

THE CAUSES OF THE WAR

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THOMAS NELSON AND SONS LTD

LONDON EDINBURGH PARIS MELBOURNE

TORONTO AND NEW YORK

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THOMAS NELSON & SONS LTD
35-36 PATERNOSTER ROW, LONDON, E.C.4 ; PARKSIDE
WORKS, EDINBURGH ; 25 RUE DENFERT-ROCHEREAU,
PARIS ; 312 FLINDERS STREET, MELBOURNE ;
91-93 WELLINGTON STREET WEST, TORONTO ;
385 MADISON AVENUE, NEW YORK.

First published, 1940

IN MEMORIAM

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MARGARET STOBIE KEITH

AND

MARGARET BALFOUR KEITH

PREFACE

It is the aim of this work to trace the motives which have induced the German people, under the leadership of a man of disordered genius, to enter into a course of action aiming at world hegemony at the expense of the liberty of thought and action of other peoples, and to indicate the causes of the disintegration of the machinery which was created after the Great War in the hope that its operation would save the world from the recurrence of that grievous disaster. It is doubtless difficult, at a time when German atrocities in Poland and Czechoslovakia, and Russian aggression on Finland, have shocked the public conscience of Europe and America, to escape the tendency to deny or minimize the grievances of Germany, and to ignore or gloss over the errors of the Western Powers. But I have thought it more profitable to adhere to the judgments on the issues dealt with which I have expressed in other works and in correspondence to the *Scotsman* contemporaneously with the events themselves. It is, I think, plain that war might have been avoided, had western statesmen understood earlier and appreciated the candid revelation of himself given by Herr Hitler in *Mein Kampf*, and had realized that they must not judge him by the standards of everyday political life. It might also have been prevented, had Herr Hitler ever understood the British character in its fundamental soundness, instead of believing that it was expressed in the social groups frequented by Herr von Ribbentrop or even by the

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most determinedly pacifist of British Prime Ministers. Nor would it have been inevitable, if the British people had realized that great possessions entail great responsibilities ; that a realm acquired by heroic activities cannot be retained by inertia ; and that, while peace may seem to the inhabitants of a satiated country the obvious ideal for man, dwellers in less happily situated lands may see in war the legitimate means of wresting from those unworthy to retain them the living spaces requisite for the life and expansion of a race with higher ideals. If historians ought to place on Germany the major responsibility for the present conflict, they ought nevertheless to add that, had Britain and France remained faithful to their traditions, and had they honourably fulfilled their clear obligations, the conditions which invited German aggression would never have been presented. The war will have been fought in vain, if the peoples do not emerge from it determined that they shall never again allow themselves to surrender principles of international obligation for selfish reasons of immediate advantage.

It would serve no useful purpose to endeavour to define principles to eliminate causes of war, for war is inherent in human nature, but I have noted some of the fundamental difficulties which rule out as practicable solutions the current dogmas of Federal Union and the revival of the League of Nations. As we failed utterly by the peace treaties after the Great War to save the world from any future conflict, so nothing we can do now will assure us lasting peace. But if we consider carefully the causes of the present conflict we may at least hope to avoid in any settlement we achieve the most obvious of the defects of the past.

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Though much light has been cast on the causes of the war by the official publications of the British, French, Polish, and German Governments, there remain serious lacunæ in our knowledge. The decision of the British Government not to publish papers dealing with relations with Germany as regards Czechoslovakia between Munich and March 1939 must be accepted as an admission that nothing passed calculated to impress on Herr Hitler the determination of Britain to secure the independence of that state within her new boundaries. This is confirmed by Lord Halifax's incautious admission on 20th January (promptly censored by the *Bulletin of International News*) that all contentious points arising from the Munich accord were settled in favour of Germany, and by Sir Nevile Henderson's confession in his *Failure of a Mission* (published after this work was written) that Germany did little to honour his friend Marshal Göring's promise to be generous. It was the duty of Britain to uphold Czechoslovakia's interests, and the failure of the Foreign Secretary and the Ambassador alike, and the similar negligence of France, clearly convinced Herr Hitler of the truth of his interpretation of Munich, as the withdrawal of Britain and France from intervention in eastern Europe, and led to his decision to act decisively against Poland.

The decision to withhold the papers on the negotiations with Russia, which were originally promised, leaves no option but to accept the substantial truth of the Russian version, which incidentally is confirmed by the absence of any denial in the *Polish White Book*. That book and the other matter so far published leave us completely in the dark why Poland was left exposed to a German attack,

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which she was patently unable to resist, without the making of Allied arrangements to afford her immediate assistance at least in the form of an effective diversion on the Western Front. The apportionment of responsibility for so grave an error must remain for the future ; Poland seems to have completely overestimated her strength and underestimated that of Germany, while British and French ministers may, like Sir N. Henderson, have unwisely clung until almost the end to the hope that by some miracle Europe would be spared the affliction of a wholly unjustified war.

I have endeavoured to regard German action with as much objectivity as practicable. To denounce Herr Hitler as a "homicidal lunatic" or a "mad dog" when he achieves the subjection of a not obviously reluctant Denmark and establishes a most dangerous hold on a divided Norway, is really inconsistent with national dignity. Nor are efforts to ignore the solidarity of the German people behind their Führer of any value. To deplore the training in false ideals of Nazi youth is legitimate only if we equally condemn the moral and intellectual decadence of our conscientious objectors and their panegyrists, the sophisms of our pacifists in State and Church alike, and the blind subservience of our Communists to M. Stalin. Germany cannot be blamed if she underestimates the courage and virtue of a country whose National Union of Students can arrive at resolutions of the type of those of the Leeds Conference of March 1940.

While considerations of immediate interest explain and may justify efforts to conciliate Italy, it is not incumbent on a detached commentator on events to ignore the prime responsibility in Europe of Signor Mussolini for the de-

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struction of peace and security, or to pass over the abiding hostility of the Duce so conspicuously evidenced in his glorification of the German aggression on Norway and Denmark, and his acceptance of the ludicrous allegations of Herr von Ribbentrop on the 27th April of an Allied intention to invade Norway and of Norwegian readiness to enter the war on the side of the Allies. It is only too plain that Italy's action is in entire harmony with the classical model set in 1899 by the German Emperor, when he instigated the Press to violent denunciations of Britain's action, in the darkest days of the Boer War, in order to blackmail the British Government into surrendering Samoa. It is, unhappily, clear that a strong element of British opinion continues to delude itself into the belief in the fundamental friendship of the Italian people for Britain, and to ignore the solid support of Italian youth for the imperial ideals of the Duce, which can be secured only at the cost of vital injury to the power of France and Britain in the Mediterranean. It is a grave source of weakness in the British war effort that influential bodies of opinion remain deliberate adherents of the illusion that fundamentally there is no essential conflict between the welfare of the British people and the ideals of the German and Italian peoples, as distinct from those of their rulers.

In dealing with Russia, objectivity is extremely hard to attain. A section of British opinion has deliberately renounced all freedom of judgment, and has so completely subjected itself to M. Stalin that it has justified and even extolled the aggression of Russia on Finland. Yet there is not much greater intellectual or moral integrity in those critics of Russia who deliberately shut their eyes to the

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historic fact that for over a decade, when Signor Mussolini and later Herr Hitler were working for the destruction of equilibrium in Europe, the Government of the U.S.S.R., for very good reasons, acted consistently as a factor making for peace. The hostility of these opponents of Russia doubtless was one of the factors which induced the British Government to reject Russian aid in the case of Czechoslovakia, and to overlook the grave crime committed by Poland against Czechoslovakia at that crisis, which created a coldness between Poland and Russia, wholly creditable to the Soviet Government. The same unfortunate attitude to Russia was seen in the failure, after the *volte-face* in British policy on March 17, 1939, to put pressure on Poland to seek reconciliation with Russia, without whose aid her defence against German aggression must be most precarious. Serious as have been to the Allies and Poland the results of the measure of *rapprochement* between Germany and Russia, candour compels the admission that the attitude of Poland, and even in some degree of the Allies, to Russia was such as to render the censure aimed at M. Stalin difficult to justify. His further decision to seize those parts of Poland, inhabited essentially by Slavs closely akin to Russians, was requisite for self-defence, and patently of much value to the Allies. Where censure can be directed without hesitation is the aggression on Finland, when M. Stalin showed himself a peer of Herr Hitler and Signor Mussolini as a violator of treaties, a destroyer of peace, and a fabricator of false charges. Yet nothing would be more unwise than to accept the advice of those who urge war on Russia, so long as M. Stalin adheres to non-belligerency. To do so would merely be to play into the

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hands of Herr Hitler, whose propaganda against Bolshevism for long misled, and still in some degrees misleads Conservative and Fascist opinion in Britain. For Britain and France M. Stalin still serves an essential purpose in the obstacle which he presents to the Italian desire to dominate the eastern Mediterranean and the Balkans.

For the suggestion of this work I am indebted to Mr. H. P. Morrison, Managing Director of Messrs. Thomas Nelson and Sons, who have produced the book with their wonted care. In its execution I have derived valuable help from my Secretary, Miss Patricia Ambrose, and I have to thank my sister, Mrs. Frank Dewar, who discussed with me the problems with which it deals as they arose from time to time.

For the benefit of those to whom original sources are not conveniently available I have referred where possible to the documents printed in *Speeches and Documents on International Affairs, 1918-1937*, edited by me for the Oxford University Press. My references to authors in the notes will indicate the works I have found most useful. Several eloquent pleas for, and plans of, forms of Federal Union appeared only after this work had been printed, but they have not weakened in the least my conviction that it would be a major disaster for this country to entertain any of them, and must involve the dissolution of the British Commonwealth.

A. BERRIEDALE KEITH.

THE UNIVERSITY OF EDINBURGH,
May 14, 1940.

