital element in the peace of Europe should be endangered ? From some points of view the Italian action was worse than the German action. From other points of view it was more dangerous for the Germans to enter the Rhineland than for the Italians to enter Ogaden. Was an action which endangered the lives of another ten million young Europeans worse than an action which sacrificed a few thousand Abyssinians ? We had got to work that out.

Mr. Nicolson agreed with Mr. Greenwood that although we should establish the rule of law in a formal way, we must have a general

settlement. As Mr. Toynbee also said, we must know the German maximum demands, and have a general clean-up.

Lord Arnold's speech had been very valuable in that it corrected what was a general flow in one direction, and expressed another point of view.

LORD ASTOR (in the chair) said that there seemed to be general agreement that Great Britain must seek a middle road. They did not want to go in for a preventive war but neither did they want to repudiate their obligations. He had amused himself one day by interviewing himself for a newspaper first as a Frenchman and then as a German, and making an unanswerable case for both. It was a fight not only between right and right, but between wrong and wrong.

Lord Astor had had a brief talk with Hitler, and had been struck by the sincerity of his conviction of the Communist danger. Hitler was probably quite honest in his belief that the Franco-Soviet Pact justified his act of aggression.

Lord Astor then quoted some words of Gladstone's dealing with the treaty which, he believed, guaranteed the integrity of Belgium, to show that we of this generation had not got an inferior sense of our moral obligations under treaties. Gladstone said: "I am not able to subscribe to the doctrine that the simple fact of the existence of a guarantee is binding on every party, irrespective altogether of the particular position in which it may find itself at the time when the occasion for action on the guarantee arises."

Lord Astor agreed with Dr. Maxwell Garnett that we had got to pay much more attention to Article 19, concerning "peaceful change." If we had done so before, perhaps our present difficulties would not be so acute, and he hoped that something would shortly be done to remove all sense of injustice and grievance, not because it paid to do so, but because it was right.

# GERMANY AND THE RHINELAND<sup>(1)</sup>

## II.

By SIR NORMAN ANGELL.

LAST Wednesday night Mr. Harold Nicolson suggested that the present crisis constituted mainly a psychological problem in the sense that we are dealing, in the case of Germany, with a nation suffering from a grave neurosis due to war, to defeat, to the blockade, to the terms of the Versailles Treaty, to the inflation, to the depression. His diagnosis was confirmed from another angle by Professor Toynbee, who gave us a most illuminating picture of Hitler with a most suggestive indication of the motive forces which explain Hitler's attitude.

The implication in both cases was that the first and last fact we had to consider was a state of mind.

I should like to say that not only were the pictures drawn probably true pictures, but that, in my view, the psychological approach to this problem is the right approach in an even wider sense than Mr. Nicolson seemed to indicate: we should approach the international problem as fundamentally a psychological one, not only when we are dealing with nations whose state of mind is pathological, but also when dealing with nations whose state of mind is normal. The problem is psychological in the sense that it arises by reason of the existence in men's minds of certain ideas, concepts, and the emotions which those ideas set up; concepts of nationality, for instance, self-determination, independence, sovereignty; pictures which men form in their minds, pictures which remain sometimes when they have long ceased to correspond to objective fact, or to be workable as a basis of any orderly society.

Take, as an instance, a mental picture which has suddenly become widely popular as explaining most of the trouble, a picture which is the basis of a deep sense of injustice, of sometimes passionate resentment in the minds of hundreds of millions, and which will colour much of the discussion in the forthcoming conference, if a conference comes out of this crisis, and which may start the nations off upon a line of solution which is certain to prove futile and ineffective. I mean the picture of John Bull as a great landowner, the fat and plutocratic beneficiary of great possessions, while outside his gates are starving multitudes, landless, deprived of the means of life. Millions of people the

(1) Address given at Chatham House on March 25th, 1936, with The Rt. Hon. A. V. Alexander, M.P., in the Chair.

world over are saying that we must look for the cause of our trouble in that situation. It is, they say, plainly a struggle between the Haves and the Have-Nots, and the line of solution is to rectify these inequalities by redistribution of resources in some form, by giving to each his share, by some approximation to self-sufficiency.

That picture, with all the deep resentment it excites, exists not only in the minds of people in Italy, in Germany, in Japan ; I found it recently everywhere in America. It was the basis of much of the writing of distinguished publicists, like the late Frank Simonds. You could find literally thousands of newspaper articles the world over coloured by that idea.

Now, if it is a true idea, if it is a true picture, the sense of unfairness is well founded, the passionate resentment is just ; and, if it is true, there is only one line of solution and that is for John Bull, the bulbous plutocrat, to surrender some of his possessions to the needy.

*He is not going to do that.* Not because he is more avaricious than others, but for reasons I shall indicate in a moment. He may make a gesture—surrender a strip of African territory, or of Asiatic territory elsewhere—but starving, or semi-starving millions do not get their stomachs filled by gestures. And if economic need, the pressure of population, can only be met by possession of territory, our forthcoming conference will fail even more disastrously and tragically than our disarmament conferences have failed. The resentments will be intensified, and the outcome will be war. Men would rather fight than starve. It is as though one cannibal were to say to another : “ The case is clear. Either I must eat you, or you must eat me. Let us come to a friendly agreement about it.” They won’t come to a friendly agreement about it. They will fight.

I have said that if this picture of Haves and Have-Nots is a true one we shall get war. But we shall get war equally even though the picture is in fact utterly false, but men believe it to be true. It is not the facts which guide men’s conduct. It is their opinions about the facts, which may be utterly false opinions. Our cannibals will fight even though it is quite false that the only food available for either is the body of the other ; even though there might be plenty of food for both if one would stand on the shoulders of the other to reach the fat cocoanuts out of the reach of either acting alone. That truth, that food was available by co-operation, would not prevent war from economic causes until men saw that it was the truth.

Note this : the sense of unfairness, sometimes passionate

injustice, which this picture of the plutocratic John Bull lording it in the midst of starvelings sets up, is a very real thing, a real force in international politics. You have a psychological condition created by a certain view of international economics, and you can only deal with that psychosis by showing that the view which creates it is a false one. The point is important because people so often say: It is useless to discuss the economics of the international situation, because the real cause of our trouble is psychological. But you can only deal with the psychological condition created by a false view of economic facts by showing what the facts really are. If my passions of hate, perhaps unreasonable hate, are aroused by the sight of an old enemy, and then by a closer examination I see that he is not my enemy but someone else, my passion subsides. In such circumstances it is silly to say that reason or logic is useless in dealing with the emotions. It is only the logic which enabled me to establish the man's real identity that causes the emotion to take an entirely different direction.

It is true that men do not give their lives for economic advantage. They could hardly do so unless they were quite unusually certain of their mansions in the skies. But they *will* die for their rights, to resist injustice, and the sense of injustice may arise from such pictures as that which they possess of John Bull's position in the world. So we must deal with it.

It is an utterly false picture. Mr. Bull, whoever he may be, does not "own" that estate at all. And that is why he cannot "give it away."

When the dispute between Great Britain and the United States about war debts was at its height, a certain senator proposed in the United States Senate that Great Britain should transfer some of her property "in settlement of the debt"—he suggested the West Indies and part of Canada. The proposal was supported by quite a considerable number of American newspapers.

Would there, in fact, have been a transfer of property at all? There would have been none. The farms, fields, factories, mines, mining shares, houses, wireless sets, pianos, gold teeth, would have remained in exactly the same hands (or mouths) after the change of flag as before. Incidentally, much of the property—represented by the bonds, debentures, mortgages, and mining stock—is already in American hands. There would have been a change of government which might be good, bad, or indifferent; there would be no transfer of property. There would be certain economic changes. The Canadian produce, influx of which into

the United States is now regarded as so damaging to American industry and is excluded by tariff would, after annexation, come in without let or hindrance, and the American producer would agitate in vain for the imposition of tariffs by one American state against another. The timber, beef, bacon, and butter, which were originally bad economically, damaging to American forestry and farming, would suddenly, by some sort of nationalist magic, become good butter, timber, bacon and beef, doing no damage to American industry.

In any case, this "transfer of property" of which the senator spoke would be no transfer at all.

Italy, we are told, needs raw material for her industry. Does any nation producing raw materials attempt to withhold them? When Britain established the greatest export industry that a country ever possessed, the cotton trade of Lancashire, it was built up on foreign raw material. Britain did not have to conquer Louisiana, or Georgia, or Texas, in order to get their cotton. She bought it, and she would have had to buy it even if she had "owned" Louisiana, just as she has to buy Australian wool.

The notion that self-sufficiency even helps towards the solution of the characteristic economic difficulty of our time is quite inconsistent with insistent facts beneath our noses. No nation could be more self-sufficient than the United States, have more abundant resources. Yet to-day she has something like fifteen million unemployed and faces grave economic crises. If the possession of empire helped noticeably in the overcoming of economic difficulty, why is Britain, possessor of the greatest Empire known to history, also the most heavily taxed country in the world, with a desperate problem of unemployment, while non-imperial nations like the Scandinavian States have a standard of living as high as any in the world, with difficulties no greater than our own?

The Have-Nots, we are told, need outlets for expanding population. Then colonies will not furnish that outlet, nor even relieve the population pressure. In 1913 there were more Germans earning their livelihood in the soon-to-be-enemy city of Paris than in all the German colonies in the whole world put together. In forty years Italy has not managed to plant a hundred genuine Italian colonists in Eritrea. Neither Germans nor Italians can compete with native labour, and if they could they would only add to a stock of raw materials of which the world, with diminished foreign trade, has already too much.

Let us put this idea, that war arises from the economic struggles of Haves and Have-Nots, to the simple test of experience.



Suppose we could revise the Versailles Treaty to the advantage of Germany to an impossible extent ; could put her back where she was in July, 1914—not only return all her colonies but all her pre-War European territory as well, including Alsace-Lorraine and their mineral resources ; put her back also into her old magnificent commercial position. If we could perform that miracle, which goes beyond German dreams, we know from tragic experience that we should have no guarantee of peace. For when Germany was in that position and had all those resources, Europe drifted to war.

I do not mean to imply that there is no economic problem—very much the contrary—but that juggling with frontiers is irrelevant to it, and that it is not in any real sense a conflict of Haves and Have-Nots. If you could take the British Empire and divide it equally between Italy, Germany and Japan, you would not appreciably even ease the obstinate economic difficulties which curse the world. As to materials, the difficulty is not that of getting them, but of getting rid of them. Materials are only wealth if they can be got rid of. The British miner cannot eat his coal. To convert it into food, he must sell it. For anyone to have money wherewith to buy British coal means that someone must sell his produce to someone who can only get money by selling *his* produce to someone who can only get money by selling *his* produce to someone. . . . and so on round the world. It is a problem of exchange, of keeping the traffic of the world moving, and there is only one way to keep traffic moving, as we ought to know in the days of Mr. Hore Belisha, by traffic rules, traffic codes. But traffic rules involve co-operation between the users of the road, and are made quite impossible if they fight for exclusive possession of separate bits of it. And there can be no rules unless the users are prepared to take common action against the road hog who really does sometimes exist.

Co-operation for the enforcement of a traffic code on the commercial highways of the world is rendered impossible at present by the prevalence of what we might call the possessive illusion, the idea that it is more advantageous to own absolutely separate bits of the road than to organise order over the whole of it. We believe that separate ownership gives a better defensive position. Which brings us to the heart of the matter.

While there is no case in peace time for having raw materials within your political control, for the possession of Empire, there is a very strong case for having those things in war time when peace-time sources of supply may be shut off. If a nation has

only its own individual power as a means of defence it will grab all that it can in response to what is, after all, the deepest instinct of every living organism, physical or political—the instinct of self-preservation. The struggle for territory is mainly the struggle for individual power as the sole means of defence in an anarchic world. Abyssinia will afford no outlet for the Italian population ; but it may well furnish the Italian armies with a million black conscripts.

This instinct for defence is so deep as to operate often unconsciously ; to be the obvious motive for political conduct, even when we loudly—and perhaps quite sincerely—proclaim that our motives are something quite other.

We say that we want peace, that peace is the greatest interest of the British Empire, that war is the very worst thing that could happen to us. We are sincere, but we do not believe it the least bit in the world. We show that we do not believe it by what we do. For we maintain our national forces ; we even increase them. The number who would vote to disband the army and navy *now* so that we could not possibly have a war because we should have nothing to make war with, the number prepared for that type of unilateral disarmament is very, very small. Year after year the Service Estimates are duly voted, and the decision to retain our forces is renewed.