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CHAPTER I

THE MOTIVES FOR AND THE RESTRAINTS ON AGGRESSION

1. *The State's Will to Power as the Basis of Aggression*

IT is common in Britain to assume that there must exist in Germany, as there does exist here, a widespread desire for peace, and that the average German, like the average Briton, is essentially opposed to war. But this doctrine rests on an imperfect foundation, and it ignores the vital fact that the nature of man is essentially appetitive.¹ In ordinary life this characteristic reveals itself on every hand. Competition in school and college in the attainment of learning is accompanied by an even more obvious love of competition for success in varying forms of amusement. It is much more difficult to find men who will play games without seeking to excel their comrades therein, than to discover men whose devotion to intellectual studies is free from any care to attain greater knowledge than others possess, or to be ranked as superior. The most learned men do not seek the fame of such learning, but pursue it dis-

¹ Cf. B. A. W. Russell, *Power* (1938). Cf. Hitler, *Mein Kampf* (E.T.) pp. 414ff; H. Triepel, *Die Hegemonie. Ein Buch von führenden Staaten* (1938.)

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interestedly. But in everyday life the desire for power is constantly exhibited, even if it takes only the common and unhappy form of seeking to defeat rivals for distinction in society.

It must be admitted that it is to this impulse that progress in the world in all its forms is to be traced. A society which contained only individuals content with equality would be essentially stagnant ; a community of Indian Yogis would add nothing to the wealth of the world, though, it may be feared, that even among them there may be some who are moved to seek superiority over their fellows in the skill by ascetic exercise to attain contact with the infinite, which lies beneath all seeming reality. But normally from the earliest history we find strife to surpass others as an essential factor in social evolution in every aspect. Moreover, we find that progress often arises from the development of groups of men in whom the power of the individual is linked with that of others to strive to establish predominance over other groups. Success in such struggles is often due to recognition by the members of the group of the superior capacity for leadership of some individual, and the institution of kingship based on the possession of some form of power comes to play a vital part in human progress. Without war, doubtless, the world would have made far slower progress ; if wars are not in themselves an end, at least they may serve, as St. Augustine insisted, to lead to the attainment of the benefit of peace.

It is, therefore, impossible to expect general acceptance of the maxim that war is detestable. There are many who even commend it for itself ; it tests men's essential qualities,

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develops and manifests courage, intelligence, power of command, self-sacrifice, and love of country. Others, doubtless more in number, content themselves with the doctrine that, while the incidents of war are deplorable, nonetheless it may serve to achieve higher ends. It is one of the worse results of this belief that it sanctions the use of the utmost harshness and cruelty among combatants. If the fight is waged for social rights, as conceived from two quite distinct points of view,¹ we arrive at the horrors of the civil war in Spain, which to those outside the motives of the struggle seem to brand both parties as devoid of decency and humanity in many of their actions. It is this consideration which explains, however little it justifies, the barbarity of attacks on unarmed fishing boats, and even on lightships, by German aircraft and submarines. What, however, is essential is that we should banish the conception of any natural desire among men for peace. If it exists, it is as the result of moral training which educates certain minds deliberately to renounce war as proper, or as the outcome of sober realization that the forces enjoining the maintenance of peace are sufficiently serious as to commend adherence to it.

The influence of morality supported by religion is of general importance, but in the state throughout its development moral principles have systematically been reinforced by the existence of superior power. The state had long to admit certain forms of self-help and to allow private war among its component elements. But it gradually advanced to acceptance of the doctrine that among its people there must be peace, which the state must itself enforce, if need

¹ J. Castillejo, *War of Ideas in Spain* (1937).

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be to the exclusion of private action. Within the state, therefore, the desire for power must satisfy itself by seeking leadership in political life. In fact, of course, the desire of power may carry men who cannot achieve their ends by normal means to resort to open force ; civil war has played a great part in history, and has been known even in our own land.

Normally, however, the state through a long period of evolution has come to represent the combined will for power of the people thereof, and it stands out against other states as embodying that will. It is inevitable that between states the desire for pre-eminence should result in conflict, and this is often so where the material gain of asserting pre-eminence is negligible. The princes of India before the coming of the Mohammedan invaders lived under a system in which a king would lightly enter upon war against his neighbours in order not to gain any material advantage, but to enforce a recognition of paramountcy. That conceded, he felt that he had fulfilled his just ambition, and could perform the sacrifice of a horse in honour of his triumph. Economic motives for their wars there were none, and such in history, ancient and modern alike, it is often difficult and indeed erroneous to discover. The tendency of modern historians to seek economic motives for struggles whether in early Greece or in Italy, in Roman or medieval times, is natural enough ; but much of what has been conjectured probably has little relation to the true motive—the eagerness to assert pre-eminence, and thus to gratify ambition. Nothing is more clear than that the sense of superiority based on mere possession is widespread. The decision of the British Government to surrender Jubaland

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in 1925 to Italy in recognition of the part played by that Power in the Great War, and the inadequate compensation which she obtained for her services therein, raised a feeling of regret in many British circles,¹ even though it was argued that the territory surrendered was of scant economic value. In the case of France, the feeling against any surrender of French territory was so strong that M. Laval adopted the inexcusable tactics of giving Signor Mussolini the free hand against Ethiopia desired by that ruler.²

2. *Internal Restraints on Aggression : Democracy*

The danger of war arising from the desire to assert power by states is patent, but it varies according to the constitution of the state and the degree in which power of decision is concentrated. In the case of democracy of the British type, based on party politics, we have almost the certainty that there shall be opposition to any war project, which may make even the most energetic government hesitate before it acts. The government of 1899 did indeed go to war with the Boer republics in South Africa, but their action was justified in the public eye by the deliberate aggression of the republics on British territory. Moreover, the steady criticism of the opposition throughout the war, despite the support given by the majority of the public to the governmental action, ensured that the settlement of 1902 was based on a candid desire for reconciliation, and contained provision for the rehabilitation of the defeated burghers,

¹ See discussions in House of Commons, December 18, 1924; February, 19, 1925; Lloyd George, *The Truth about the Peace Treaties*, ii. 987ff, 1284.

² See Chap. IV., § 3.

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and their speedy attainment of a predominating influence in the former republics under the grant of responsible government. At no time after that war would any party have been prepared to declare war. Even in August 1914 the decision of the Liberal ministry to go to war was evoked only by the deliberate invasion by Germany of Belgium, which implied a challenge both to international law and to the safety of the British coast.¹ Since that war the fundamental difficulties of securing warlike action by a British Government have been admirably exemplified by the firm refusal of the ministry in 1935-36 to make good its obligations under the Covenant of the League of Nations to Ethiopia, or in 1938 to afford succour to Czechoslovakia. In vain in 1936-38 did the opposition suggest to the ministry that it should not acquiesce in the deliberate violation by Italy and Germany of their solemn engagements not to afford assistance to General Franco in his revolt against the Republican Government recognized by the British Crown.

The recent history of France is eloquent likewise of the obstacles to the use of war as an instrument of national policy by a democracy. Even the Popular Front, despite the appeals of the Spanish republicans,² was unwilling to face the opposition of the Right parties, doubtless because of its knowledge that war is a dangerous policy in a democracy. It would be easy to multiply examples of the dislike of democratic governments to enter into war. It took many efforts and much propaganda, accompanied by the belief

¹ Sir E. Grey, *Speeches*, pp. 297ff (August 3, 1914); Mr. Asquith, Guildhall, November 9, 1914.

² Toynbee, *Survey Int. Aff.*, 1937, ii. 138ff; A. Werth, *France and Munich*, Chap. VII.

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in the deliberate destruction of a man-of-war, to induce the United States to make war on Spain ;¹ repeated destruction of American property and lives was required before she declared war in 1917 on Germany, which had become convinced of Americans being too proud to fight ; and the refusal of the United States to give or even lend Finland money to procure arms, despite the fact that 98 per cent. of the people, according to the President on February 10, 1940, favoured the Finnish fight against cold-blooded aggression, proves clearly how difficult it is to create a demand for war in a democracy.

In a totalitarian state, on the other hand, the danger of a warlike policy is far greater. Such a policy can hardly come into existence except through the deliberate seeking of power by a group of men adopting as their own the demand for power by a leader among them. As has been shown, the success of Herr Hitler in achieving the Chancellorship, and, later, complete control of the administration of the Reich was essentially brought about by the intensive scheming on the part of himself and his supporters with the definite object of achieving power, and their efforts were furthered by the desire of members of the Nazi party to share in the power which their leaders were out to win. When control of the state has been achieved, it is obviously practically impossible for any effective resistance to be opposed to war. The case for peace is never permitted to reach the ears of the public ; it is permitted only to read or hear by broadcasting the governmental point of view, which on a basis of deliberate falsification of facts builds up a convincing

¹ Benton, *The International Law and Diplomacy of the Spanish-American War* (1908).

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thesis, demanding war as essential for the preservation of vital national interests. In the absence of any counteracting force the formation of an opposition is impossible, and it is the essence of any totalitarian régime that it should treat as criminal any attempt to attack in any form the régime or its policies. It must be remembered also that even those who, for any reason, such as foreign travel or access to the foreign Press, have fuller knowledge of the truth, and can criticize the assertions of their leaders, may be held back by national sentiment from dissociating themselves from the decision of their leaders.

It is therefore clear that there is reason in the contention, so often put forward by British spokesmen after the outbreak of the war, that it would be possible to contemplate the making of peace only with a Germany which had deposed the Hitler régime. Such an action by the German people as a mode of ending the war figures in the Labour Party's manifesto on war and peace aims, and it may be admitted with Mr. H. Morrison that, "if the German people destroyed the Nazi Government and substituted an enlightened democratic régime anxious to co-operate with other nations, the purpose of the war would have been served and there would be no need for its continuance." In such an opinion the essential point is that a democracy is far less likely to adopt war as an instrument of national policy than a totalitarian state. Even if the cause be very clear, in a democracy there will assuredly be an opposition, which will have considerable weight, prepared to oppose resort to arms.¹

¹ Thus the Peace Pledge Union was able on March 9, 1940, to start a campaign to end the war at once, the government declining to interfere.

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It is the essential benefit of democratic rule that the citizens cannot be left so completely misinformed of the essential facts as they are in totalitarian states. During the attack on Ethiopia of Italy the Italian public was left in complete ignorance of the motives of British action,¹ and it was excited by propaganda to assign the British defence of Ethiopia to the most selfish motives and to jealousy of Italian energy. In Britain, on the other hand, the circulation of Italian propaganda was unchecked, and the vast resources at the disposal of Signor Mussolini enabled him to obscure the essential wickedness of the Italian onslaught. The Ethiopian case in comparison was allowed to go by default. It is difficult to believe that, if the true attitude of Britain in 1938-39 had been realized by Germans, there could have been developed the determination to seek the destruction of the British Empire. Reason would have been able to play a part in framing the national judgment, and it might well have been held that there was room for compromise. Moreover, in a non-totalitarian state the people would have been able to appreciate the determined hostility to any war of aggression of the vast number of the British people.

The difficulties which democracy places in the way of aggressive or indeed any wars are illustrated effectively by the attitude of all the democratic states in the Great War and in the present struggle. Holland resolutely abstained from bringing succour to Belgium in the Great War, although every reason could be adduced to show that the incorporation of Belgium in the German Empire must bring disaster to Holland. Scandinavia remained aloof

¹ Toynbee, *Survey Int. Aff.*, 1935, ii. 26f, 159n, 312, 376, 378.

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then as now ; even the savage aggression on Finland evoked no immediate decision to take up arms for a country, whose destruction must prelude disaster to Norway and Sweden alike.¹ Denmark has never shown the slightest wish to go to war even in the most righteous of causes. Switzerland places her neutrality above every other consideration ; when the League of Nations, galvanized into activity by the demands of the Powers of South America, raised its voice to demand aid for Finland, the Swiss delegate was careful to record that the Swiss delegation was convinced that the assistance of the technical services of the League Secretariat in the organization of aid to Finland, recommended by the League, would not involve any activity in the territory of the federation that would be incompatible with Swiss neutrality. It is sufficient to recall the anxiety of the Baltic States—Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania—and of Finland to preserve detachment from any risk of war by negating in 1938² any obligation to apply the sanctions clause of the League Covenant, and their refusal to accept a British and Russian guarantee of their position, so eager were they to avoid any risk of war. Their subsequent fate may serve as a warning to democracies that freedom is a good, which cannot be relied upon by those who love peace too much to be willing to take up arms even in the most righteous of causes. On the other hand, the Russian aggression on Poland and on Finland stands out as a signal example of the rapidity with which a totalitarian state can shed all its vaunted principles and resort to inexcusable aggression.

In democracies the rule that war must be willed by the

¹ Chap. VI., § 8 below.

² Chap. IV., § 6 below.

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people deliberately finds its expression in the constitutional rules which render the government helpless to act without the sanction of Parliament. No doubt a government in the event of sudden attack must take measure for the protection of the country without the delay of summoning the legislature, but even then it must forthwith seek authority, and to declare war without such authority would be unconstitutional. The constitution of Eire recognizes the position explicitly ; war requires the assent of Parliament, though the ministry has power to take measures to meet aggression pending the meeting of the legislature.¹ In the United Kingdom² the situation is governed by constitutional principles. Ministers might indeed, so far as the law of the land goes, advise the King to declare war without ascertaining the will of the people. But the King would assuredly demand that their advice should rest on the declaration of the will of the House of Commons, and both in 1914 and in 1939 the ministry applied to the Commons to homologate the declaration of war which they deemed essential in the interests of the country. Such homologation was afforded by the Commons and the Lords alike, for, though the Commons' sanction would authorize a declaration of war, the accord of the Lords is also requisite, as legislation will be necessary to give effect to the innumerable measures which a state of war renders essential in a free country. The Dominions acted in like spirit. Canada and the Union of South Africa refrained from declaring the existence of a state of war in 1939 until their lower houses had formally approved, and in Australia

¹ Keith, *The Dominions as Sovereign States*, p. 578.

² Keith, *Const. of England*, i. 229, 240.

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and New Zealand approval of the action of the government in notifying the existence of a state of war with Germany was immediately obtained from the legislatures.¹

In France the President may not declare war without the previous consent of the two Chambers, and in the United States it rests with Congress to declare war. In Czechoslovakia the constitution of 1920 gave power to the President to declare war with the consent of the National Assembly. The fullest popular control of declarations of war is given by constitutional law or practice under the constitutions of Switzerland, Holland, the Scandinavian countries, and Belgium. There is little doubt that the rule of consulting Parliament is efficacious as a safeguard for peace. The further demand, which has at times been put forward, for instance in 1937-38 in the United States, that war should not be declared without consultation of the people by referendum, or the analogous claim, mentioned in 1939 in the Union of South Africa,² that a dissolution of the legislature should be held to decide the popular will, has received so far but slight assent. The objection alleged is essentially that of the danger of delay which, with the growth of air power, has indeed become of the most serious kind. But clearly democratic institutions are a definite and important protection against the probability of aggressive war.

The fact deserves to be emphasized, because of the current ~~in~~ in many British circles of the principle, often

¹ Keith, *J.C.L.*, xxi. 254.

² It was proposed in Canada in 1925 by Mr. Meighen, but not approved. *The Dominions as Sovereign States*, pp. 577, 613. For the United States see *Survey Int. Aff.*, 1937, i. 10f.

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enunciated by members of the government, that Britain has no concern with the form of government adopted by foreign states, and should regard the selection of any form of government by a state a matter of purely domestic interest. Facts as well as theory tell definitely against this comfortable and convenient belief. Italy became a definite menace to European peace from the moment when Fascism established itself and the restraint of Parliamentary intervention was lost. In Germany, even under the rather defective Weimar constitution, war could be declared only under a law of the Reich ; had the constitution remained operative, it is impossible to believe that aggressive war would easily or hastily have been decided upon. In Russia neither under the imperial nor the Soviet régime has any safeguard existed against aggressive war determined upon by an executive irresponsible to the legislature. The necessity of reasoned discussion forms, indeed, one of the best safeguards against any form of war which cannot be justified by reasons of paramount weight. If interests such as those of armament firms,¹ and of a military clique, make for war, the fact that in any democratic legislature there will be those ready to denounce their activities as sinister affords a definite and not unimportant check.

3. *External Restraints on Aggression : The League of Nations*

If internal restraint is either lacking, as in the totalitarian state, or may prove insufficient, the necessity arises of

¹ See Report of Royal Commission on Private Manufacture of and Trading in Arms, 1936 (*Cmd.* 5292), and decision of British Government that it was necessary, May 4, 1937 (*Cmd.* 5451).

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providing extrinsic means of restraining aggressive tendencies. Such a means was presented by the grouping of Powers in Europe intended to secure that no state should be so strong as to be under any incentive to seek to extend her control over others. The balance of power¹ was a doctrine which, much attacked at the present day, was of great value to Europe so long as it was effectively obeyed. It totally lacked any sinister quality ; it meant only that the Powers should in their own interest take measures early to prevent any one of them attaining such a plenitude of power that it might threaten its neighbours with subordination. The principle, therefore, can be regarded as improper only by those who deem one Power intrinsically superior to another, as does the Germany of Herr Hitler or the Italy of Signor Mussolini. Its failure cannot be doubted, but the reason for it is simply that reason which later was to ruin the League of Nations. When Prussia manœuvred under the leading of Bismarck the declaration of war against Denmark over the issue of Schleswig-Holstein in 1864, when she defeated Austria in 1866 and annexed Hanover and other territory, and when she in 1870 induced France to declare war, she was deliberately destroying the balance of power. But the rest of Europe refrained from enforcing the theory by intervention, for reasons good or bad.² In any case Germany emerged from these wars of aggression with quite disproportionate strength, and the régime of the balance of

¹ Cf. Temperley and Penson, *British Foreign Policy*, pp. 10, 138, 164f, 170f, 228, 363.

² Palmerston (*ibid.* pp. 279f) held that it was necessary to strengthen Prussia to counterbalance Russia and France.

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power was really destroyed by the events of 1870-71. British statesmen still ignored the new situation, and remained convinced that a policy of isolation could be adhered to. It was only in 1901 that the failure to come to an accord with Germany as desired by Mr. J. Chamberlain revealed to Britain the dangers of isolation,¹ and the Anglo-Japanese treaty began a new era. But the effort by an *entente* with France in 1904, followed by one with Russia in 1907, to reconstitute the balance of power was both belated and ineffective. Germany had been allowed to become so strong as to constitute a definite menace to her neighbours, and the temporary removal of that menace was accomplished only after the entry of the United States into the Great War created a plurality of forces, which even Germany could not successfully resist.

The idea of a balance of power was certainly desirable as a safeguard for peace. It failed to secure that end simply because the Powers, which should have laboured to enforce it, failed to recognize their duty, and shortsightedly allowed the aggrandisement of Prussia to a most dangerous degree.² The action of Prussia showed that the state was permeated by the desire of power which is the root cause of war; its rise to power from the revolutionary period of 1848-49 had been accomplished by the deliberate destruction of such democratic influences as had existed in Prussia and, more plentifully, in the rest of Germany. It should have been realized that the triumph of Prussia over Austria was a definite menace to the peace of Europe, and

¹ G. P. Gooch, *Before the War*, i. 8ff.

² For Gladstone's doubts see P. Knaplund, *Gladstone's Foreign Policy*, pp. 55ff.

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the overthrow of France ought to have confirmed that realization. As it was, the shortsightedness of Britain no less than of the rest of Europe was bound to encourage Germany to prepare for further aggression. When that danger was appreciated, the old maxim regained approval, but the moment for successful restoration of the principle had passed away. The enforced resignation¹ of M. Delcassé at the bidding of Germany in 1905 was a most significant sign of the appearance of a Power in Europe which could dictate terms to its neighbours; but the folly of Russia in engaging in a struggle—for which she was badly prepared—with Japan precluded the development of sufficient strength among the Powers most clearly threatened by German action to enable them to restore the independence of Europe in the face of the German claims. In the end the determination of Austrian statesmen² to destroy Serbian independence forced Russia to face the risk of war, and compelled Britain and France to join her, but only after Germany by invading Belgium had definitely violated a cardinal maxim of the British view of the balance of power—that which forbade the domination of the Low Countries by any European Power.

It was inevitable that at the close of the Great War there should have been made a determined effort to substitute something more lasting for the idea of a balance of power which had proved so ineffective as a safeguard for peace. The League of Nations was designed to rule out the probability of war by enlisting all its members against such a contingency. But the League Covenant, as

¹ Gooch, *Before the War*, i. 177ff.