Note what that means. It means that in certain circumstances we would fight, that we do not reject war, that we do not regard it as the worst thing that could possibly happen ; that we regard domination by a foreign State as a thing worse still, and would be prepared to go to war to prevent it. Not what we say but what we do proves that we put defence before peace, as does every great State in the world.

We may be quite right in so doing. But let us be clear that we do it, and let us be clear what it means. It means that our problem is *not* to ensure peace, which, obviously we could secure by complete surrender beforehand or by occupying a position like that of Finland or Norway ; our problem is to ensure peace plus defence, to reconcile peace with effective defence, which presents us with an entirely different problem. On behalf of defence we are prepared to use these armaments—to kill, to maim, to disembowel children with our bombs, to do all those things involved in military sanctions. If we did not mean to use those instruments we should not have them.

It is necessary to keep this in mind if we are to think clearly about defence, about the best policy of defence. For the collective method of defence is being assailed on pacific grounds by those

who accept or urge the maintenance of our armaments for defence by the old method. The collective principle is sometimes bitterly assailed on the ground that it is an attempt to "keep peace by threatening war" as the phrase is. But armaments for defence by purely national action equally involve an attempt to keep the peace by threatening war. The very existence of our arms is equivalent to saying to foreign nations: "Take a line which we in our judgment regard as aggressive, as an attack, and we will go to war." Those who say that, as do all who vote the Service Estimates, are quite entitled to object to the collective system. But they are not entitled to object to it on the ground that it rests in the last analysis on force. The alternative methods of Armed Isolationism or the Balance of Power, involve force, the employment of sanctions, national sanctions. What we see in the present drift of British opinion is this: a deeply pacifist attitude when it comes to collective defence, a strongly militarist attitude when it comes to defence by individual national action. We take, in fact, the line that it is right and natural and expedient to defend our territory, our interest, wrong to defend the law, the League Covenant, the code designed to secure *general* defence.

I suggest that on grounds of effectiveness in defence, and on grounds of the best assurance of peace and of justice, the order should be inverted; that individual, purely national action for defence is the most hazardous method of all, involves a denial of right, all equality of right; that armed defence can *only* be reconciled with peace, with justice, by employing arms collectively on behalf of a principle, or a rule of the road which protects each member of the community with some approximation to equality of right.

Let us examine the alternative policies of Armed Isolationism, Balances of Power, and Collective Defence. It is a timely examination because if the present state of opinion becomes crystallised we shall almost certainly return to the policy of the Balance of Power, which has the dangerous quality of offering peace to-day in exchange for war to-morrow; of securing peace precariously for a considerable period at the cost one day of sudden and inevitable war.

Let us take first the policy of Armed Isolationism, or ensuring your defence by your own power. You must be stronger than anyone who is likely to attack you. Very good; then what becomes of that other's defence? Is he to have none? We begin by a denial of right by that method. We begin by denying to the weaker the right of defence by superior power which we claim for ourselves. Would it be unfair to say that those—and

they are multitudes—who advocate that the way to prevent war is to be stronger than the next man have not taken into consideration the fact that it does thus deny to the weaker the right that the stronger claims ?

Of course we cover up that moral dilemma—and it is a very grave moral dilemma. We talk continually of “equality”—of “equality of arms, of equality of power, of parity.” For years we have discussed “parity” of various kinds. It cropped up again and again in the disarmament conferences—as someone remarked, “We shall be saved by Faith, Hope, and Parity.”

Yet parity is as a principle just as impossible as Isolationism, because you can never tell when two nations are equal in power. You can tell when one is overwhelmingly preponderant. But you cannot tell when two are equal, because you cannot equate dissimilar factors of power. One nation has more ships, another nation has more coaling stations. How many coaling stations go to how many ships ? No one knows, or ever will know. This difficulty of equating dissimilar factors of power was brought out in our naval discussions with the United States. It was a problem there, among others, of equating cruisers mounting six inch guns with cruisers mounting eight inch guns. The Washington experts made this interesting discovery ; in clear weather the eight inch gun cruiser had the advantage because it could outrange the other ; but in misty and foggy weather, when the ships had to come to close quarters, the six inch gun ship could manœuvre more quickly, and therefore had the advantage. The Americans therefore said : “We really must take into account your greater liability to foggy weather.” So there arose the interesting problem : how many six inch gun cruisers went to how much fog. The discussion, I believe, is still going on.

If you *could* get parity, of course you would not be any ‘forrader.’ Suppose you have it. You say, “Now we are equal.” And then one of the parties goes and makes an alliance ! That upsets the whole thing. Because whether our armament is adequate for defence depends on what we have to meet. A degree of armament which would be adequate if our enemy were, say, Norway or Finland would become automatically inadequate if we were faced by two or three great States. Which is it ? Have we to meet those States by ourselves or aided by others ? Until you can answer those questions I suggest that the purely technical discussions about “enough” ships, “enough” aeroplanes, are meaningless. It is like talking about things being the size of a piece of chalk. Enough to meet whom ?

In other words the ultimate problem of defence is political.

Who is with you, and who against you? Armed Isolationism is almost a contradiction in terms. It implies that you must have adequate arms to meet the next great Power. So be it. You are equal. And, again, he goes and makes an alliance so that what you have to meet now is not one State, but two. What do you do? To be adequately armed you double your power. And then the hostile dual alliance becomes a triple alliance. What do you do then? You make an alliance. And that is the end of Isolationism. You see, an alliance is a source of power, like the air arm or the submarine. If the other fellow adopts it, and you mean to keep your end up, you have to adopt it too or drop out of the race. It is significant that Hitler precipitated our present crisis, not on any question of arms, not on any economic question but, quite logically, on the question of an alliance.

When we come to policy, the reply is usually that *our* policy at least is clear enough. It is defence. Well, what do you mean by defence? I was once discussing this with a military technician who kept talking about defence, and when I asked him what he meant by defence in a political sense, he said: "I mean by defence what you mean when you lock your doors at night. Our army and navy are the bolts we put upon the doors of the national household to keep out the intruder." And as he said this, my mind made a rapid survey of British history. Of course, as an Englishman—particularly as an Englishman who has so often to talk to foreigners—I am prepared to argue till the roof falls in that every war we have ever fought has been a purely defensive war. But still, one has to take cognisance of the quite simple historical fact that every war we ever have fought since the Norman Conquest happens to have been fought in someone else's country. Now, if defence means locking the door of the house against the intruder, what were we doing on all those occasions in other people's houses?

Do not misapprehend me. It does not mean that those wars were necessarily aggressive. But it does mean that, if they were defensive, they were not defensive of soil. I suggested to this particular technician that they were defensive of interests which may collide with the interests of other nations all over the world. What we really mean by defence is the capacity to keep our end up in diplomatic disputes, to defend our interests and rights. This particular technician thought that a very good definition. And for that purpose, he went on to suggest, we must be stronger than anyone who might challenge our interests or rights.

See where that leaves you. We say to another nation, when we are discussing parity and all the rest of it: "Well, perhaps

we have tried to give ourselves the benefit of the doubt a little ; and do ask perhaps, to be a little stronger than you. But it really ought not to disturb you because we are prepared to give you most positive assurances that this preponderant power of ours will be used purely for defence. And by defence we mean this : That when we get into a dispute with you about our respective interests and rights, and we are not in agreement, and the question is really whether you are right or we are right—what we mean by defence is that in such a situation we shall be the sole judge of the question, and so much stronger than you that you will just have to accept our verdict, without any possibility of appeal. Could anything be fairer ? ” Would we accept that position if foreigners put it to *us* ? I think we should say it was a moral outrage, that the litigant was asking to be the judge, and asking for power to enforce his judgment.

It is clear therefore that this method of defence not only defies arithmetic, in that each cannot be stronger than the other, but it also defies morals and ethics, in that the stronger claims a right of judgment in his disputes which he denies to the weaker.

See how it has worked out in history, how it is working out in history now at this moment. Before the War, we said (in a sense quite rightly) : “ If the power of Germany grows, she will be so much stronger than we are, that we shall be without defence. She may or may not make outrageous claims, but if she did so, and this building up of power goes on, we should not be able to resist them. We should be compelled impotently to accept her verdict. This position of defencelessness is one which a free people should never occupy.” So far, perhaps, we were right. But we were not quite so right when we went on to add : “ We therefore propose that Germany shall occupy that position by being weaker than we are.”

To prove that she need have no misgiving about allowing us to be preponderant, and judge in our own cause, we made the Treaty of Versailles, a treaty which no one now defends, and all now forget that we made. It was the British Navy, of course, that made the Treaty of Versailles, in the sense that without the power of the Navy that treaty could never have been made. Looking at it to-day, the Germans say : “ That is what comes of being weaker than your enemy. You never get justice. In order to get justice, you have to be stronger.” And they are preparing to be stronger. If certain advice now so freely proffered our people is followed, Germany will be stronger. And if necessary they will go to war to correct what they regard as an

unfair *status quo*, an unjust Europe. If victorious, they will write a new treaty, make a new map of Europe. Will it be better than the one we wrote? I suggest that it will be worse. The Germans are no more fit to be judges in their own cause than we or the French. We shall be the victims next time, perhaps. If we are, it may well happen that we shall do then what the Germans are now doing so successfully, build up our power, secretly at first, and then defiantly, justifying our action on the ground that our prospective war is a war against injustice; and it will be a war against injustice, though not a war for justice. And when we have won it, we shall write a new Treaty of Versailles, Treaty Number Three. Will it be better than Number One? It will be as much worse as there will be more wrongs to avenge. And if the Germans have to rebel against Number One, they will have still greater cause to rebel against Number Three, except that, long before that stage is reached, Europe will have lost the capacity even to make war, and will have gone down in sordid chaos, in which everything in the nature of law, or right, or civilisation will have perished.

Those things will have perished in a series of wars fought by men passionately convinced that they were right, just as the men who fought the religious wars were passionately convinced that they were right. The modern warriors would, in fact, be wrong, because like the men of the religious wars, they would be putting force in the wrong place. They would be using force as the instrument of the rival parties to the dispute, and not as the instrument of the law.

The real problem which confronts civilisation to-day is how to transfer power from the litigants to the law. In my youth, I travelled in Spanish America, and was struck by the fact that in those passionate wars, both within each State, and between the States, which were always going on, the trouble was that you had people ready to die for liberty and justice, who half the time had not realised what was the rôle of force in the promotion of those ends. The place of force is behind law: first of all this law—that there shall be no more war, and that the war-maker is the common enemy. It is not really difficult to establish which is the aggressor, who is really refusing third party judgment, and who is willing to accept it. But if we saw that force used as an instrument of the litigant constitutes a gross and fundamental denial of right, and really saw that, only when it represents the power of the community mobilised for common resistance to the disturber of the peace is it an instrument of right, then we should be on the road to some sort of order and peace in Europe.

We shall not be on that road until we *have* established that understanding.

The problem is psychological, a problem of public opinion. It marks a point where our education as a preparation for understanding the world in which we have to live breaks down. That was brought home to me a year or two ago, when I had to argue this problem of defence and peace with a rising young politician who had specialised on foreign affairs, the son of a Cabinet Minister and having had all the educational advantages. He began the debate with this question : " Would you take a poker to a burglar if one entered your house ? " And he invited me to consider the political significance of the fact that, in the Tudor bedstead which his people had at home, there was a place where his forefathers used to keep the family blunderbuss, wherewith to greet the highwayman. I replied that I *would* take a poker to the burglar if nothing better were handy ; that I *had* considered this matter of the blunderbuss. The moral of the blunderbuss I thought was this : that in the old days, when every house was an armoury, when the only protection that the household had was its own arms, roads being impassable and society ill-organised, in those days, bandits were much more common than they are now, when not one house in a thousand has a firearm in the place. Consequently, the relative degree of security of to-day cannot be due to the household blunderbuss, because it does not exist. It is due to the improvement of the collective method of defence within the nation. In the old days, the bandit could argue : " Look here, we have only to overcome the power of one house at a time, usually John Smith quaking in his nightshirt, flourishing a blunderbuss, to have the countryside more or less at our mercy." That is not the situation to-day. We say to the potential gangster : " Mr. Gangster, any of these tricks and it is not Mr. Smith you will meet." Whom will he meet ? All of us, the whole community organised through detectives, courts, police, lawyers ; the whole apparatus of restraint. It is hardly practicable to challenge all that. We live in security because our society is organised on the principle that an attack on one is an attack on all. I reminded this young man that the English police not long since had spent tens of thousands of pounds trying to find out who had murdered a perfectly uninteresting woman. I said : " Why are not you, as an isolationist, indignant that your money, as a tax-payer, should be poured out in this reckless fashion to interfere in a quarrel which is none of yours. You did not know the lady, had never met her. Her affairs were none of your concern. Why did you not argue, let her attend to her business and I will



attend to mine ? Because if you did so, nobody would be safe." I went on to suggest that if he wanted to create an analogy between domestic and international situations, he should have asked : " Will you pay your police rate to protect *others* ? " That is the essence of the matter. I put it to him, as I put it to you, that until we have discovered as a rudimentary social truth that it is a physical impossibility to defend ourselves until we are prepared to defend others ; until Europe has discovered that very simple social truth, we shall have no permanent peace and no effective defence.