² Gooch, *op. cit.*, ii. 437ff

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it emerged from much discussion, was not confined to the idea of a League to enforce peace. France had stressed the necessity of security, and had proposed that the League itself should be possessed of such a force as would successfully prevent aggression. But Britain throughout the proceedings displayed a marked reluctance to place security in the first rank of League objects, and neither she nor the Dominions would seriously contemplate the idea of a standing League force.¹

The net result, therefore, was that by Article 10 of the Covenant "the Members of the League undertake to respect and preserve as against external aggression the territorial integrity and existing political independence of all Members of the League. In case of any such aggression, or in case of any threat or danger of such aggression, the Council shall advise upon the means by which this obligation shall be fulfilled." The Article was categorical as to obligation, but it opened, by the provision that the Council should advise as to means, a loophole of escape for Powers determined to ignore their obligations. The binding character, however, of the main obligation is clear. It is clearly not an obligation conditional on its being fulfilled by all the members; it is severally and individually binding on each state. The issue, of course, was one very definitely before the minds of the British framers of the Covenant. In the Great War it had been held, in accordance with the views of Lord Derby and Lord Clarendon

¹ D. Lloyd George, *The Truth about the Peace Treaties*, i. 664ff. The New Commonwealth Institute now supports an international air force. Cf. R. N. Lawson, *A Plan for the Organization of a European Air Service* (1936).

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in 1867,¹ that the guarantee of the neutrality of the Grand Duchy of Luxemburg, given on May 11, 1867, by Britain and other Powers, was a collective guarantee, which did not demand individual action when one of the guarantor powers violated the neutrality. But it was held that the guarantee of Belgium of April 19, 1839, was joint and several, so that the obligation became incumbent on Britain and France to go to her aid when her neutrality was violated by Germany. Indeed, to make the obligation of the Covenant conditional on action by all the members of the League would have deprived Article 10 of all meaning and sincerity.

Canada early showed how serious she held the obligation in question to be by raising the issue on December 3, 1920, of the extent and character thereof with special reference to the position created for Canada as a non-European Power. The question of the character of the obligation was elucidated by a legal committee which held that it essentially meant that no territorial changes or loss of independence should result from war or aggression. Canadian² efforts to limit her obligation—made onerous by the refusal of the United States to join the League—resulted in twenty-nine states voting at the fourth assembly in 1923 for a resolution of interpretation :

“ It is in conformity with the spirit of Article 10 that, in the event of the Council considering it to be its duty to recommend the application of military measures in consequence of an aggression or danger or

¹ A. D. McNair, *Law of Treaties*, pp. 271ff; Wheaton, *Int. Law* (ed. Keith), i. 530.

² Keith, *The Dominions as Sovereign States*, p. 594.

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threat of aggression, the Council shall be bound to take account more particularly of the geographical situation, and of the special conditions of each state.

“It is for the constitutional authorities of each member to decide in reference to the obligation of preserving the independence and the integrity of the territory of members, in what degree the member is bound to assure the execution of this obligation by employment of its military forces.

“The recommendation made by the Council shall be regarded as being of the highest importance, and shall be taken into consideration by all members of the League with the desire to execute their engagements in good faith.”¹

The resolution, though supported by a majority of members present, was voted against by Persia, and twenty-two states were absent or refrained from voting. It is clear, therefore, that, despite the influence of the United Kingdom and the other members of the Empire, there was real reluctance to accept any diminution of the stringency of the terms. The dissent of Persia prevented the resolution being accepted, and the President accordingly declared it not adopted. Canada was content to have elicited a declaration referring to the necessity of the Council bearing geographical conditions in mind, even though it did not obtain the status of a resolution. The Article, therefore, remains to the present day formally binding in law on all the members of the League.

The Covenant further provided by Article 11 that “Any war or threat of war, whether immediately affecting

¹ *L. of N. Off. Journ. Spec. Suppl.*, No. 13, p. 86.

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any Members of the League or not, is hereby declared a matter of concern to the whole League, and the League shall take any action that may be deemed wise and effectual to safeguard the peace of nations. In case any such emergency should arise, the Secretary-General shall, on the request of any Member of the League, forthwith summon a meeting of the Council.

“It is also declared to be the friendly right of each Member of the League to bring to the attention of the Assembly or of the Council any circumstance whatever affecting international relations which threatens to disturb international peace or the good understanding between nations upon which peace depends.”

The value of this Article lay in the fact that it ensured that the Council should have a right to mediate in any dangerous situation without incurring the rebuke which might be meted out to a third Power, which of its own motion might seek to intervene. Unexpectedly this provision proved of special value in the early days of the League. It resulted in a useful intervention against the invasion of Albania by Yugoslav forces; in the giving of assistance in securing the settlement of the Upper Silesian difficulty; of the question of Memel in 1923-24; and the threat of war, when on October 21, 1925, Greek troops invaded Bulgaria, was removed by the prompt action of the Council in demanding the withdrawal of the forces of both states behind their frontiers.

The possibility of disputes between members of the League was provided for. By Article 12¹ “the Members of

¹ “Judicial settlement” was added by an amendment operative from September 26, 1924.

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the League agree that, if there should arise between them any dispute likely to lead to a rupture, they will submit the matter either to arbitration or judicial settlement or to inquiry by the Council, and they agree in no case to resort to war until three months after the award by the arbitrators or the judicial decision or the report by the Council." The award or judicial decision or Council report must be made within a reasonable time, in the last case six months, thus preventing undue delay.

If a dispute arises between members which diplomacy cannot settle satisfactorily,¹ they agree to submit it to arbitration or judicial settlement if they think it suitable for such submission. No binding rule defines what disputes are thus suitable, but questions regarding treaty interpretation, international law, the existence of facts which, if established, would constitute a breach of international obligation, or of the extent and nature of the reparation to be made for such a breach are declared to be thus proper for decision. Nor is there any absolute rule as to the tribunal; the permanent Court of International Justice is indicated as suitable, but another tribunal may be adopted by the parties.

"The Members of the League agree that they will carry out in full good faith any award or decision that may be rendered, and that they will not resort to war against a Member of the League which complies therewith. In the event of any failure to carry out such an award or decision, the Council shall propose what steps should be taken to give effect thereto."

The case of failure to refer a dispute to arbitration or

¹ Article 13, as amended from September 26, 1924.

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judicial decision is covered by Article 15. Members are bound to submit the matter to the Council ; any party to the dispute need merely notify the existence of the dispute, whereupon each party must as promptly as possible communicate its statement of its case with any necessary documents to the League. The Council may then direct publication for the purpose of securing the expression of international opinion on the question. It must endeavour to effect a settlement of the dispute ; if its efforts are successful, a statement shall be made public giving such facts and explanations regarding the dispute, and the terms of settlement, as the Council thinks fit. If the dispute is not thus settled, the Council, either unanimously or by a majority vote, shall make and publish a report containing a statement of the facts of the dispute and the recommendations which are deemed just and proper in regard thereto. Any member of the League represented on the Council may make public a statement of the facts of the dispute and of its conclusions regarding the same.

If a report by the Council is unanimously agreed to by the members thereof, other than the representatives of one or more of the parties to the dispute, the members of the League agree that they will not go to war with any party to the dispute which complies with the recommendations of the report. If, however, the Council cannot arrive at such a report, the members reserve the right to take such action as they shall consider necessary for the maintenance of right and justice.

The Council, however, may relieve itself of responsibility by referring the matter to the Assembly, and it must do so if either party so demands within fourteen days

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after submission of the dispute to the Council. In that event the rule of unanimity, exclusive of representatives of parties to the dispute, is modified by holding sufficient a report concurred in by the representatives of members represented in the Council and a majority of the other members of the League.

In one case neither Council nor Assembly may make a recommendation. If a party claims that the dispute arises out of a matter which by international law is solely within the domestic jurisdiction of that party, and the Council or Assembly finds that this is the case, it must so report. The object of this curious exception is hardly doubtful. Japan¹ had raised in discussions the difficulty of co-operation among the nations when entry of her subjects was barred on racial grounds, and there was much nervousness in Canada and the other British Dominions lest their policy of exclusion—which no doubt it is difficult morally to justify—might be held to be open to examination by Council or Assembly, on which there might easily sit members which had no interest in the doctrine that non-Europeans were unfit to mingle with Canadians, or the nationals of other dominions. There was, of course, an even more inconvenient possibility; if the Covenant were held to apply between members even of parts of one Commonwealth,² India might raise the issue of the exclusion on colour grounds of her people. This risk was prevented by the insertion of this clause. In an advisory opinion on the issue of nationality in Tunis and Morocco³ the Permanent

¹ Lloyd George, *op. cit.*, i. 636.

² Keith, *The Dominions as Sovereign States*, pp. 133ff.

³ Advisory opinions, Ser. B, No. 4; *B.Y.I.L.*, 1925, pp. 8ff; Wheaton, *Int. Law* (ed. Keith), i. 573f.

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Court ruled that in the existing state of international law questions of nationality were in the reserved domain. Another reserved issue may be assumed in the case of tariffs. It was certainly not contemplated by the framers of the League that an issue of differential or hostile tariffs could be brought before the Council or Assembly for report.

It was recognized that war could not wholly be ruled out as impossible. Hence by Article 16 was enacted a rule of sanctions. "Should any Member of the League resort to war in disregard of its covenants under Articles 12, 13, or 15"—set out above—"it shall *ipso facto* be deemed to have committed an act of war against all other Members of the League, which hereby undertake immediately to subject it to the severance of all trade or financial relations, the prohibition of all intercourse between their nationals and the nationals of the covenant-breaking State, and the prevention of all financial, commercial, or personal intercourse between the nationals of the covenant-breaking State and the nationals of any other State, whether a Member of the League or not. It shall be the duty of the Council in such case to recommend to the several Governments concerned what effective, military, naval, or air force the Members of the League shall severally contribute to the armed forces to be used to protect the covenants of the League. The Members of the League agree, further, that they will mutually support one another in the financial and economic measures which are taken under this Article, in order to minimize the loss and inconvenience resulting from the above measures, and that they will mutually support one another in resisting any special measures aimed at one of their number by the covenant-

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breaking State, and that they will take the necessary steps to afford passage through their territory to the forces of any of the Members of the League which are co-operating to protect the covenants of the League.

“Any member of the League which has violated any covenant of the League may be declared to be no longer a Member of the League by a vote of the Council concurred in by the Representatives of all the other Members of the League represented thereon.”

This famous clause, though meritorious in intention, patently contained some weaknesses.¹ It was indeed left to any Power to hold that an aggression had been committed and to act on that finding, but it was equally clear that the Powers might shelter behind the decision of the Council. Moreover, the Council could not decide unless there were unanimity, disregarding, of course, the vote of the guilty member accused of aggression, for the essential principle of the action of the Council was unanimity. Moreover, the right of the Council to recommend what forces each member should supply was subject to the principle of Article 4 of the Covenant, under which, if any matter affecting a member arose for discussion by the Council, that member must be entitled to be present at the discussion, with, inevitably, the power to veto the recommendation. On the other hand, it was argued that, as Article 21 of the Covenant permitted special defensive covenants of assistance between members of the League, it was open to members to make special arrange-

¹ See *International Sanctions* (1938); A. E. Highley, *The First Sanctions Experiment* (1938); W. Schiffer, *L'Article 16 du Pacte de la Société des Nations* (1939).

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ments to encourage immediate co-operation in case of aggression.

The effect of the Article was modified by the Assembly on October 4, 1921, when a resolution was adopted arising out of suggested amendments.¹ It was laid down that the unilateral action of the defaulting state could not create a state of war, but merely authorized the other members of the League to resort to acts of war, or to declare themselves in a state of war with the covenant-breaking state. But it was in accordance with the spirit of the Covenant that the League should endeavour in the first place to avoid war, and to restore peace by economic pressure. Stress was laid on the duty of each member to consider whether a breach of the Covenant had been committed. Procedure was suggested to simplify action. If any member brought a breach before the Council or if the Secretary-General did so, the Council must meet, and summon representatives of the states involved, of neighbouring states, and of states which normally maintained close economic relations with the defaulting state, or whose co-operation would be of special value. If the Council held that a breach had been committed its finding must be sent to each member with an invitation to take action accordingly. The Council might set up a technical committee to assist it, which would remain in permanent session. The Council was authorized to fix the date for the taking of measures of economic pressure, and was given power to vary in certain conditions the measures required to be taken by each member and the date of such application. A plan for action would be

¹ League Document A 14, 1927, v. ; *International Sanctions*, pp. 190ff, 220ff.

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submitted to members by the Council, but clearly the *modus operandi* of sanctions was left extremely vague. It was suggested that the severance of diplomatic relations which the Article clearly demanded forthwith might at first be confined to the virtually symbolical withdrawal of the heads of missions only, and that consular representation might be maintained. Humanitarian relations should be continued, and a special régime established for correspondence. On the other hand, it was admitted that progressively severe measures might be adopted, but the interference with food supplies for the civil population was to be postponed until it was clear that other measures were inadequate. But, if essential, a blockade of the seaboard of a covenant-breaking state might be imposed, and entrusted for execution to some member of the League. Moreover, the co-operation of non-members of the League was to be sought; the reference was obviously to the United States, whose assistance in economic sanctions was patently most desirable.

Formal amendment of the Article was agreed to at the Assembly on September 27, 1924, but the changes were not important. The prohibition of intercourse between nationals of all members of the League and nationals of the defaulting state was modified by restricting the rule to persons resident within the territories of the members and of the defaulting state, and the duty to prevent financial, commercial, and personal intercourse between nationals of the defaulting state and those of all other states was likewise modified, though the wider application was permitted. The change was due to the realization of the inconvenience of the rigid rule, which would, if carried out, have compelled the complete boycott of any national of a defaulting

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state resident in the territory of the member. Recourse instead was had to the normal rule of treatment of alien enemies in British law, under which the criterion of enemy character is not nationality, but residence in the enemy territory, so that a British subject resident in such territory ranks as an enemy for war purposes in matters of trade. It was also laid down that it was for the Council to decide if a breach of the Covenant had taken place, the votes of the member alleged to have resorted to war, and of the member against whom war was directed, not being counted. Express authority was also given to the Council in recommending a date for the application of sanctions to postpone the coming into force of such measures, but only when satisfied that postponement would facilitate the attainment of the object, or was necessary to minimize the loss and inconvenience which would be caused to members.

But this effort to weaken the Article failed to receive ratification, as did also the proposal to make binding the resolutions of 1921, for France was insistent that the binding character of sanctions ought not to be weakened.¹

A further strengthening of the measures to prevent aggression was provided by the provisions of Article 20 of the Covenant, under which "the Members of the League severally agree that this Covenant is accepted as abrogating all obligations or understandings *inter se* which are inconsistent with the terms thereof, and solemnly undertake that they will not hereafter enter into any engagements inconsistent with the terms thereof." As a mode of preventing the evasion of this provision, it was required by Article 18 that "every treaty or international engagement entered into

¹ Keith, *Current Imperial and International Problems, 1935-36*, p. 148.

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hereafter by any Member of the League shall be forthwith registered with the Secretariat and shall as soon as possible be published by it. No such treaty or international engagement shall be binding until so registered."

While it was hoped ultimately to make the League all-embracing, it was recognized that this result could not forthwith be achieved, nor was the immediate admission of Germany to the League contemplated. Provision was therefore made by Article 17 for the case of disputes between a non-member state and a member, or between non-member states. An invitation had to be given to any non-member state to accept membership for the purposes of the dispute on such conditions as the Council might deem just, and, if the invitation were accepted, the provisions of Articles 12-16 of the Covenant would become applicable with any necessary modifications. The Council on giving an invitation must institute an inquiry into the circumstances of the dispute, and recommend such action as might seem best. If the invitation was refused and a non-member Power resorted to war against a member, the sanctions of Article 16 became applicable. If neither of two non-member Powers in dispute would accept an invitation, the Council might take such measures as might result in a settlement.

It is clear that these provisions were open to one serious objection, that they might be used merely to preserve the *status quo*. But that criticism was met by Article 19, under which "the Assembly may from time to time advise the reconsideration by Members of the League of treaties which have become inapplicable, and the consideration of international conditions whose continuance might endanger the peace of the world." The power of the

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Assembly apparently might be exercised by a majority, but it is patent that the provision was definitely too weak to serve much useful purpose, for action on the advice clearly remained optional to the states to which it was addressed. It is therefore clear that the accusation that the Covenant contemplated rather the maintenance of the conditions established by the treaty of Versailles than the orderly development of international relations to meet emergent circumstances has substantial force, though it is undeniable¹ that the Article 19 was so framed as to cover recommendations for the revision in course of time of the terms of the treaties of peace themselves.

On the other hand, the Covenant recognized by Article 8 a principle of fundamental importance.² It was put on record "that the maintenance of peace requires the reduction of national armaments to the lowest point consistent with national safety and the enforcement by common action of international obligations." The Council, therefore, taking account of the geographical situation and circumstances of each state, was to formulate plans for such reduction for the consideration and action of each government, such plans to be subject to reconsideration at least every ten years. Once adopted by the several governments, the plans were not to be varied without the consent of the Council. The disadvantages of the private manufacture of arms and munitions and implements of war were noted, and the Council charged with advising how to counter these dangers, having due regard to the fact that some members of the League were unable to

¹ Lloyd George, *The Truth about the Peace Treaties*, i. 566. See Chap. VI., § 8, below.

² *Ibid.*, pp. 583ff.

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manufacture supplies necessary for their safety. Exchange of information, full and frank, on the scale of the armaments of each member, its military, naval, and air programmes, and the condition of industries adaptable to war-like purposes was enjoined. Moreover, the system of reduction of armaments was to be begun forthwith by the clauses in the treaties of peace strictly limiting the forces to be maintained by the defeated states, and in the correspondence with Germany on the terms of the treaty of Versailles it was made plain that the Allies intended to address themselves to the limitation of their own armaments. This accords with the provision in the Covenant (Article 9) for the constitution of a permanent commission to aid the Council on this head.

In the constitution of the League there was a like desire to promote equality of treatment. The Assembly was to be made up of representatives, not exceeding three, of each member state, and membership was accorded not only to all associated and allied Powers, but to a very large number of other states if they desired to join. The Council at first was to consist of one representative each of the five principal allied and associated Powers (the British Empire, the United States, France, Italy, and Japan), and of each of four other members chosen from time to time by the Assembly; but, with the assent of the majority¹ of the Assembly, the Council might add to the number of members of the League entitled to permanent representation, and of members to be selected by the Assembly for

¹ From 1926 the rule is that the Assembly decides by a two-thirds majority the rules as to non-permanent members. The number was raised to six (1922), nine (1926), ten (1933), and eleven (1936 and 1939).

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temporary representation. Successive additions raised to eleven the number of members with seats for three years ; Germany was given a permanent seat during her membership, and a like recognition was accorded to the U.S.S.R. on her entry in 1934 ; her expulsion in December 1939 and the coming into effect then of the retirement of Italy left France and Britain alone permanent members.

The Council was required also to formulate plans for the establishment of a Permanent Court of International Justice,¹ with competence to decide any dispute of an international character submitted by the parties to it, and to give an advisory opinion on any issue submitted by the Council or Assembly. The outcome of this obligation was the establishment under a Statute, finally approved by the League Assembly on December 13, 1920, of the Court, but its jurisdiction was not made under normal conditions compulsory. Its composition, long disputed, was finally so arranged that the judges, now fifteen in number, are men of high competence and character who owe their seats to the votes of both Council and Assembly ; their tenure for nine years with the possibility of re-election renders their impartiality probable. Moreover, an effort was made to add to the weight of the Court by opening up membership of the organization to states which were not members of the League, but despite elaborate arrangements to facilitate the acceptance of the Statute by the United States, and the strong opinion in favour of adhesion held by distinguished members of the executive govern-

¹ M. O. Hudson, *World Court Reports* (1934ff) ; annual review in *A.J.I.L.* ; *The World Court*, 1921-38.

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ment, the objections of the Senate to any connection with the affairs of Europe precluded acceptance.