My friend said : " I think I know what you are getting at ; This business of pledges. Never again ; it failed in 1914." Was it the system of pledges which failed in 1914 ? Is that how we read history ? Just think. Into the war against Germany there entered from first to last something like twenty nations, most of whom had no pledges. We had the Belgian business, which was very obscure. But most of the nations, like the United States, were perfectly free of all commitments. That freedom did not keep them out. A stray shot in a Balkan village was felt in the remotest American family. Freedom from commitment did not keep them out, but commitment would have kept them out. If the German statesmen in the years preceding the War had known to a certainty that by following a certain line of policy twenty States would be drawn into opposition to her, those statesmen would not have followed that line of policy, and there would have been no war.

We get a cant phrase " Sanctions mean War." It is plainly untrue. It is uncertainty about sanctions that means war. If there is war in Africa to-night, it is because Mussolini was quite uncertain about sanctions. He was assured by most of our popular press, by distinguished publicists, by lordly newspaper proprietors, that the League being a moribund institution, and this country, Italy's old friend and ally, we would never dream of interfering with Italy's legitimate enterprises in Africa ; you could find this attitude expressed in our press of last year day after day. It is even rumoured that one lordly proprietor took the trouble to go to Rome and give his personal assurance to that effect. If you were in Mussolini's position, what would you have judged ? After such assurances of British opinion, you would have judged that it was a fair gamble. Force was not lacking for effective and peaceful sanction. We have proof that the force was ample in a very simple situation. Mussolini makes no bones that he is in Africa for the purpose of territories, colonies, raw materials. But there are far better colonial territories than Abyssinia lying about. There is Algeria, there is

Tunis, there is Malta (already partly Italian), there is Australia, New Zealand, Florida. Why did he not have a shot at some of these? Because he knew that if he began landing troops in Jamaica or New Zealand we should not discuss for five months as to whether the oil sanctions should be applied. Note that the sanctions of *one* State are sufficient to secure the defence of territory *without war*. That is the point that I want to make: if sanctions are certain and overwhelming, you do not have to use them. Respect for the Ethiopian territory would have been assured by the power of one State if Mussolini had believed that it would defend the Covenant in exactly the same way that it would defend Malta or Jamaica. If the purpose and intention in the former case had been as clear as in the latter, if Mussolini had been as certain that we would defend the Covenant and the law in exactly the same way as we would defend our own territory, there would be no war in Africa to-night.

That is perfectly evident and unanswerable. It proves that sanctions do *not* mean war. It is uncertainty about sanctions which means war. If we could make of this principle that an attack on one is an attack on all a reality in international affairs, then force might become an instrument of effective defence and peace and justice. It cannot possibly become so otherwise.

I said just this moment that I thought we were on the eve of drifting back to the Balance of Power. That danger arises from the fact that confusion about this issue, our irritation with France, will cause reversion to historical attitudes, cause us to support Germany and abandon France. The effect of this will be the collapse of the whole idea of the collective system, reversion to that ancient policy of taking sides against the most powerful combination on the continent. The process of change will be semi-conscious, and will be aided by a half-thought-out and sometimes specious pacifism. (I am sorry to use words that may be a little offensive, perhaps, to some very old friends.)

When we oppose sanctions, when we object to Article 16, the effect is not to eliminate power from international politics and to lessen the chance of its employment. It is to put it once more into the hands of the parties to the dispute, to remove it further than ever from any purpose of law and to increase the likelihood of its being used. We have always boggled at sanctions, commitments; and the French, as Mr. Harold Nicolson made plain last week, have never known just where we really stood. As one who has lived twenty years of his life in France I think I may be able to judge something of French opinion. Because the French do not know where we are, because of our oscillations on

this point of commitment (recall the history of our unfulfilled guarantees, of the treaty of mutual assistance, of the 1924 Protocol, of the German Naval treaty), they are nervous and irritated. They have their psychosis, too, like the Germans. They *are* tiresome. But if ever natural irritation causes us to abandon French co-operation and we drift into a co-operation with Germany, then we have in fact reverted once more to the Balance of Power. The effect of being vague about our commitments is not to minimise the risks involved, it is to increase them. By refusing to say clearly what our arms are for, we remove them further from the law and nearer to their use as instruments of the parties to the dispute. We talk of alliances and their danger. But the League itself is an alliance. All society is founded on alliances. The danger is not in an alliance, but in allowing an alliance designed to be the nucleus of a true European society, upholding a principle of security which can be applied to all alike, to become an alliance which is in fact a challenge to that principle.

We want to be clear as to the difference between the two. The alliance of the old type was unconnected in any way with institutions of third party judgment, League or Court. Those who held the power became the judges, delivered the judgment, enforced it. Such alliances offered no defence to the other party. That older type was exemplified in the two groups that confronted each other at the outbreak of the War in 1914. The growing power of Germany threatened to deprive us of all means of defending our interests and rights. Germany saw the War close by a hostile preponderance which deprived her of any means of defending her interests and rights and which imposed the Treaty of Versailles. If she was secure, we were not ; if we were secure, she was not. The only recourse open to a State threatened by hostile preponderance was to fight.

Collective alliances offer another alternative to a State threatened with encirclement : it can join the alliances which encircle it and claim their privileges and protections, the privilege that is of impartial judgment in its disputes and protection against war ; a defence organised on the principle that an attack on one is an attack on all. The collective alliance offers to others the same protection of law which it claims for itself. The old alliances did not. If we make it clear that the purpose of our alliance is to create a rule of the road, a principle of defence which we offer freely to the other party, then it ceases to be " encirclement " because we are in a position to say to the other side : " If you regard this as encirclement, break the encirclement by joining our club, accepting its obligations and benefiting by its

protections." If it is clear that that is indeed the purpose of our power, I see no objection to close military co-operation with France, to conversations beforehand.

All forms of the collective method involve the giving of guarantees, undertakings to do certain things in certain circumstances. To say that arrangements beforehand as to how these undertakings may best be carried out are dangerous, is to condemn the undertakings themselves to unreality. The whole method depends upon the conviction that when the time comes the undertakings really will be fulfilled. It will certainly not add to that conviction upon which the whole system rests if we are to say that previous discussion of the method of carrying it out is never to be permitted. It would not have seemed to me outrageous if, quite early after the violation of the demilitarised zone, and the implied refusal of the Hitlerite Government to abide by the undertaking given by Hitler himself to refer, under the optional clause, to third-party judgment, we had sent a regiment into France. If we had done so it would have been a gesture to the French constituting an assurance that, however the course of negotiations might go, we really did mean business in our commitment. Having given that assurance to France we would then have been in a better position to insist that all talk of economic sanctions against Germany be abandoned, and upon the opening of negotiations with Hitler. The sending of a regiment into France would have meant: "We have abandoned these old hesitations about which you have justly complained and this measure proves it." If we had done that, then I think we could have talked to the French in a way we cannot talk to them now. I think the position is summed up by an English commentator: "So dubious have been our commitments that the peaceful States are not sure that we shall honour them while the aggressor States gamble on our pacifism."

If war comes it will not be from malice, it will not be from bad intention. War is not made by evil men. It is made by good men passionately, but mistakenly, convinced that they are right. War will come as the result of muddle, from our failure to appreciate what must be the Frenchman's point of view, after that series of "deceptions" (in the French sense), of which Mr. Nicolson spoke last week, our continued refusal to say either "yes" or "no," to make clear whether we really will do a thing or not.

Looking at that record I am reminded of a remark I once heard a Frenchman make at Geneva when one of our men was stating a case. The French representative had said to ours: "But,

Monsieur le Ministre, you must admit the logic of our position, you have accepted A and B, and C follows as a quite logical sequence." Our man replied: "Oh! logic, logic, don't talk to us about logic. You know we don't believe in logic. We believe in empirical judgment, in intuition, in waiting until the day comes and seeing then what we will do." The French spectator turning to me said, "Really, I think that you English people believe that your stupidity is a gift of God. It may be, but it is a gift that ought not to be abused."

Let us not abuse this gift for succeeding without very great clarity of thought. Let us realise that if we are to ensure peace and combine it with effective defence it will be by the application of careful and painful thought to a difficult situation. We shall only find a solution if we are strongly imbued with what one might call the moral and religious sense of the obligation to be intelligent about a very difficult situation.

#### *Summary of Discussion.*

MR. WICKHAM STEED said he completely agreed with Sir Norman Angell's analysis, and that if he had one or two reservations to make, they were only the prelude to the questions he wished to put.

He did not know if Sir Norman would agree with him or not, but he considered that when we talked about putting law in the place of force, or of putting force behind law, we needed something more than a Covenant or a Court. We needed a community sense among nations which would enable them either to act as a police force, or to delegate police functions to police forces, and to put them at the service of a tribunal. One must not begin with the superstructure, which was formulated law and constituted tribunals. One must begin with the kind of community sense originally expressed in this country by the hue and cry against criminals. Then the law and the tribunals would follow of themselves.

There was great anxiety throughout the country, and besides the pacifist fear to which Sir Norman had alluded, there was an apprehension that, out of misunderstanding of public feeling, the Government might go back on the stand we had made for the sanctity of international treaties. He would warn the Government not to misunderstand the people's love of peace, or to imagine that the country wished to grovel before Hitler.

He wished to ask Sir Norman if he agreed that the position was complicated by the fact that French public opinion was not disposed to go on with the course we had taken to restrain Italy's aggression. If that were the case, it made our position more difficult.

Mr. Wickham Steed's answer when questioned about the situation was as follows: Hitler's act transformed the Locarno Treaty from an

engagement on our part to go to the help of Germany or France if either were attacked, into an Anglo-Franco-Belgian defensive alliance. Until the legal *status quo ante* were restored, that must remain. But France must stand for the Covenant, so that it may not be said that she stands for collective security only when it operates in her own favour.

Should we not begin to see a little daylight in a troubled situation if the Government would say firmly and publicly that we did intend to stand against war as an institution, that we did intend to stand by the League of Nations, that we would not bargain over the word we had given and the action we had taken. If we wavered, and allowed our conduct to be determined by hankering after Four-Power Pacts, we were doomed.

MR. V. N. PEEL agreed with nearly all that Sir Norman Angell had said, but he considered that we should take the German point of view into account. He himself had once asked a man what he would do if attacked by a burglar, and the man had said he had no weapon, but that he would throw a jug and basin out of window, because somebody in the street might hear the noise and do something. That was all very well, but in this case there seemed to be nobody in the street.

The French did not want to parley or listen to anything Hitler might have to say, and it would be unfair to give them the impression that we were prepared to enter into a military alliance, which he did not believe the country would stand. We must support the collective system by impartial help to everybody, both the French and the Germans.

He did not see why we should be tied down by the impossible terms described in the White Paper (Cmd. 5134). The idea of an international force in the Rhineland was absurd.

We were also in a difficult position as regards sanctions. We could not let them go by default because France wanted Italy on her side. We had put our hands to the wheel, and we must go on turning it. Nor should we agree to a forced peace in Abyssinia on Italy's terms, just because we were frightened of the French marching into the Rhineland, which was the bottom of the whole trouble. We were afraid that the balloon would go up, so we had agreed to the White Paper under force of pressure. It would have been better if we had told France we were going to listen to what Germany had to say, and try to come to some sort of arrangement.

MR. G. M. GATHORNE-HARDY hoped Mr. Wickham Steed's diagnosis of British public opinion was correct, but he himself was dismayed by the attitude of a large part of the population, backed by the press. The essentials of the situation were ignored. He had met many people who laid all the stress on the fact that Hitler had promised to enter the League of Nations, and promised twenty-five years' peace; they seemed entirely to ignore the outrageous action by which he had

violated the pledges into which he had voluntarily entered. People said—why should not Hitler put troops into his own territory? forgetting that demilitarisation was a price paid at the Peace Conference in 1919 to induce France to abandon her insistent claim for the Rhine frontier, and that, if this price had not been paid, it was doubtful if all the territory would now be his own. Article 44 of the Versailles Treaty emphasised the gravity of Hitler's action by describing it as a "hostile act" and as "calculated to disturb the peace of the world." The worst feature of the action, however, was the way in which it was done, which cut at the whole foundation of true peace, for as Hobbes said: "we are still in the condition of war," if covenants are disregarded.