Though normally the jurisdiction of the Court was left optional, compulsory jurisdiction was conferred on it in cases where states accepted the obligation to submit disputes, either generally or of specific classes, to determination by the Court, and a considerable number of such acceptances were notified for specified periods under the Optional Clause of the Statute of the Court. But the essential feature of the activities of the Court was its confinement to issues of legal character, which enabled it to attain no small distinction as an exponent of international law, but prevented its serving as a tribunal for the decision of international questions of an importance greater than legal.

The aim of securing peaceful evolution of relations between states was also to be furthered by the creation under the treaties of peace, though not as part of the machinery of the League of Nations, of an International Labour Organization, whose effort it would be to maintain and improve conditions affecting all aspects of the employment of labour, and to induce the more backward states to bring the conditions of labour in their territories more nearly up to the standards prevailing in the more highly developed states. The constitution was made elastic so that states not members of the League could be included, and representatives of employers and workers were conjoined with those of governments on the governing body established, like the League Secretariat, at Geneva. The *modus operandi* of progress is the holding of conferences where governments, employers, and workers are repre-

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sented for full discussion of matters falling within the competence of the organization. The fruits of such discussions are conventions or recommendations which may or may not be ratified by member states. There is therefore no idea of coercion ; the aim of the organization is to induce fruitful co-operation, and considerable results have been achieved. But it is idle to ignore that states are far from eager to adopt conventions, should there seem to be any risk of injury to national interests thence arising, and that the carrying out of conventions agreed to is often far from complete. There have been often suspicions that British interests might be compromised by the acceptance of conventions improving conditions of workers, which would be given full execution by Britain, but would be so operated in foreign states as to confer a definite advantage on the industries therein. Useful as has been the organization, its sphere of operation has been restricted to issues never of high importance as affecting national aims. The League itself has carried on valuable activities of a wide character in the economic, humanitarian, and intellectual sphere, of greater value than those of the Labour Organization, but equally without power to affect vitally questions of world peace.

The amendment of the Covenant was accepted as possible, and the procedure laid down requires only ratification by the members of the League which are represented on the Council, and by a majority of members of the League represented in the Assembly. But any member may dissent from an amendment so adopted, whereupon it shall cease to be a member of the League. Any member may also withdraw on giving two years'

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notice of its intention, provided that all its international obligations and all its obligations under the Covenant shall have been fulfilled at the time of its withdrawal. It is clear that the proviso was meaningless in practice, and no effort was ever made to give it substance, all resignations being treated as of unquestionable validity after the due expiration of time, as in the case of Germany and Italy.¹

The framework of the League was thus complex, but its operation was facilitated by the immediate establishment of an elaborate and highly competent Secretariat, at first mainly British and French in composition, but later extended to give places to many members of the League. Despite its obvious defects, one of which was the normal rule of unanimity in decisions of the Council, the machinery was by no means unworkable; the vital issue was whether the members would be willing to work it. On that point depended the question whether the danger of aggression by states eager for power would be removed.

4. *The Theory of Federal Union as a Preventive of the Anarchy of National Sovereignty*

As we shall see, the hope that members of the League would give effect to their obligations and thus secure peace in Europe was to end in disillusionment and disappointment. Three great states were to violate deliberately and wantonly their obligations, two were to connive at such violation, and the United States was to decline membership, and thus from the first to weaken, though not to

¹ J. J. Burns, *A.J.I.L.*, xxix. 40ff; cf. *B.Y.I.L.*, 1935, pp. 104, 153ff.

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destroy, the power of the League to carry out its essential aims. It is not surprising, therefore, that the thesis has been widely adopted that the whole conception of the League was erroneous. It failed, it is argued, to appreciate that it was attempting a hopeless task, in seeking to curb the anarchic tendencies of sovereign states, whose nature it was to endeavour to expand their power, by the combined action of other such states which would act together only in so far as they deemed their own immediate interests at stake. This view, so far from accepting with satisfaction the doctrine, so often repeated by the supporters of the League, that the League was not a super-state, stressed the fact that this was a definite ground for its failure to perform effectively the end of maintaining peace.

The argument for Federal Union¹ must rest essentially on the base that state sovereignty must inevitably lead from time to time to aggressive wars, due to the will for power of strong states, which feel that their importance, the number and the high qualities of their people, and the disadvantages of their existing position, demand that they should further divine and human law by securing for themselves the expansion destined by providence. The claim indeed seems to be advanced that anarchy is inevitable under national sovereignties; just as in the state itself the existence of a central government is necessary to prevent lawlessness, so a super-state must exist to prevent the lawless activities of sovereign states.

The argument, of course, is not perfect. The necessity

¹ C. Streit, *Union Now* (1939); W. B. Curry, *The Case for Federal Union* (1939). See also G. W. Keeton and George Schwarzenberger, *Making International Law Work* (1939).

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of forces of coercion in the normal state is due to the admitted existence of evildoers who are in revolt against the normal laws of morality. In the case of states, which exist to curb lawlessness and to enforce the doctrines of morality, there may be said to be no necessity for a controlling authority over them. But the argument can be put in a better shape. In the state, it may be said, the organization is required, in order not merely to check criminals in the ordinary sense of the term, but also to maintain the social structure in equilibrium. Thus in Britain it serves to keep Communism and Fascism, both of which would indignantly deny the pursuit of criminal aims, from disturbing the established capitalist civilization, while in the U.S.S.R. it secures the rapid elimination of capitalists of any kind, though capitalists, if there were any, would argue that they were working wholeheartedly to rescue the people from the grinding tyranny of the Ogpu, and so on. We are to regard the difficulties which arise between states as similar to such fundamental conflicts within states. We are not to confound the efforts of Herr Hitler or Signor Mussolini or M. Stalin with the crimes of ordinary wrongdoers, but to recognize in them idealisms which, as they conflict with other idealisms, must be held in check by an organization of states which will confine change in world affairs to peaceful methods.

The idea of Federal Union has the merit of being simple, and all simplicity is attractive. On the other hand, it must be noted that examples of successful federations are few and far between. The basis of success has normally been union of essentially similar peoples for the common advantage, not motivated by any fear of war *inter se*. The

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Commonwealth of Australia¹ is a clear case where hostilities between the colonies which became States of the Commonwealth was unthinkable. In Canada the federation was adopted, primarily as a mode of solving the difficulty of working the constitution of the united province of Canada, the two parts of which—now Ontario and Quebec—differed in race, in religion, in history, and in outlook. But real risk of armed conflict never existed, nor was it in the minds of any of the founders of federation. In the case of the United States the states which united were driven to union not by fear of war *inter se*, but by the necessity of making common cause against Britain, and later of consolidating the rather unworkable confederation which had sufficed to secure peace with Britain, but patently could not work effectively for wider ends. The population of the states which united was not divided by any such racial distinctions as were found in Canada. The case of Switzerland² is *sui generis*, but it does not present any support for the doctrine of states uniting in order to keep their people from fighting *inter se*. Union for purposes of co-operation and defence against external foes explains the unions of the United States and Switzerland; in those of Canada and the Commonwealth the motive of common defence was hardly in any sense present, as a compelling cause.

There is, it must be added, no evidence that even a voluntary union will prevent the possibility of efforts at secession. The constitution of the United States was preserved only by a very long and bloody war, which left

¹ Keith, *The Dominions as Sovereign States*, pp. 420ff.

² W. Oechsli, *History of Switzerland, 1499-1914*.

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behind it bitter memories, and resulted for a decade in the oppression and misgovernment of the southern states by unscrupulous politicians from the north. The slaves were indeed liberated, but devices, approved by the Supreme Court, have been found to deny them political equality, and lynch law negatives the equal protection of the courts, even when they themselves are not manifestly moved by racial prejudice. Modern Switzerland enjoys peace, but the war of the Sonderbund in 1847-48 reminds us of the impossibility even there of securing complete freedom from difficulties. In the case of a Federal Union on a larger scale the risk of disunion and resort to arms to decide control would be infinitely greater. Any of the larger units would in the nature of things be strongly represented in the federal army, and, in the event of any grave dispute arising in the legislature, the state might declare secession and urge its nationals in the armed forces to rally to the fatherland. The danger would be infinitely greater if, as would be inevitable, there would be left outside the federation other Powers, for an aggrieved state would be able not merely to appeal to its nationals in the federation to undertake its defence, but it could invite an outside Power to lend its aid. Thus a Germany, acting as a federal unit, would be able to call on the assistance against the federal authority of a contingent in the federal army of the most serious dimensions, and, if an appeal to Russia were added thereto, the fate of the federation would be in the gravest jeopardy.

Even if it were assumed that the federal functions were reduced to the bare minimum of foreign affairs and defence, so as to secure sufficient accord for its acceptance,

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there would be serious risk of discord. A federation could hardly exist without a legislature to control the executive government which would owe to it its mandate to govern ; but the legislature would in all likelihood have to be constructed on the usual plan of two chambers, one representing the states according to the numerical strength of population, one according equal representation of each state as such. That the popular chamber would be in agreement with the states chamber would often be impossible, and it would be very difficult to work out any system under which the executive government, if conducted on the normal basis of responsible government, could owe allegiance to both chambers at the same time. The non-responsible government system of the United States is possible only because of the homogeneity of the American population ; that of Switzerland is due to the fundamental similarity of interests among the different elements of the population, despite difference of speech and of race. If, as is normally assumed, Russia could not be included in the federation, the issue of the policy to be adopted towards that Power would present the gravest difficulties, for the views of the majority of the British and French representatives might easily be at variance with those of the German representatives.

The assumption is no doubt made in many plans for Federal Union that a federation including the Low Countries, Scandinavia, and Switzerland, with Britain, France, and Germany, and also if possible the British Dominions, would possess a legislature and government, in which there would be no strong differences of opinion on fundamental issues, foreign or defence. There seems no ground whatever for

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this optimism ; Germany, if she entered the federation, would naturally aim to assert her strength to further those ideals, which have been accepted readily from successive governments since 1860, and which seek the advancement of Germany at the cost of the rest of Europe. Moreover, it is impossible to limit federation to defence and foreign affairs ; the more optimistic of constitution framers assign to the federation vast powers over commerce, immigration, and finance in many aspects, and it may frankly be admitted that the outcome of participation in a federation of this kind would be utterly speculative. It may be taken for granted that the British Dominions would refrain from entering any form of federation ; they have steadfastly refused even to consider federation with the United Kingdom and India. The Low Countries, and Scandinavia¹ can hardly stand to gain anything by federation ; their protection against external aggression is in their view adequately provided by the essential interest of Britain and France in preventing them from falling under foreign domination. They would feel it unwise to merge their identities in a federation wherein their voices, even if united, would count for but little. Switzerland has so persistently clung to her neutrality that she would never be induced to surrender it for the dubious advantages of federation.

For Britain, federation would present grave risks with scant advantages to be gained. She might find in the federation her system of capitalist society undermined by action of German, and a part of the French, representatives ; nor is it without importance that many of the more en-

¹ Since their share in the defeat of Finland (Chap. VI., § 8), their inclusion in a federation would be dangerous.

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thusiastic supporters of federation are already advocates of Socialism or Communism for Britain itself. For France the outlook would be equally uncertain, while for Germany federation might present itself as at least offering a reasonable chance of gaining by methods of peace what she had lost by war. Instead of standing out as an assurance for peace, a federation divided in itself might merely invite war from Powers like Russia or Japan not admitted to its ranks. Whether such a federation would be able to remain on cordial terms with the United States may even be doubted ; in any case the suggestion that the United States would accept federation rules out those who suggest it from serious consideration as constitution-builders. Nor would the virtual secession of the British Dominions from the United Kingdom be compensated for by the dubious advantages of closer relations with Germany. There is no scintilla of proof that the interests of the world would not far better be served by the independent development by national states of their own distinctive contribution to the welfare of mankind. That this would not be the case is naturally assumed by supporters of federation, but the necessary proof has not even been suggested.

The proposed federation would, in fact, work only in British interests if Germany were to be imbued with a completely new spirit, of which there is little evidence. But, were such a spirit really to appear, Germany as an independent state might well be far better fitted to promote the common good than if made merely a unit in a federation. It is often forgotten that a federation necessarily suffers from serious defects.¹ It introduces an element of division and

¹ A. V. Dicey, *Law of the Constitution* (8 ed.), pp. lxxvff.

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weakness in national planning for welfare. Neither the state nor the federal government is master of the whole sphere, and it is seldom, if ever, possible to secure such an adjustment as shall promote the effective evolution of a concerted and well thought out policy. No unit is all-important for the federation, and a highly advanced state may be compelled to accept rules, which are ill-adapted to it, but which suit other units. For the individual citizen there is introduced a conflict of loyalties, for few men can manage to maintain an equilibrium between their allegiance to unit and centre. In all federations there is the eternal problem of the division between those who are earnest supporters of state rights, and those who seek centralization and the increase of federal powers. Moreover, the legalism of Federal Union constantly imposes fetters on both federation and state, and the legal battles based on alleged encroachment on powers, serious as they are in the United States, and in the Dominions, would assume a much graver aspect if the federal judiciary were to rule invalid a British, French, or German act, or to override a power claimed by the federation. Legal issues, unhappily, as experience shows, can raise a measure of bitterness which is almost inexplicable; the inevitable action of the Privy Council in 1935 in negating the power of the federal government in Canada to enlarge the power of Parliament by the conclusion of treaties in matters normally denied to the federation, and thus invading the provincial sphere, resulted in an unanimous denunciation by Canadian jurists of the temerity of the Privy Council, and converted many to the necessity of destroying the appeal. Yet candour must have shown that the Council had no real option but thus to decide, if it were not to

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destroy the balance of the constitution as laid down through a period of seventy years.¹ How much more dangerous would be the annulment of a British act based on important needs of the people by a federal court, whose judges for the major part would be without British connection and sympathy with British ideals. Nor need we doubt that France or Germany might feel equal annoyance at a judicial decision contrary to their ideals. Further, the instinct of a federation to add to its authority at the expense of the units is undeniable. It has led in Switzerland to the steady increase by the process of constitutional amendment of the federal powers. In the United States the power of the President with the support of Congress to affect the number and composition of the Supreme Court has resulted in the ultimate acceptance by that body as valid of legislation which vitally affects the economic structure of the states. In the Commonwealth the federation has by the deliberate use of the power of the purse invaded state spheres, while the judiciary has since 1920 been ready to increase federal power by an interpretation of the constitution which certainly does not err in point of generosity of respect for state rights. Yet, as a series of failures by referendum to alter the division of federal and state powers shows, when deliberately invited to add to federal powers the people of Australia have definitely negatived the suggestion. It can hardly be supposed that matters would be better under the régime of a federal judiciary, so appointed as to be free from executive control.

The whole conception rests on the view that only by depriving Germany of control of armaments can peace be

¹ Keith, *Canadian Bar Review*, 1937, pp. 438ff.

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secured, and that only by creating a federation can German deprivation of armaments be rendered consistent with the assurance, generously asserted by the British Government with popular approval, that there is no desire to treat except on the basis of equality a Germany which has renounced Herr Hitler and his régime. Yet the difficulties of securing a workable federation which would not be more dangerous to Britain and France than the *status quo* are prohibitive, and there must arise, if federation were carried out, the danger of the appearance of an insistent demand for the admission to it of Powers such as the U.S.S.R., whose ideals are in the long run as destructive of liberty and goodness as are those of Herr Hitler himself. On the whole, it may well be that the most effective method for the ruin of British ideals would prove to be the following of the *ignis fatuus* of federation.

The objection that federation should be tried, as no other course offers itself, to prevent the recurrence of the horrors of war carries conviction to many minds. The answer, of course, is that it may be better to bear the ills we have than fly to others that we know not of. But it is more satisfactory to point out that the League régime need not have failed, had France and Britain kept faith, or had they, as permitted by Article 21 of the Covenant, entered into an effective covenant to act jointly and with determination in defence of the League. If, more wise from the misfortune they have brought on their countries and on Europe, these two Powers are agreed to consolidate¹ their foreign policy, their defence, and their finances for the future, as for the war period, and if they extend their co-operation to a democratic Poland

¹ Cf. G. W. Keeton, "Anglo-French Union" in *The New Commonwealth Quarterly*, 1940.

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and to a restored Czechoslovakia, they might without federation secure a bulwark against German efforts at hegemony, and be strong enough to aid a Balkan Entente to face unmoved even the hostility of the U.S.S.R.'s multitudinous population, and to preserve China from the greed of Japan or the ravages of Communism supported by the Soviet Government.

While advocates of federation deceive themselves with the idle delusion that any Dominion would enter a federation in which they would be subjected to incessant pressure to accept freedom of migration, they are not so unwise as to imagine that India could be included. But what then is to be the position of India? Is she to attain complete independence, as demanded by Congress, under a constitution which will cover the whole of India, the Moslems being compelled to accept Hindu predominance, or is she to be disintegrated by the creation of a Moslem State, to which Moslems outside the state could look for support in their disputes with Hindus? When all these issues are hard to answer, it seems unwise to talk of federation for Europe or part thereof.¹

¹ In O. Newfang, *World Federation* (1939), no real effort is made to face facts, and F. Darvall, *The Price of European Peace* (1937), underestimates the problem. See Keith, *The New Commonwealth Quarterly*, 1940, pp. 263ff.

CHAPTER II

THE CAUSES AND MOTIVES OF GERMAN AGGRESSION

1. *The Ascription of War Guilt*

ARTICLE 231 of the treaty of Versailles provides that "the allied and associated governments affirm and Germany accepts the responsibility of Germany and her allies for causing all the loss and damage to which the allied and associated governments and their nationals have been subjected as a consequence of the war imposed upon them by the aggression of Germany and her allies." This declaration was not lightly made. A Commission on the Responsibility of the Authors of the War, presided over by Mr. Lansing, formally reported to the Peace Conference that "the war was premeditated by the Central Powers together with their allies, Turkey and Bulgaria, and was the result of acts deliberately committed in order to make it unavoidable. Germany, in agreement with Austria-Hungary, deliberately worked to defeat all the many conciliatory proposals made by the Entente Powers." The Commission had before it a German White Book on the issue, compiled with considerable care and ability, but it failed to be convinced.¹ Naturally the report of the Commission, endorsed by Mr.

¹ S. B. Fay, *Origins of the World War*, i. 7.

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Lansing, carried wide conviction and rendered the impression in Europe very widespread that the allied assertion and German admission of war guilt were true.

In Germany¹ a very different view had from the beginning of the war been accepted on every hand. The German White Book published at its outset was destined to show that Germany was fighting a war of self-defence against Russian aggression, and the omission of vital matter, including the communications between Germany and Austria, served to give plausibility to the allegations. As Germany had fought throughout the war under the impression that it was waging a defensive struggle, the admission in the treaty of peace meant nothing to public opinion, and instead the opportunity was forthwith taken to denounce the peace as based on a deliberate falsehood, which brute force only had compelled Germany to admit to be true. There is no doubt whatever of the general German belief in the injustice of the accusation, and it has naturally derived support from the many historical investigations which, inevitably, have tended to distribute more generally responsibility for the war. It may be admitted that the inclusion of the assertion of war guilt was not wise. It was not really necessary, and it should have been obvious to the framers of the treaty that to force an admission from Germany was quite without moral value. So far it may be admitted that the action of the Allies afforded Germany a motive for denouncing the treaty, and seeking, when opportunity offered, to compel the cancellation of the

¹ See Holborn, *Kriegsschuld und Reparationen auf der Pariser Friedenskonferenz von 1919* (1932); Kunz, *Die Revision der Pariser Friedensverträge*, pp. 166ff; B. Schwarzbach, *Die Kriegsschuldartikel* (1934).

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verdict, especially as such cancellation afforded a sound ground for demanding the wholesale abrogation of the treaty as based on false premises.