Instead of dwelling upon this side, papers as far apart as *The Times* and *The News Chronicle*, were talking about "A Chance to Build." He supposed that, if London were destroyed in an air raid, in a sense it would be a chance to build. But when your foundations had been pulverised, on what were you going to build? And what were you going to build? Were you hoping to build a satisfied Germany, or a Germany which thought she could get what she wanted simply by taking it? Were you hoping to build a sense of security in France, or in the Little Entente? Were you hoping to build a more trustworthy collective security?

He considered there was a danger at the moment of collective security dying of two maladies: an almost universal atrophy of the sense of the sanctity of international obligations, and an exaggerated and erroneous pacifism. If you were never going to face a situation which might mean war, then you would be the slave of every bully. The aggressor could call your bluff any time. The moment sanctions became a bit of a nuisance, he had only to say he would make it a matter of war, and you would either have to face that, or to climb down. That kind of pacifism was extraordinarily widespread. The world was rather like a sporting dog which had been so thrashed for running-in that he was no longer willing to go and retrieve. Unless you were prepared to face the issue of war, the aggressor could always call your bluff, and it was about time we called his bluff instead.

Mr. Gathorne-Hardy would have been prepared to support much stronger action. It seemed to him that our so-called police force was more like the Watch in "Much Ado About Nothing." The parallel was extraordinarily close. Dogberry told them to summon any wrong-doer to stand in the Prince's name, but if he would not stand when he was bidden, they were to let him go and call the Watch together, thanking God they were rid of a knave. In one way we had improved on that, because we tried to get the knave elected as a member of the Watch!

Mr. Gathorne-Hardy did not believe Hitler was prepared to fight if we had sent him an ultimatum in the old pre-War style. He did not believe that the kind of war which might at the worst have arisen from that would have been as dangerous as the kind of war which

would be in store for us if we went on much longer with the policy most favoured at present, for which public opinion was more to blame than our leaders.

MISS FREDA WHITE did not consider the fault lay so much with public opinion. The people still had a sense of honour upon which their governments could call, even if mistakenly, as in the case of Italy. But the governments and the foreign offices had absolutely no working sense of honour. Quite apart from countries which committed aggression, there were countries like ourselves who did not keep their pledges. What had happened to us about Manchuria? What happened to France about Abyssinia? When it came to the point, and we did not think it to our interest, we did not keep pledges. Therefore we must build the situation not upon honour but upon interest, and interest was a matter of psychology, of what you imagined your interest to be. We must persuade the peoples who believed their interest to lie in peace to support the collective system.

The appellations "Haves" and "Have-Nots" were very silly, because if you considered poverty and overcrowding, India and China would be the "Have-Nots," not Italy and Germany.

Last Wednesday's discussion and this evening's discussion had been almost entirely confined to Western Europe. She considered that the danger was more in Eastern Europe. Even were Hitler to fortify the Rhine, it was very unlikely he would strike westwards against France. He would strike at Memel, or Austria, and finally, of course, at Russia. That would mean a general war for us, but it would not be prevented by a Franco-British alliance.

Miss White considered that the Franco-Soviet Pact was one of the strongest bulwarks of peace, for Russia was one of the great military Powers who had not the slightest interest in war. She wanted peace.

Miss White would like to see the collective system based on the following principles: Either a great strengthening of the Covenant of the League of Nations, as it stands, or a sort of European Protocol, based upon perfect equality of co-operation against aggression, which should foresee every possible case of aggression and provide against it in advance. This was not so absurd as might be thought. Germany should be offered her part in it on a basis of perfect equality, but if she would not come in, we should make it without her. Miss White considered that in such a case you would enlist on your side not Hitler and his gangsters, but the Reichswehr generals, who would not encourage their country to go in for a hopeless war against such a strong combination. This should be combined with disarmament, and with an examination of every grievance; but a conference of experts should examine them, not politicians.

MISS ELEANOR RATHBONE said she regretted that the speeches reached such a relatively small audience, since they had put forward truths which were so needed. Judging by the letters and articles



in the press, the country was giving way to a wave of what might crudely be described as Sentimental Pro-Germanism. Some months ago public opinion had rescued us from the disgrace of the Hoare-Laval proposals. Now, led by the same honourable motive, but misconceiving the facts, it was throwing its weight on the wrong side. The motives were sympathy with the under-dog, whom they strangely imagined to be Germany, and a horror of war. The same people who were terribly shocked at our armaments programme seemed to have overlooked the fact that Germany had spent twice the sum on armaments in 1935 alone.

What was likely to be the result of that burst of sympathy with Germany? We knew that Hitler's aim from the beginning had been the annihilation of France, with the active aid of Britain, or at least with our tacit connivance. The state of public opinion in this country as evidenced in the press would strengthen him in the belief that he would be able to encompass that end. There was a real danger of a repetition of the outbreak of the Great War. Hitler might be encouraged to do something which would precipitate a war, in the idea that British opinion was so much on his side that the Government would not dare to stand by France. But when it came to the point, we generally did stand by our obligations, and we should have a repetition of the whole tragedy.

What was Sir Norman's attitude to the entry of Germany into the League of Nations? Was it not only too likely that Hitler was inspired with a desire for more power, which he thought he could obtain more easily within the League than outside. For instance, by withholding his vote when it was necessary to action against an aggressor, he would gain allies, and strengthen his position. With regard to the proposed conversations between the General Staffs, many people who professed to be strong supporters of a system of collective security, objected to the continuance of the Locarno Treaty because it was outside the League. But supposing Germany were to attack France, our succour would not be very effective if it had to wait for the League Council. She therefore considered it essential there should be discussion as to what should be done in case of such aggression.

MR. T. P. CONWELL-EVANS said that we must remember that our foreign policy was no longer directed by the London Foreign Office alone. The needs of the six independent Governments of the British Commonwealth had to be harmonised. The Dominions were not bound by Locarno; and still less by alliances; so that the Covenant of the League, as a unifying factor, could not be under-rated.

He therefore welcomed Hitler's offer to re-enter the League. He himself had been for two years in Hitler's Germany, and had met Hitler, also von Ribbentrop, and he therefore could claim to know something of the German outlook, and the German desire for peace. Mr. Nicolson's picture of Hitler was overdrawn. If Hitler, according to Mr. Nicolson, listened to voices, the voices were monotonous in

their continuous injunctions to claim equality. This was a constant factor, which gave one something to work on. The problem of the demilitarised zone was one of status, and he considered that we could not make it a test-question of international law without involving ourselves in great difficulties. After all, the Rhineland was a part of Germany and the Germans would not understand the use of sanctions in this particular case; they had violated neither the Covenant nor the Kellogg Pact. People said that Germany should contribute something. Hitler was in a position of a man asked to contribute to two collections at a Church Service, and who finds that he has already emptied his pockets at the first round. He had already offered a new Locarno Treaty without the Rhineland clauses. He had proposed Non-Aggression Pacts with his other neighbours, which would have a collective value through Germany's entry into the League, and Germany would become a permanent colleague of Russia at the Council table. Had Hitler been Mussolini, he would have offered those proposals singly and demanded a price for each one of them.

We must have some confidence in the German people. The Germans had now obtained equality of status, and on this basis Hitler would negotiate. On no account should we miss the opportunity of getting the Germans back into the League, and of enabling them to lend their support to collective security.

THE RT. HON. A. V. ALEXANDER (in the Chair) said that Mr. Evans' honestly expressed views were an example of how sympathy for Germany was at the moment driving an effective wedge between us and the League of Nations. Germany had left the League not many years ago under Hitler's régime, and although it was desirable that she should come back, it was not likely that we should get satisfactory co-operation from her if we showed weakness at the present time.

Personal contact with trades unionists and the working classes during the last few weeks had made him very anxious that we should not give the impression we were tied by any formal military alliance with France. That was the other side of the difficulty which had to be faced. The only way we could solve this problem was by a courageous stand for the full League policy.

He felt personally that we had made a grave mistake in departing from the spirit of the Geneva Protocol of 1924 and turning to this very limited sort of pact, which entailed military commitments as its direct consequence. If we could have relied upon a general protocol such as we had hoped to get, embracing a much wider circle of nations supporting a League policy, we should probably never have been faced with the present situation.

SIR NORMAN ANGELL agreed with Mr. Wickham Steed that Germany's departure from Locarno automatically turned it into an

alliance of Britain and France and Belgium, even with Russia since she was allied to France.

He did not believe in sanctions against Germany, or that you could turn her out of the Rhineland, but he did consider that we should have offered to send troops, not into Germany, but into France ; this would have been a gesture. We should have taken the position that the responsibility lay with Germany for converting the Locarno Pact into an alliance with France, and that if she wanted to convert it back into something in which she could co-operate, she must make restitution. Such restitution might have taken the form of submission of her point about the Franco-Soviet Pact to the Permanent Court of International Justice. To talk of "only going into her own country" and all the rest of it, was beside the point. The foundation-stone of the whole collective system is third-party judgment. To claim the right to be one's own judge was flatly to deny all equality of right, or equality of status. Not only Germany, but Hitler himself had subscribed to the Optional Clause of the Permanent Court. He had promised, of his own free will, to submit the interpretation of any treaty to that Court. He claimed that the treaty had been violated, and instead of observing the first obligation of all, submission of the case for impartial judgment, he constituted himself his own judge.

As to the sincerity of Hitler, Sir Norman was reminded of M. Briand's reply in his younger days to a question as to whether he—Briand—had been sincere in a particularly inflammatory speech. M. Briand had replied : "How should I know ?" Did Hitler really know his own intentions ? Or would he be guided by the course of events. We did know he had this dream of expansion towards the east, and had for years, and still preached a kind of Holy War against Communism. If it came it would mean the launching of a class war. Hitler's fanaticism on that point was indisputable. In that he was certainly sincere. A war with such religious passions behind it, dividing not only the nations, but classes within the nations, would destroy Europe, and we must face that fact. The effective sanction was the diplomatic or the political sanction—the demonstration to Germany that Western Europe was in truth united against her if she launched her Holy War in the east. The presence of our troops in France would demonstrate where we stood in that alignment of power against further aggression.

There had been some reference to "police action." He himself did not think that we had yet arrived at the time when an international police force was practical politics. But he did believe that there could be such co-operation of the different national forces of the existing armies and navies as to convert them even under their present form of national organisation into what would be, in fact, an international police force. The difference between an army and a police force was not one of organisation, but of function.

The purpose of the police force was to prevent the litigant being the judge by "taking the law into his own hands." The purpose of

armies as we have known them in the past was to enable the litigant to be the judge. The two purposes were the exact contrary, the one to the other.

Sir Norman said he was a pacifist. He had a great respect for the Quaker position. But he had no respect for the use of the Quaker argument by those who repudiated the Quaker policy; who were pacifist when it came to League sanctions, but militarist when it came to national sanctions, who wanted to double our forces in order that arms might be used for defence as we ourselves should interpret defence. There was a case for non-resistance. If you accepted the position of Norway or Finland it might work. The argument was an intellectually respectable one. But even those who took that position must not evade the question put by that part of our public who felt honestly that they could not take the non-resister position. They put this question: "Although convinced that we must use arms to defend our country we realise that there are two ways of doing it—the old way of each for himself, and the new collective way, of common action behind the law in resistance to the aggressor. Which is the less evil, the less dangerous way." When the Quaker gets that question, and it is the question which our generation puts to all of us—how is he to reply? Only one intellectually honest answer is possible. The non-resister must reply: "I would prefer that force should not enter into the matter at all. But if you have decided to use it by one means or the other, and ask me which is the less evil, I am obliged to say that the collective way is the less dangerous and evil." In making that reply the Quaker surrendered no Quaker conviction. He merely replied honestly to a question which our generation put; a question which should not be dodged and to which that was the only answer.

# GERMANY AND THE RHINELAND<sup>(1)</sup>

## III

By THE MOST HON. THE MARQUESS OF LOTHIAN, C.H.

I AM not going to enter to-night into an argumentative discussion as to the merits or demerits either of the German or of the French point of view, because I do not think anybody can think much about the issues which are now arising without realising that they go far deeper than the mere question of the breach of the Locarno Treaty by the entry of Germany into the demilitarised zone in the Rhineland. They raise the whole question of the future basis, if such a basis can be found, of peace in Europe; and they are going to raise the whole question of Great Britain's relations with Europe. Therefore, I will try, as far as I am able, to put before you the setting, the fundamental underlying factors, within which the discussion raised by the Locarno violation ought, I think, to take place, because unless we see the thing in perspective we are likely to go wrong.

First of all let us consider the background of the German and the French points of view. We must remember that Germany does not admit the common pre-supposition in the Allied countries that she was solely, or in overwhelmingly preponderant proportion, responsible for the War. And, I do not think that anybody can read the documents relating to the origins of the War without recognising that the view that any one of the nations was solely responsible is untenable.

Very briefly, as I see it, the last War came about in four stages. There was, first of all the fact that under conditions of international anarchy change of any sort or kind is practically impossible without war, and that every nation tends to seek its own security by armaments and alliances, which make for its own security at the price of the insecurity of its neighbours. That was the foundation which constantly made for war in Europe before 1914. The strategic factor, if I may use the phrase, which produced the War was the determination of the Kaiser to acquiesce no longer in a situation in which, as he thought, the affairs of the rest of the world were being settled without Germany being consulted. That determination, which began long before, was brought to a head by the Franco-British Treaty about Egypt and Morocco. The Kaiser then laid down a navy which was a challenge to our navy in order to compel

(1) Address given at Chatham House on April 2nd, 1936, with the Viscount Astor in the Chair.

us to consider his claims by aggressive diplomacy and, after 1908, the German navy was designed to be as great as our then navy, with the result that we were gradually drawn into the European Balance of Power. The proximate cause of the War was the impending collapse of Austria-Hungary under the impact of nationalism within it. The question of what was to happen, if and when that Empire disappeared, became more and more urgent. If the Empire vanished, it would, on the one hand, leave Germany alone between the French and Russian Alliance; on the other hand it would raise the question whether Russia or Germany was to be predominant in the Balkans. It was this double question about world power and the future of the Balkans which led to constant anxiety about war, to the feeling that war was inevitable and to that diplomacy of ultimatums and counter-ultimatums which made everybody prepare for what they would do on the day when war broke out. Finally, the immediate cause of the War was the assassination, by a Serbian assassin, of the Archduke Franz-Ferdinand (the one man who might have kept the Austro-Hungarian monarchy together), which induced Austria-Hungary to send an ultimatum to Serbia and to mobilise her army to enforce it. Germany backed Austria, partly in the hope of saving Austria-Hungary from disintegration, partly on the ground, about which we hear so much to-day, that by making her position unmistakably clear at once, she would gain a diplomatic victory and also prevent war, as her "shining armour" action over Bosnia-Herzegovina in 1908 and our ultimatum about Agadir in 1911 had done. But by July, 1914, the fatal military timetable had come to be drawn up not in weeks but in days and hours and the soldiers, especially of Germany, were saying, "It is victory or downfall." No sooner was the Austro-Hungarian army mobilised to occupy Belgrade to enforce acceptance of the ultimatum than the Russian General Staff went to the Tsar and demanded a counter-mobilisation, partly to show Austria-Hungary that Russia could not allow a Slav State like Serbia to be destroyed, partly to ensure that there could be no sudden march on Warsaw from the south. No sooner did the Tsar agree than the frantic Willi-Nicky telegrams followed. The Kaiser pointed out to his fellow-autocrat that the security of Germany, situated as she was between the immense but slow moving armies of Russia and the smaller but quick moving army of France, united in a military alliance, depended, in the event of war, upon her being able to defeat the French army with the whole Germany army before Russia was fully mobilised and then swing back to meet the oncoming Russian army to the east. If

Russia, therefore, began to mobilise he (the Kaiser) would be inexorably driven to mobilise also and, when mobilisation was complete, to attack France, for only so could Germany save herself from having to meet a simultaneous attack by superior forces on both fronts at once. The Germans have always contended that it was the mobilisation of the whole Russian army of the Tsar which made world war inevitable. When the Tsar said that he could not suspend his mobilisation unless Austria-Hungary first suspended hers, Germany mobilised. Faced, apparently, by the alternative of victory or national destruction, Germany then took the quickest road to victory by attacking France, through Belgium, despite her own guarantee of neutrality. While the statesmen were helplessly trying to arrange for conferences and conciliation, the fateful and remorseless wheels of the military mobilisation tables were sweeping all Europe into a world war, for which all had been preparing, which none wanted, and for the launching of which no statesman consciously pressed the button.

I have made that brief summary because there is no doubt that we are beginning to re-create a similar situation in Europe to-day, and because it is one of the justifications which Germany pleads for the view that, if she cannot get rid of unilateral discrimination by negotiation, she is entitled to take equality by her own unilateral action, since the Treaty of Versailles was based on the thesis that she was solely guilty for the War.

Mr. Harold Nicolson, in his address at this Institute two weeks ago, said that "to our eternal shame" we had repudiated the proposed Anglo-American guarantee to France against unprovoked aggression. Now that is simply not true. The United States finally rejected the treaty in the spring of 1920, but in January, 1922, the British Government offered to France exactly the same treaty at Cannes. It was accepted by M. Briand, then Prime Minister, as the prelude to the attempt to re-settle Europe by conciliation later on at Genoa. M. Poincaré, however, took the view that Europe could not be given peace by conciliation. He threw M. Briand out of office. He disorganised the Genoa Conference, and he attempted to coerce Germany to do the impossible by invading the Ruhr. You must remember that the entry into the Ruhr was based on a merely technical default in the matter of timber by Germany, on a majority decision not a unanimous decision, of the Reparation Commission, against which the British member protested; and that it drew a formal declaration from Lord Curzon—then Foreign Secretary—that the entry into the Ruhr was

contrary to the Treaty of Versailles. The Locarno Treaty by which Germany accepted once more the demilitarisation of her Rhineland frontier zone was a treaty which she signed when reeling from a worse defeat than she had endured during the War, for the entry into the Ruhr probably did Germany more harm than her defeat in the War ; it ruined the middle class, and raised the suicide rate to prodigious heights. Therefore, Germany feels that the Locarno Treaty, to a considerable extent, was also a dictated treaty, because it was the price she paid, and then willingly paid, as a guarantee against a second Ruhr occupation.

It was inevitable that the signature of the recent Franco-Soviet military convention, together with the Czechoslovak-Soviet convention, should re-awaken in Germany all the old fears of encirclement—the fear that Germany might have to fight simultaneously a fully mobilised Russian army and a fully mobilised French army. The signature of that convention, inevitably as I think, made Germany feel that she could no longer keep open the back-door through which France had made the Ruhr invasion. A very distinguished British General, Sir Ian Hamilton, wrote to *The Times* only a few days ago, and said that Germany, from a military point of view, had escaped from a military embrace only just in time. Thus to understand the German point of view you must remember those three factors : her view about the origins of the War, the background of the Locarno Treaty, and the back-door through which France had been able to invade the Ruhr.

France and Belgium were, on the other hand, the principal sufferers from the War itself, for they endured four years of occupation. Moreover, to understand present European psychology you must realise that, psychologically speaking, there were two defeated nations in the Great War. The one Germany, defeated first by the Allies and then by the French in the Ruhr : the other, France. In the secular duel which has been going on between Germany and France for a thousand years, France has been on the whole, the victor, but in the last fifty years, she has been defeated twice, once in 1870, and again in 1914. In both cases it proved utterly impossible for France to get the Germans off her soil without help. That is the explanation of the universal conviction in France that equality for Germany spells destruction, or at any rate insecurity, for France. That is why she has said that she will never, if she can possibly help it, agree to equality or to the ending of those discriminations against Germany which add to the strength of France, unless she has alliances with somebody else in exchange.

The French point of view, and from the military point of view



there is a great deal to be said for it, is that peace can only be maintained in Europe through the overwhelming military preponderance of one side. That is why French policy from the beginning has asked for guarantees from the United States and ourselves, and why, when these were either not forthcoming or rejected by Poincaré, she made alliances, first with Poland and the Little Entente, then when Germany re-armed, with Italy and Russia, and after Germany sent troops into the demilitarised zone, she asked for an alliance with us.

Let me now consider the problem on rather wider lines. There are only three ways in which Europe can be organised. There is the method of preponderance, in which on one side there is such an overwhelming mass of power that the other side, whether it feels it is justly or unjustly treated, knows that it has no chance of altering the *status quo* by means of war. That is a system which throughout history has never lasted very long, for the reason that the preponderant group tends to disintegrate, while the will to remedy inequality or injustice, even at the price of war, gets stronger and stronger among the weaker group, who finally endure the last sacrifices for the sake of what they call freedom or justice.

The second method is the system of the Balance of Power, in which two groups are roughly equal, so that neither dares to challenge the other. The objection to that system is that it makes any real change almost impossible, and that you inevitably get competition in armaments, because each side watches the size of the armaments of the other, in order to keep itself ahead in armaments or alliances. First one side increases the pace, then the other, and you get the situation you had before 1914—a situation which is re-appearing to-day—in which the military time-table becomes so rigid and the sense of the inevitability of war and conviction of the malice of the other side becomes so intense that a fool, a knave, or an accident can start the slide into a general war which nobody deliberately intended to start.

The third alternative is the League of Nations system, which in a sense combines the other two with some vital additions. It recognises on the one hand that there ought to be absolute preponderance as against military aggression, but it also recognises that if you are going to have stability the League must provide for change constantly, so as not to inflame the sense of injustice to the point of explosion. And, lastly, it must bring about disarmament, because without disarmament the mere competition in armaments blows everything else to pieces of its own accord

for the reason I have given. The League is obviously the right system if you can get it into operation. But it is well to remember that the Covenant does not rule war out altogether. It compels every Member to submit its disputes to pacific procedure for a period, but leaves it the right to resort to force if it fails to get redress. It is this vital element in the Covenant which gave the driving power behind revision while enabling the League to localise the conflict—a driving power which has been weakened by the Briand-Kellogg Pact.

Now a word about the immediate situation. My own view of it is that in the present crisis British public opinion says that Germany has essential justice on her side, that France has the law on her side, that we are in a particularly difficult position because we are guarantors of a one-sided treaty, and that above everything else we want to see negotiations started. France, on her side, is thinking above everything else, and from her point of view quite naturally, of seeing how she and her friends can keep complete military preponderance in Europe as a security for peace. Germany seeks equality, and that inherently must lead her back towards the Balance of Power. And we, in our bones, want the League of Nations solution: but that means not only predominance against an aggressor, but effective revision, so as to remove grievances, and disarmament, without which no League system will eventually last.

May I come now to one of the greatest and least understood difficulties. We in this country, perhaps by reason of the fact that we are an island and less open to attack than other people, inherently take a different view of the problem from our closest friends on the other side of the channel. I venture to think that if you took any average audience in this country, they would agree that if there is to be lasting peace in Europe, a peace of consent and not of coercion, a good many changes are still necessary in the post-War settlement. They are not very formidable, but Europe will not settle down until certain grievances are removed. The items, I think, would be somewhat as follows. In the long run Austria must be the judge of her own future. We cannot, and certainly will not go to war to perpetuate a system in which Austria is governed by the combination of Mussolini and the Pope. If Danzig, which is a German city, wants to rejoin Germany now that Poland has got Gdynia, it is not worth a war to prevent it. It would be wise for Poland to make some permanent arrangement for enabling Germany to have access to East Prussia while she has access to Gdynia. Something has got to be done about Memel. Colonies? They present a very difficult problem,

because we are torn between two groups of which one says : " Not an inch of British territory for anybody," and the other says : " I will never allow anybody for whom I am trustee to be under the control of repressive dictators like Mussolini or Hitler." So you have a combination, right and left. Apart from that I think that most people would say that if you could find some corner of the earth that would satisfy the *amour propre* of Germany, which has no overseas possessions to-day, it would contribute towards peace if it were given to her. Our view would be, if we want to make peace let us first remove grievances. For if we remove grievances there would be some hope of Germany settling down and being a good neighbour, while there will be none if the grievances are not removed.

The French view differs from that. Since they consider that military preponderance is what matters most, it follows that if you want to keep preponderance you must not offer to give away what people who seek to support the *status quo* want to retain. If you do they will not remain your allies. Besides, whatever you give Germany to-day she will ask for more to-morrow. War is inevitable directly preponderance goes, so do not weaken at all.

Yet, if you are unable to bring about revision required by justice, the League of Nations, or the new bad name for it, the system of collective security, becomes merely a system for maintaining the *status quo* by force. If the League becomes a mere instrument for preserving the *status quo* by force, it will inevitably disappear, for the reason that the justice without which it cannot survive and grow will no longer be its foundation.

There is a similar difficulty—although I do not think it is a deliberate difficulty—about Herr Hitler's proposals for a twenty-five years' peace. I think Herr Hitler wants twenty-five years' peace. He has often said : " I will never fight a war again about a frontier. It would be madness. No frontier can be worth the price of a modern war." But how can anybody guarantee twenty-five years of peace with the black spots still left in Europe? Nobody can do it ; not with the best will in the world. These crises will arise of themselves. Austria may produce a crisis at any time. Yet if peace is to last, changes must be constantly made in this *status quo*.

Why is it so impossible to make changes ? First, because every nation, as long as it has sovereign rights (and the League of Nations leaves every nation complete sovereignty), looks at every problem from its own point of view, and there is no power which can override it and coerce it into taking any other view.

What is far more important, every problem is looked at, not from the point of view of its merits, but primarily from the point of view of how it affects the security of the individual nation. The reason people object to the *Anschluss* is not that they object to the union of German Germans with Austrian Germans, but because the union of Austria and Germany would alter the strategic balance of Europe, threaten the security and independence of Czechoslovakia, and threaten the preponderance of the *status quo* Powers. That is the reason. In point of fact we ourselves look at questions which affect our security in just the same way. So change in the *status quo* becomes almost impossible, except by war, or threat of war. One side cannot acquiesce in the *status quo*, yet the other cannot alter it without weakening its own security or coherence. So you inevitably begin to move into a period of threat and counter-threat, ultimatum and counter-ultimatum, armaments competition, and so on, similar to that which began in 1904 and took shape in the Bosnia-Herzegovina case, the Agadir case, the Balkan war crisis, until finally you get a tension so great that the war almost comes about of its own accord.

This brings me to Britain's relationship to this apparently insoluble European question. I think the experience of the last year has brought home to everybody that in the last analysis the instrument of the League is war. For many years we thought that the League could keep the peace by conciliation, and obviously much the most important element in the League ought to be conciliation, and remedy of grievance. But in considering the aspect of the League which is called collective security we have got to recognise that, in the last resort, the instrument upon which the League has to rely is war. War for a collective or an international purpose, instead of for a national purpose, but none the less war. Experience of sanctions, in the easiest case in which they could have been applied, the Italian case, because Italy was more dependent on economic resources outside her own country than any other great Power, has proved that either they are ineffective or immeasurably slow in their effect, or that they bring you right up against the edge of war. In dealing with a great Power, therefore, you will only get the collective system to work if its members are prepared for war, and can exert irresistible power if war occurs. It must be remembered, however, that in a modern democracy there is a tremendously deep prejudice against war. No government will be able to lead Great Britain into war unless public opinion is behind it. Still less will it be able to continue long at war if

public opinion is divided. You can only get a democracy to undertake obligations involving war on two conditions. One, that it is absolutely convinced that it is fighting a war in the cause of justice, and the other that its own vital national interests are in one way or another engaged. That is the root of the difficulty between France and ourselves, British public opinion will not go to war about some of the things for which France thinks it is essential to go to war, i.e., to prevent German expansion or to maintain the preponderance system.

There, as I see it, is the root of the growing divergence of view in Europe. You cannot get the kind of military alliance system behind the collective system in Europe, about which Sir Norman Angell talked, if its inevitable purpose is to prevent revision; at least Great Britain will not participate in such a system. Collective security depends, in the ultimate contingency, on readiness to go to war. And there is a difference of opinion between France and Great Britain as to the things for which we would be prepared to go to war. We would go to war, for instance, to stop an unprovoked attack on France or Belgium, or an attempt by Germany or any other Power to establish a complete hegemony over the whole of the rest of Europe. We would not go to war about those questions in Eastern Europe concerning which the rest of Europe wants to build a sort of armed collective security system in order to maintain the *status quo* there.

I think it is vital that public men and public opinion should face that issue. We shall never clear up our attitude to Europe or give Europe a chance to solve her own problems until we do. What are we prepared to go to war about? If we do not face that issue and define our position we shall do to Europe what we have already done to the Abyssinians. I was opposed to the policy of September 11th, 1935, because I did not believe that, in a half-League, we could live up to it but, when we did adopt it, I thought that we ought to have closed the Suez Canal in order to compel a true peace conference. We must now face what we are prepared to go to war about in Europe before we can make any contribution whatever to the security or peace of Europe.

I think that this country might be willing to underwrite a system of collective security in Europe at the risk of war provided it thought it was a settlement which was just and could inherently endure. I am therefore going to be bold enough to put down the kind of elements of a settlement which I think British public opinion might support, if necessary, by war. (I do not suggest this, of course, as an immediate diplomatic manœuvre !)

1. That within a defined number of years a plebiscite, under

League of Nations supervision, should be taken in Austria as to her future, on questions agreed between Austria, Germany and the Council of the League.

2. That a settlement should be reached about the future of Memel within, say, three years.

3. That the Polish and German Governments be invited to discuss, at an early date, the future of Danzig and the provision of better means of access between Germany and East Prussia.

4. That the frontiers of Bulgaria and Hungary be reconsidered.

5. That, within one year, all the armies of continental Europe be reduced by 25 per cent. from their present figures.

6. That, within one year, no nation in Europe or Asia should possess more than 1,000 first line aeroplanes.

7. That no additions be made to existing navies.

8. That, within one year, all nations agree to reduce their present tariffs by 25 per cent., and also to abolish embargoes and quotas.

9. That the "colonial question" should be open for discussion, that military operations in Abyssinia should immediately cease, and that the policy of the "open door" in colonial areas should be restored.

10. That Germany should rejoin the League, and accept all its obligations.

If you could get a solution of that kind I believe you would have enduring peace in Europe, a League of Nations peace, which Great Britain would guarantee. Nor is there anything unreasonable about these proposals. An outsider would say they were only common sense. But suppose you cannot get a peace of this kind, are you prepared to go to war, to invite this country to go to war, for the *status quo*? That is the question you will be asked and which we shall have to answer. The real danger is that we shall not answer it and shall repeat to-day what happened before the War, and say: "Oh, well, don't let us raise difficulties. We have got round the Rhineland corner. We will wait till we get to the next corner and then turn that." That next corner is likely to be Austria—and then something else. That policy would be all right if we were prepared to go to war in each and all of these crises as they arise. I do not believe that we are prepared to go to war for questions in Eastern Europe, and therefore the sooner we make that clear to Europe the better for us, for Europe and for peace. Otherwise war will come and we shall be dragged into it exactly as we were in 1914. That is the real danger. Let us tell Europe the kind of settlement we will fight for and make it clear that we will not fight for any other.

I will now consider another hypothesis, because I think that, for the first time, we must consider it as a possible alternative.

If we could get a peace in Europe which would settle the major difficulties, we could then underwrite it. But supposing we cannot, and Europe staggers from one crisis to another with ever-increasing armaments piled to the skies, what ought our policy to be?

One reason for Great Britain's reluctance to enter into commitments in Europe is uncertainty about the dictatorships. I am not sure that the Italian dictatorship is not the worst from our point of view. I may be wrong, but it seems to me that Mussolini's long-distance plan is perfectly plain. He means to have a navy which will enable him to close the centre of the Mediterranean against everything except the whole British fleet, and an army—black and white—in Abyssinia. He will then wait until the British Navy has to go to the Far East or to the North Sea (or until we are in one of those many troubles in Europe in which some of our friends—and our enemies—are so anxious to involve us), when he will seize the opportunity to grab an empire which will include Libya, Egypt, the Sudan, Abyssinia, Somaliland, Palestine and Arabia. There is no other intelligible explanation of his policy. Abyssinia, in itself, is simply not worth the price he is paying for it. As a distinguished Italian said to me not long ago: "Yes, Mussolini is Napoleonic!"—remember that was the direction first taken by Napoleon.

Everybody is also quite obviously anxious about National-Socialist Germany. Whatever we may think about the way Germany has been treated since 1920 (and I think a good deal), I do not think any of us can fail to doubt the dangers latent in the National-Socialist régime: its intense brutality to its minorities, its ruthlessness, its inherent belief in force, as opposed to reason, manifested inside its own boundaries and inevitably likely to be manifested outside them also (for violence is the law of being of all dictatorships) and, finally, the immense power which exists in a totalitarian Germany.

I confess I have no confidence in Russia either. I think Russia wants peace. I am sure she wants peace. But if my reading both of the essence of the Communist dialectic and of Mr. Litvinov's policy is correct, Russia is confident that the way to security and peace for herself is to maintain discord in Europe. As long as Europe is discordant, there is no chance of there being an attack by capitalist Powers on Russia. And if the discord does precipitate itself in war, Communism itself may well be the beneficiary. I thought the most sinister speech ever made at the Council of the League since its inception was that of Mr. Litvinov a few weeks ago—a speech which was a bid not for peace but for sowing discord in Europe.

We have, therefore, some hesitations in this country about committing ourselves very deeply to Europe, because of the dictatorships.

Is Europe more likely to make peace with us or without us? I do not think there is the slightest chance of Europe making peace so long as we allow either group to bid for our support. We do not like to be told that because, as every foreigner will agree, our principal characteristic is self-righteousness; and our self-righteousness takes the form of being so confident that we are right (and we very often are right!) that we are prepared to do everybody else's business for them. That is the secret of what opposition to us there is inside the British Empire to-day. We shall be quite willing to take on Europe's problems if we are flattered enough. But I am inclined to think that Europe will never make peace within herself until we leave her to do her own work. I am not sure that Europe might not come to peace if it were made quite clear that no group in Europe could hope for a military alliance with us, that we were not concerned in that aspect of the European game at all.

We are told that we must join up with the *status quo* group because Germany is becoming so strong and so determined on expansion that our strength is necessary to maintain this group in a position to resist her. I think, however, that the Franco-Soviet military alliance should have as much significance for us as for Germany. It means that there is an immense accession of strength to the *status quo* group in Europe—without us. The following figures, obtained from the Information Department of Chatham House, give an indication of the strength of the armies and air forces in Europe. They are necessarily very rough, because no one really knows the present figures of the armies and air-forces of the world, and still less their morale and therefore their effective striking power.

				<i>Army.</i>	<i>Front Line Aeroplanes.</i>
France	...	...	...	530,000 (including 210,000 overseas)	1,670
Belgium	...	...	...	86,000 (including 17,000 overseas)	180-200
Czechoslovakia	...	...	...	200,000	400
Poland	...	...	...	266,000	500
Roumania	...	...	...	240,000	250
Soviet Russia	...	...	...	1,300,000	3,000
Yugoslavia	...	...	...	200,000	350-400
				2,822,000	6,420



I am not taking into account para-military formations, which exist in all countries, but front line armies. If you include Italy (I have treated her as neutral for the moment), she has 370,000 men on a peace basis and 1,300 aeroplanes.

On the other hand is the following position :—

				<i>Army.</i>	<i>Front Line Aeroplanes.</i>
Germany	...	...	...	550,000	900 <small>(expanding rapidly to 1,500)</small>
Hungary	...	...	...	34,000	—
Bulgaria	...	...	...	30,000	—
				<hr style="width: 100%; border: 0.5px solid black;"/>	<hr style="width: 100%; border: 0.5px solid black;"/>
				614,000 say, 1,500	
				<hr style="width: 100%; border: 0.5px solid black;"/>	<hr style="width: 100%; border: 0.5px solid black;"/>
Then Japan has (approx.)	...	...	...	320,000	900

Thus, speaking purely in terms of numbers, which I admit are inadequate in themselves, you have 2,800,000 troops on the one hand, on the other 600,000, and over 6,000 aeroplanes on one side and approximately 1,500 on the other. There is, therefore, still preponderance on the *status quo* side, without us, and even without Italy. All who had anything to do with the last War know the immense advantage possessed by the Power in the central position, and how easy it is, if the small Powers are isolated, for a large army to deal with them one by one. None the less I think that the present day argument, that we must rush in a panic to the military succour of the *status quo* Powers, is utterly and entirely unfounded. If co-ordinated military preparation against an impending invasion by Germany is necessary, the first step is for the *status quo* Powers in Europe to make effective arrangements among themselves and not to ask us to do their work for them or to bind ourselves to guarantee a *status quo* which we do not believe in and for which our people will not fight. We are more likely to help to preserve the peace by keeping our arms well prepared, having no commitments and being able to place our weight in a crisis where it will have most effect.

We shall be asked if it is possible for this country to stand aside in the event of a European war. It is very doubtful, though I do not feel it is impossible, for us to keep out of a European war, unless that war seems to threaten the independence of France and Belgium or to result in a hegemony over Europe. But in my view there is all the difference in the world between being automatically committed to go to war when somebody else presses the button, and going to war on our own decision on issues about which we can be sure of having our countrymen

unitedly behind us. The more committed we are, the more certain it will be that we shall be the first Power to be attacked. Personally, I would give without the slightest reserve an absolute guarantee to France and Belgium against unprovoked aggression of their frontiers and soil ; but I would make it absolutely clear that the *casus fœderis* could never occur as a result of war arising from treaties between France and other countries.

Again, is it possible for Great Britain, to-day, to make military commitments both to preserve the peace of Europe, and to preserve the British Commonwealth? The British Commonwealth and the American Monroe system are the two great free systems left in the world. The British system covers a quarter of the earth's surface, and within it there is increasing self-government and liberty. It is a big job to preserve it. Are we going to do more good to the world by risking our power to do that by trying to keep peace in a mad-house? You must remember that in addition to the problems inside Europe, account must be taken of Japan and the colonial aspirations of Italy.

If there is another European war, what will it be fought about? Before we undertake any commitments let us be sure that we shall be asked to fight about something that is worth while. Is it going to be fought to maintain a system in which twenty-six nations have tariffs to the skies and armies prepared to their last man, aeroplane and tank? Is that what we are going to fight to preserve? I do not think anybody to-day would say that such a system is worth a million British lives; and yet what else is Europe going to fight about except either to preserve that system or to redraw her boundaries into a few economic empires or *Zollvereins*? If Europe does go to war—and I do not say she will—as a result of all the factors I have described, does our experience of the last adventure warrant the belief that if we spent another million British lives we should solve her problems?

Is there another way forward? I believe that this country does believe in the ideas behind the Covenant of the League of Nations, that it does believe with its whole heart that a system of law must be created in the world if civilisation is to survive. But suppose the attempt to make the League of Nations system work in Europe (and that involves revision and disarmament as well as collective action against aggression) breaks down, is there another road to the essential ideals underlying the League? I think there may be.

Mr. Walter Lippman, the distinguished American publicist, gave an address about a year and a half ago in one of the New England towns which made a deep impression on me. After

discussing the failure of President Wilson's attempt to create a new world order, which involved active co-operation by the United States, he recalled the fact that during the nineteenth century there had been no world war, whereas during the two previous centuries there had been continuous world wars. Why was that so? It was, he said, because after the victory at Trafalgar and the establishment of a predominant British fleet, no war could be a world war in which Great Britain was not involved. If Great Britain was involved in war, that war was liable to become a world war, not only because she was a world empire, but because she inevitably involved the United States, either against her or on her side, because of the difficulty known as the "Freedom of the Seas." There were local wars during the nineteenth century. Why was there no world war during that century, the greatest century of progress of which we have record? Because nobody dared to attack the British Navy. Many people wanted to go out into the outside world, as did the Kaiser at the time of the Boer War, but none could do anything unless they were prepared to fight the British Navy. But as soon as a nation arose which was prepared to fight the British Navy, namely Germany, there was a world war.

Supposing the League's attempt in Europe fails (by which I mean the creation of a true League system and not a mere set of military alliances, masquerading as the League, for the maintenance of the *status quo*), is it possible to re-create that nineteenth century situation in the present century? Because if you can do that you can prevent world war, even if you cannot prevent local wars, and that will be a tremendous gain for mankind. Of course, it could be done quite easily if the United States and the British Empire worked together, for the reason that collectively they have overwhelming financial and industrial resources, ten units of naval power against the rest of the world's five, immense commercial shipping, most vigorous peoples, all the natural resources which are necessary, every single naval base that matters and control of all the narrow waters of the world. If that combination were made, they could play the same game that Great Britain played in the last century. Nobody would dare to attack them and, therefore, they could guarantee that there would be no world war. Further, there would be a centre of gravity in the world, both liberal and preponderant in its own area, and a real nucleus round which a League of democratic nations could exist in security.

Of course the difficulties in the way are immense. I need only mention two. Firstly, you will never achieve it until Great

Britain has ceased to have commitments in Europe (apart from a guarantee to France and Belgium against really unprovoked aggression) because the United States has made up her mind, once and for all, that her intervention in Europe in 1917 was a waste of effort, that somehow or other Europe must solve her own problems and that she is not going to be associated, in any way, with European commitments. The second difficulty is that the United States has yet to realise that she cannot be indifferent to the result of the next war, if it comes, and that her own security and peace may be made more certain by partial than by total isolation.

I am not suggesting that such a system is in sight, but I am not certain that events may not bring it nearer, though it will not be brought any nearer by sentimental talk about Anglo-American relations. But, if we ever make up our minds that we must refuse military commitments which will involve us in war in Europe, there is an alternative policy, which if it could be brought about, would ensure liberty and freedom over half the world, would create really enduring foundations upon which a League of democratic nations could function in perpetuity, would end world wars, and might assist in bringing peace to Europe by creating an indestructible element of power, democratic and liberal, outside it.

In conclusion, I want to say again, as I said at the beginning, that the central question we have to decide is: "What is the British democracy prepared to go to war about? And what are the other Empire democracies prepared to fight for?" When we have decided that we shall know whether we can say to our friends: "Yes, you can count on us to back the *status quo* in Europe, except in so far as you agree to modify it," or whether we can say, as a very able Canadian friend urged that we should say to Europe, "primarily it is your business to make peace in the European region yourselves. We are only concerned in the stability of its Western frontiers."

#### *Summary of Discussion.*

MR. P. V. EMRYS-EVANS said he agreed with Lord Lothian in regard to public opinion; there was a danger that there might be doubt in the public mind as to the Government's policy. Public opinion was by no means crystallised; it was, indeed, very nebulous. A great change had taken place in the attitude in the House of Commons and in the country since Mr. Eden's speech of March 26, and it was important that this should be followed up. We should keep

very clearly in our minds the danger of reproducing the state of things which preceded the Great War. He did not agree that the pre-War position had arisen as a result of military agreements. It was largely due to the policy of the German Government of those days, which was similar to the policy of the German Government to-day: to strike first and to talk afterwards. They struck once too often, and then there was a war. It was due also to the policy of surrender of the then Liberal Government, always giving something away and running after Germany with further offers. It was the old policy of paying "Danegeld" and it failed then as it always would fail.

We were always talking in this country as though France were a kind of distressed damsel whom we had to succour, but France was just as necessary to us as we were to France. When France trusted us we were able to make our influence felt. France had lost confidence in us after our withdrawal from the Treaty of Mutual Assistance, and the result was the invasion of the Ruhr. The position remained bad until Sir Austen Chamberlain regained French confidence, and brought her into the Locarno Treaty. After Lord Snowden's speech at the Hague, in 1929, and subsequent events, France lost confidence in us again, and became unmanageable. To-day we were regaining our influence as a result of Mr. Eden's speech.

We must remember, too, that the unsettled state of Europe and our own policy of re-armament were due entirely to German re-armament.

Mr. Evans considered that the Rhineland issue could have been liquidated by negotiation during the past year, had Germany been willing to do this.

It was essential that this country should consider the question of colonies as early as possible as it was a most difficult issue for Great Britain. It was a test case: were we prepared to give up the colonies or not? People must make up their minds.

MR. J. H. HARLEY agreed that the chief trouble at the moment was the confused state of public opinion. He had heard ex-Service men say that they would prefer to fight against France than against Germany.

Let us negotiate, but let us look at the German Memorandum realistically. He did not think Lord Lothian had done so. We should not have said much to a breach of the Versailles Treaty. In fact, Germany had already broken that Treaty and it had been overlooked, but Locarno was another matter. Hitler did not even say that Germany was forced into Locarno, as Lord Lothian contended; he only said in the Memorandum: How can you conceive any nation voluntarily surrendering its sovereign rights over its own territory? The obvious answer to this was that Germany did so, and did it voluntarily.

Mr. Harley said that he had taken a melancholy view of the Locarno Treaty at the time of its inception, because it separated the

East from the West of Europe. He believed that that Treaty had been the millstone round the neck of the Disarmament Conference, because it had been impossible to get the nations of the East to assent to a limitation that they would have assented to had they felt their position secure, or had they felt Great Britain was whole-hearted in her support of collective security. Incidentally, Hitler, in his Memorandum, threw over the Locarno Treaty but built his proposals on the same division between East and West which had been implicit in the Locarno provisions. He offered France various concessions, but left Russia out altogether.

Mr. Harley agreed that we must be prepared for war if we were to make collective security watertight. Economic sanctions were not enough, as the information which he had received on the effect of sanctions in Italy plainly showed.

As regards isolation, either we belonged to Europe or we did not. We must be honest, and either disinterest ourselves or be wholehearted in our support of the League of Nations.

SIR FRANCIS LINDLEY said he agreed with Lord Lothian as to the necessity of guaranteeing the frontiers of France and Belgium against aggression, but he would like to hear how he reconciled that with his policy of clearing out of Europe altogether. Sir Francis considered the most valuable part of the speech was that in which Lord Lothian had emphasised the necessity of our knowing what our responsibilities were, since it was no use backing the League of Nations unless we were prepared to go to war for it. This fact had been lost sight of in Great Britain: to go in for sanctions unless we were prepared to go to war was folly.

Sir Francis Lindley did not entirely agree with Lord Lothian as to the events leading up to the Great War. Although Germany was possibly not solely responsible, he considered that her intolerable arrogance was the root cause of the War. He himself had been in the Diplomatic Service before the War, and he knew that Germany was "on the nerves" of every country in Europe. He regretted to see a strong resemblance to that position to-day. He had just come back from the Continent, where the deepest pessimism reigned, produced solely by the state of affairs in Germany. She had spent almost a thousand million pounds yearly on armaments for the past two years, and had five or six million people engaged in manufacturing munitions, whilst her whole population was raised to a fever-pitch of bellicosity. No wonder sober people on the Continent considered war inevitable in the next two or three years. Sir Francis would be interested to hear how Lord Lothian proposed to deal with this appalling and imminent danger.

BRIGADIER-GENERAL SPEARS said that there were high-lights and shadows in Lord Lothian's interesting picture of the situation; the shadows had gathered thickly upon any errors that Germany might

have committed, and the lights shone brilliantly on her virtues.

Lord Lothian's picture was somewhat biased. He seemed to think that the Franco-Soviet Pact justified Germany in her action, and omitted to say that Germany was asked to join that Pact, and might have done so. Lord Lothian had also said that France wanted preponderance. France only wanted such preponderance through the League of Nations. She had never put forward any other demand. Lord Lothian then said that Germany would not make war over a frontier, but it seemed to General Spears that she had run a risk of such a war by her action the other day.

Lord Lothian had said that Great Britain was singularly unprepared to go to war, but it seemed to General Spears that last October this country had shown that it was prepared to run that risk in support of the League of Nations. It was important to remember in that connection that we had then asked the French for staff talks, when we felt ourselves threatened by Italy because of the support we were giving the League of Nations, and that these staff talks took place and resulted in support being guaranteed to us by France at sea, on land in North Africa and in the air. All these guarantees were given us under Article 16 of the League Covenant, which as we know is not a precise undertaking on the part of any nation to come to the help of another in a specific way. In the circumstances it was at least reasonable that the French should ask for staff talks under the very precise undertakings of the Locarno Pact.

General Spears was disappointed that Lord Lothian had not dealt with the German Memorandum which had been published in the press that morning. He would like to know if Lord Lothian was satisfied with the proposals or not. Did he think they dealt with the present situation, or were they content with painting a very rosy picture of the future? Was it not the fact that there was nothing in those proposals which had not been contained in Herr Hitler's speech of May 21, 1935, or of March 7, 1936? Had not Herr Hitler refused every one of the proposals put forward in the British White Paper?

Surely it was a strange attitude on the part of Herr Hitler, having broken the Treaty of Locarno, that he should object to our fulfilling our very definite obligations under that instrument? The staff talks represented our minimum contribution under that Treaty. Did not Lord Lothian consider that if confidence is to be re-established in the value of treaties, Herr Hitler should at least make some contribution? If he promised not to erect fortifications in the demilitarised zone for a given period, this might be accepted as an adequate gesture.

LORD LLOYD said that he found himself in cordial agreement with Lord Lothian in his estimate of the present dangerous activities of Russia. The Franco-Soviet Pact was indeed one of the most difficult features of the situation for those who, like himself, believed that we were bound both by interest and in honour to stand by France.

The Great War had been brought about not solely by Germany's

naval competition but by a long series of carefully planned challenges on her part, all over the world, to the existence and power of Great Britain—by her “*Drang nach Osten*,” by her determination to cut athwart our communications to India. Had Lord Lothian forgotten the Agadir incident, the Baghdad Railway, the threat to the Persian Gulf and the Madeira question?

Lord Lloyd was glad to hear Lord Lothian say that collective security could only be based on the strength of Great Britain. This was a tardy discovery, however, on his part, when for the last six or seven years unilateral disarmament had been held to be the only road to peace. This discovery was particularly welcome to those, like himself, who for the last six years had been preaching amid much opposition and obloquy the urgent needs of national defence. The Government was at last awakening to the fact that Great Britain's power for peace depended upon the strength of her armaments.

Lord Lothian had put the biggest question of all at the end of his paper, as to how far our intervention in European affairs would ultimately be compatible with co-operation in the British Commonwealth. We could only look forward for a few years, and Lord Lloyd thought that for the present the Dominions and the Empire could only be maintained upon common British standards and British strength. The Empire was still the biggest League of Nations, and the most decisive force for peace if we chose to empower it.

But Great Britain could not abandon France. He thought that there was no man or woman in the room who would not prefer the French system of civilisation to the German. France stood for the great Catholic tradition of a free Europe; life under the German system would be insupportable to Englishmen.

The trouble to-day was that there was no leadership in the country. If only somebody had had the courage to teach the people of Great Britain the truth, they would certainly support it.

MR. ROBERT BOOTHBY, M.P., said he had listened with great interest to Lord Lothian's deplorable speech. He considered the most remarkable part of it was that which implied that, in the present Rhineland dispute, justice was on Germany's side and that the people in Great Britain held this view. Mr. Boothby did not consider that anybody in Great Britain thought Germany had justice on her side in this particular issue. Germany had freely signed the Treaty of Locarno, chiefly to avoid another Ruhr occupation. Injustice had been done her by the Versailles Treaty, not by Locarno; but that map had been drawn by Lord Lothian, although he would now like to forget it. In 1918, the French were hanging on to Mr. Lloyd George's coat-tails to restrain him. Mr. Boothby said that nobody of his generation would defend that Treaty, but the frontiers were there. An American journalist had said to him recently: “Those frontiers are not good, but if you want to change them you will probably have to go to war. If it is a choice between the frontiers and war, I would choose the



frontiers, if I were a European." Mr. Boothby thought there was much truth in that remark. This did not mean that it was impossible to have revision of certain questions such as Memel and Danzig ; but it would be quite impossible to allow Austria and Germany to amalgamate.

If we were going to talk of frontiers and concessions in Europe, we must also face up to the question of colonies. That was the acid test for us. He would remind the audience of what we were all saying three or four months ago, when the threat was not to the French frontier, but to Egypt, the Sudan, and the Suez Canal. We put up a tremendous moral song-and-dance then about collective security ; and France answered our appeals, admittedly after some reluctance. Nevertheless she did answer them, and said she would come to our support if our fleet was attacked by Italy at Alexandria. How could we take this high moral line when the threat was to our own interests, and a severely practical view when it came to a threat to the frontiers of France ? The two things were wholly incompatible. If we betrayed the principle of collective security now we should never be able to hold up our heads again ; but he thought we should not betray it.

As regards Isolation, that was a policy which had been found impossible by Great Britain for five hundred years. We could never see a single great Power astride Europe or in the Low Countries.

The only alternative was the League of Nations, the whole League and nothing but the League. This country had not had a lead as yet ; public opinion was worried and waiting for that lead. Mr. Eden's recent speech in the House had been the nearest approach to it, and it had aroused a wonderful response. There was no doubt as to how this country would stand if the issue were fairly put before it.

That issue was not between France and Germany, but between the reign of force and the reign of law—between tyranny and freedom.

We must now get back to Geneva as soon as possible and discuss the German proposals there. If we took our stand upon the League, Mr. Boothby believed that we should have 100 per cent. assent to a firm declaration of that policy from the Dominions.

SIR NORMAN ANGELL asked what was the policy which Lord Lothian offered to the British public. It seemed to be abandonment of the League, Isolation, re-armament and naval co-operation with the United States.

Isolation had been impossible not merely for five hundred years but for two thousand. There had not been one century since 55 B.C. in which we had not been concerned in the movements of power on the Continent.

If you could get this hegemony with the United States, what would happen to the *status quo*, about which Lord Lothian was so disturbed ? The *status quo* embodied grievances which had to be remedied. Lord Lothian had given a long list of such grievances. How was an Anglo-American Navy to bring about redress ? By merely sitting on the safety valve ? Or letting war take place ? But

if war took place the last *status quo* was always worse than the first. Only institution of third-party judgment offered any hope of modification of the *status quo* other than at the will of a victor. You could not get that method until you said you would stand for those States that would accept third-party judgment and peaceful discussion. The present Europe was in many respects a less workable Europe than the one we had destroyed ; the old Austrian Empire had at least been an economic unit.

Sir Norman Angell suggested that if our neutrality in the West was secured, the Nazi dictatorship would be free to re-cast frontiers in the East, and the Fascist dictatorship to establish that Mediterranean empire of which Lord Lothian had spoken. There would then be so great a preponderance of power in Europe against France that she would be helpless, and we should be exactly in the same position as we were in 1914. We had to prevent such a situation arising, and we could only do this by the collective system. At this juncture we had in a sense to choose between Germany and France, and Sir Norman chose France, not because one nation was necessarily more moral than another, but because, as Lord Lothian had himself said, France could not stand by herself, which meant that she had the most powerful of all reasons for being in favour of a real collective system and of a united Europe—the reason of self-preservation and defence ; whereas Germany, potentially so much more powerful, had a chance of standing on her own individual power. The whole character of Hitler's pronouncements showed that Germany was in favour of "each for himself" in the matter of defence. Germany believed that out of anarchy there might come a position of domination for herself. The collective method meant the end of the domination of Europe by a single State.

We must not ask Germany to accept anything we should not be prepared to accept ourselves, but we must stand for the collective method. It should be for us to remember that the place to defend Abyssinia was on the Rhine, and for the French to remember that the place to defend the Rhine was in Abyssinia.

MR. NEWBOLD emphasised the necessity for agreement within the British Commonwealth of Nations, so that the Dominions would send their men if a crisis were to occur. He did not think that the great masses in the Commonwealth were prepared to lay down their lives for the principle of a League of Nations, but they would be prepared to defend Britain across the narrow seas. It was a question not of the logic of principles, but of historical development.

He did not believe that the frontiers of Eastern Europe were fixed. He believed from repeated visits to the area in January, 1923, that the occupation of the Ruhr had been justified to prevent what might then have occurred between Germany and Russia. That was once more the danger-spot. We must not let the Soviets throw the apple of discord between the Western Powers.

Unless we were very careful we should celebrate the twentieth

anniversary of the Bolshevik Revolution by the World Revolution, which could only come as the result of war. The Red Army was not organised and would not enter Europe as an invading army, but would do so to assist revolution. If we went on quarrelling like this, the masses would say "A plague on both your houses!" and start a struggle for power in every country, which would bring us face to face with the World Revolution.

LORD LOTHIAN said that, although most of the speakers had disagreed with him, he thought that the point of view he had put forward would more and more come to the front in Great Britain in the next three or four months. As regard the remarks of Mr. Emrys-Evans he felt that unless we were prepared to admit that Germany had a case we should inevitably drift back to war. All peace must be founded on justice and the people of Great Britain had, latterly, realised that the present régime in Germany was largely the result of the unfair treatment which Germany had had from her neighbours for nearly twenty years.

He assured Mr. Boothby that his picture of Mr. Lloyd George being held back by M. Clemenceau at Paris was merely picturesque romancing. He reminded him that the frontiers which were causing the most difficulty to-day were the Polish frontiers imposed by Mr. Woodrow Wilson and M. Clemenceau, contrary to the efforts of Mr. Lloyd George.

He did not think that British public opinion wholly supported the British White Paper; he was quite certain that public opinion thought some of the proposals, notably for the despatch of an international force to the Rhineland by ourselves and the Italians, were simply ridiculous.

Replying to Sir Norman Angell he said that, before the War, the latter wrote a remarkable book called *The Great Illusion* in which he attributed war to the belief that nations could gain advantages by means of war, and in which he proved that no nation could make a profit out of modern war. The book, however, ignored the main cause of war—anarchy brought about by national sovereignty—as Sir Norman would probably now admit. In the same way, to-day, Sir Norman ignored the difficulties in the way of his proposals for armed collective security caused by the principle of national sovereignty entrenched in the League. He (Lord Lothian) thought that collective security could only be achieved when nations had reached the point where they were willing to pool some of their sovereignty. He advised people to read the Federalist Papers written by Alexander Hamilton, Madison and Jay, on the subject. This led Lord Lothian to repeat his main point that collective security could only be effective in so far as its upholders were prepared, in the last resort, to go to war. He did not think the people of Great Britain would fight to maintain the *status quo* in Europe. He thought that they would fight for France or Belgium (in the case of unprovoked aggression), or for the interests of

the British Commonwealth. If that were the case the sooner we stated plainly what we would do and what we would not do the sooner there would be a basis upon which permanent peace could be built in Europe. Until we made up our minds on this point there would be no certain basis upon which Europe could build.

He felt that public opinion in Great Britain was becoming more and more opposed to the idea of war for the kind of issues which were coming to the forefront in Europe. We would not guarantee a *status quo* in which we did not believe or which we did not think was just. That being the case the British public would inevitably wish to limit very strictly its military commitments in Europe, and would endeavour to find a way of preserving liberty and the League of Nations idea through the British Commonwealth of Nations and the democracies of the rest of the world, rather than by being tied up to a Europe dominated by military alliances, committed to the *status quo*, and armed to the point of bankruptcy—even though this travesty were called a League of Nations.

LORD ASTOR said he would make no attempt to summarise the three discussions on the present situation, but he wished to submit some searching questions to stimulate reflection and discussion.

Europe had been on the brink of war. Could this have been avoided? Were there any steps which might have been taken by other countries during the past few years which might have removed those causes which induced Germany to run the risk of war and, on other occasions, Italy and Japan to challenge the world. If so why were they not taken? Are there any other smouldering fires which may at an unexpected moment burst into flames and which in any case create a sense of insecurity?

What have we all to learn from the events of the past few months? The questions he wished to put were as follows:—

Is our present machinery for the peaceful treatment of grievances and revision of treaties inadequate? or is *the will to make use of it* lacking?

Are the League of Nations, as now constituted, and the Covenant, as now drafted, instruments capable firstly of defining and secondly of remedying such grievances as arise out of war treaties, or out of questions of minorities, frontiers, colonies, economic strangulation, desire to change internal form of government, insecurity, armaments, prestige, etc.?

Should those Powers with vested interests in the maintenance of the *status quo* have their present facilities for hampering discussion especially when alteration may involve changes at their expense? If they insist on refusing discussion, is the *status quo* likely to be altered forcibly?

If the coercive clauses of the League of Nations Covenant were strengthened would grievances be dealt with more rapidly? or, alternatively, would League Members be more likely to make use

of Article 19 if less emphasis were laid upon the clauses relating to Sanctions? In other words, have those countries which are satisfied with the *status quo* felt in the past that they could resist any constructive consideration of claims made by dissatisfied countries because they could mobilise support for their opposition through the coercive clauses of the Covenant?

Conversely, would the dissatisfied Powers be more inclined to take the law into their own hands?

Should the Covenant and League be used (a) more for preventing the outbreak of war by conference, and for mediation after wars have begun, and (b) less for taking coercive action when wars have begun?

What light do the Italo-Abyssinian and the Sino-Japanese conflicts throw on this?

Would America's attitude towards the League be altered if the coercive clauses were modified?

Is it possible to get adequate co-operation and security between members of an international organisation unless, and until, its members have given up certain sovereign rights to a central authority?

How much of the claim for colonies would be met if there were the "open door" in all colonies as an alternative to territorial re-distribution?

How far is the claim for colonies due to psychological motives?

How far should Great Britain's commitments be limited? Should our commitments be military or economic, regional or universal? What should be the extent of our military commitments outside the Locarno area?

How far can a national interest be defined?

Should we commit ourselves to fight where no immediate territorial, economic, or strategic British interests are involved? Is the maintenance of peace itself a British interest? If so, at what cost should it be protected?

How does public opinion in other countries view these questions in so far as they involve action on their part?

How far do collective commitments, whether military or economic, endanger the solidarity of the British Empire? (or are they a bond between the Commonwealth countries as League Members?)

Are alliances compatible with "collective action"? or can effective collective action only be organised regionally?

Will a "policy of encirclement" lead to war? Or, does the predominance in arms and industrial power of a country over any single neighbour compel each neighbour to take more precaution than single action can provide?

Does the experience against Germany in 1914-1918 and against Italy in 1935-1936—not to speak of the four years' experience of the Southern States in the American Civil War—indicate that

collective economic action cannot make itself felt in a sufficiently short time and without the backing of force to be effective against a determined and powerful nation ?

There is nothing so dangerous as a foreign policy based on complacency or vague phrases, or on ignoring fact, or on inadequate study.

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