But from the point of view of balance of truth the case of Germany is far from strong. It may be admitted that Herr von Bethmann-Hollweg and the Emperor were not really anxious to have war at that juncture, and that prime responsibility must fall on Count Berchtold. The humiliation of Serbia and Russia in 1908-1909 over the annexation of Bosnia-Herzegovina had been severe and unwise, and inevitably Serbia was eager to revenge herself, and to carry out her ideal of securing the creation of a Greater Serbia through the disruption of Austria-Hungary. Inevitably also, Russia, after the disgrace of having to yield to German threats of backing Austria-Hungary, was preparing to increase her military strength so that she might be able to intervene effectively in favour of Serbia if attacked by Austria. But there is no doubt that neither country had the slightest desire for war in 1914, for neither was in any measure ready for decisive action; Serbia required time to consolidate the gains from the Balkan war, Russia had still much to do before her forces could be fit for serious war. On the other hand, Count Berchtold, prompted by the Austrian chief of staff, Baron Conrad von Hötzendorf, saw in the assassination of the Archduke Franz Ferdinand at Sarajevo an ideal opportunity to humiliate Serbia, and to compel her to renounce the design of a Greater Serbia. The evidence on this head is conclusive; ¹ it is true that he hoped to localize the struggle, but even had he realized from the outset that a world war would result he would have pursued

¹ Gooch, *Before the War*, ii. 446f.

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his policy ; the alternative in the long run was the dismemberment of the dual monarchy and the eclipse of its greatness, and not unnaturally he preferred, convinced of this, to allow his country to run the appalling, and as it proved, the disastrous risk of an aggressive war. We may, therefore, admit that Count von Berchtold must bear the primary blame of bringing about the outbreak of war.

But that has no power to exculpate Germany, and the evidence of German responsibility is conclusive. Austria-Hungary could risk a war if, but only if, she could rely on German support. As early as July 18, 1914, the Bavarian Chargé d'Affaires in Berlin was able to report¹ that the Austro-Hungarian note to be presented to Serbia would contain demands which would be incompatible with the dignity of Serbia as an independent state, and that the result would be war. Nor could there be any doubt of the facts : Serbia was to proclaim her dissociation from and disapproval of the Greater Serbia movement, to take proceedings against all persons who had participated in that movement, and to open an investigation against all persons guilty of complicity in the Sarajevo assassinations, and to allow the participation in this investigation of an Austrian official. The report insisted that the German authorities were thoroughly willing that Austria should use the favourable moment, but Herr von Jagow and Herr Zimmermann were doubtful whether Vienna would rise to the occasion. The latter was eager to see a decisive movement against Serbia which would restore to Austrians and Hungarians the feeling that they were a national Power, revive the decayed economic life, and suppress the foreign aspirations

¹ Fay, *op. cit.*, ii. 260ff.

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for years to come. It was added that Germany, when Austria had presented its note at Belgrade, would claim to have been ignorant of the proposed ultimatum, and would strengthen this view by pointing to the absence from Berlin of the Kaiser, the Chief of the General Staff, and the Prussian Minister of War. It would seek to localize the struggle, and to induce other governments to accept the view that it was in the common interest to root out the Belgrade nest of anarchists.

This view is confirmed by the report of the Austrian Ambassador at Berlin on 21st July that Herr von Jagow had given him "clearly to understand that Germany would naturally stand behind us unconditionally, and with all her strength."¹ Germany had indeed no alternative, for on 5th July the Emperor had committed himself fatally. On learning that the German Ambassador at Vienna was urging Count von Berchtold to avoid overhasty steps, he minuted:² "Now or never! Who authorized him to this? That is very stupid! It's none of his business, for it is purely Austria's affair to consider what to do in this matter, for it will be said afterwards, if things go wrong, that Germany was not willing! Tschirschky will please drop this nonsense! Matters must be cleared up with the Serbians, and that soon. That's all self-evident and the plain truth." On 6th July, after due consultation with the Chancellor, the German Ambassador at Vienna was duly informed that, while "His Majesty naturally cannot take any stand in the questions between Austria and Serbia, for they are beyond his competence, but Franz Joseph may be sure that His Majesty, in accordance with his treaty obligations and old

¹ *Ibid.*, ii. 265.

² *Ibid.*, ii. 209.

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friendship, will stand true by Austria's side." ¹ The assurance as conveyed to Vienna by the Austrian Ambassador was even more explicit, but there is no possibility of its deliberate character and its effect. It may be admitted in favour of Emperor and Chancellor that they were not probably intelligent enough to realize that they were placing the future of Germany in the hands of a stupid and clumsy adventurer, or that the Great War would spring from this decision. But it is impossible to excuse their action, and when they learned on 22nd July, the day before its presentation at Belgrade, of the terms of the ultimatum to Serbia, it was patently impossible to draw back. To have disavowed Austrian action would have been utterly dishonourable, and it would have been of the gravest disadvantage to their ally. The Triple Alliance would have been profoundly weakened at a time when the Triple Entente was manifestly gaining in cohesion, unrest among the Slavs of Austria would have hastened her dissolution, and Russia would soon have been so strong as to dominate the Balkan situation, and to advance towards her goal of controlling Constantinople and the Straits.

At this juncture German action was marked by complete dishonesty. On 24th July she endorsed Austria's charges against Serbia, and urged that the conflict should be strictly localized, and at the same time Herr von Jagow made the deliberately false statement ² that Germany had no foreknowledge of the contents of the ultimatum, thus giving the Entente Powers every motive to believe that in reality Germany had instigated Austrian action, and was aiming not merely at Serbia, but was seeking to make use of the

¹ *Ibid.*, ii. 215.

² *Ibid.*, ii. 263.

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Serbian issue to bring about a general war, such as had been urged by pan-German speakers and newspapers.

The efforts of Sir E. Grey¹ to prevent a general war, and to secure a peaceful settlement as between Austria and Russia of the issue in the following days were untiring, and nothing he could do was left undone. His urgent suggestion of a conference of the ambassadors of Britain, France, Germany, and Italy was accepted only by Italy—Germany and Russia preferring that direct conversations should be carried on between St. Petersburg and Vienna. The conversations, however, failed because of Count von Berchtold's refusal to modify the terms of this ultimatum, and of his declaration on 28th July of war against Serbia, with the deliberate intention of forestalling any mediation which might prevent Austrian military action against Serbia. Serbia on the other hand went far further in conciliation than had been deemed possible, and, had Germany not committed herself so deeply, the obvious duty of her government would have been to insist that Austria must content herself with what was in effect a distinct victory. But Count von Berchtold was not to be diverted from his dream of crushing Serbia by anything short of an absolute refusal of German aid, and that was not, and could not be, forthcoming.

The effort² has been made to put the blame for the war on the general mobilization ordered in Russia on 29th July, when Germany, realizing at last the danger of a European war, was endeavouring to bring Austria to a settlement. But the accusation is untenable. The mobilization finally

¹ Fay, *op. cit.*, ii. 354ff.

² Fay, *op. cit.*, ii. 547ff. Cf. Gooch, *Before the War*, ii. 367ff.

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ordered on 30th July by the Czar, after cancelling on reconsideration a like order on 29th July, was inevitable, if Russia were not to be taken unprepared on the outbreak of a war which was now becoming inevitable. That it was the decisive step which precipitated war cannot be conceded; the notorious slowness of the working of the Russian military machine rendered the Czar's action unavoidable, and war could still have been averted, had Germany so willed. But such will was absent, for Germany had already committed herself.

Further light is thrown on German responsibility by the action of Herr von Moltke¹ who on 30th July urged on Austria-Hungary mobilization against Russia, the refusal of the peace suggestions of Britain, and the making of concessions to Italy to keep that Power an active member of the Triple Alliance. He insisted that Germany would go unconditionally with Austria into war. This advice was given considerably earlier than the order for Russian general mobilization, which was ordered only at 6 p.m., and it shows that the German Chief-of-Staff was giving earnest advice on issues essentially political to the Austrian Chief-of-Staff, and demanding war. That the advice given corresponded entirely with the desires of Austria-Hungary is true; but it is idle to deny that the episode, which is beyond doubt, adds gravely to the sum total of German responsibility. That Herr von Bethmann-Hollweg² made some efforts to avoid war is true, but their sincerity is far from certain, in view of the energetic measures to counteract them taken by the Chief-of-Staff.

The effort to put responsibility on France is quite

¹ *Fay, op. cit.*, ii. 507ff.

² *Ibid* ii. 497ff.

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unsuccessful.¹ France had had bitter experience, in the driving from office of M. Delcassé and the Agadir incident, of the enduring hostility of Germany, and, unable to secure a British alliance, had to rely for her protection against the steadily growing superiority of German numbers and war power on the aid of Russia. To Russia the destruction of Serbia would have been a decisive injury, and M. Poincaré could not, on his visit to that country, do less than assure the Czar's government that France would support Russia as an ally against the humiliation or crushing of Serbia by Austria-Hungary. It is urged that the French Ambassador renewed these assurances in such a manner as to induce Russia to stand firm, and did not attempt to restrain Russia from adopting military measures which he knew would call forth German counter-measures and cause war. But it is very far from being shown that he either exceeded his obvious duty or substantially influenced the course of events. It is admitted that the President on his return to France made efforts for peace; all the evidence indeed shows that France was desperately anxious to avoid war, and only acted because the alternative was to allow the crushing of Russia and the establishment of German hegemony in Europe. The suggestion that France was anxious for war in order to recover Alsace-Lorraine is patently untenable; that one consolation for enduring the burden of war was the hope of recovering the lost provinces was a matter of course.

British action in the matter has been attacked in Germany, but the attack is devoid of even the slightest plausibility. The Liberal administration in power was

¹ Fay, *op. cit.*, ii. 555ff; Gooch, *Before the War*, ii. 188ff.

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deeply immersed in a mass of difficult local problems, including the issue of Ireland on which civil war was menaced. The idea that such a time would be chosen for war on Germany is fantastic, and no competent historian could for a moment adopt the validity of the proposition. But it is said¹ that Sir Edward Grey "could probably have prevented war, if he had done either of two things." But what were these two things? The first is that he should early in the crisis have acceded to the urging of France and Russia, and have given a strong warning to Germany that in a European war Britain would take the side of the Franco-Russian alliance. This would probably have led Germany to exert an earlier and more effective pressure on Austria, and might have averted the declaration of war on Serbia and secured a satisfactory outcome of conversations between Vienna and St. Petersburg. The answer, of course, to this suggestion is that no such assurance could have been given. Neither the Cabinet, the Commons, nor the people would have authorized such an assurance; the decision to accept war was produced by the German violation of Belgian neutrality, thus infringing a cardinal principle of foreign policy. The other alternative is that he should have acted as desired by Germany, and have warned France and Russia early in the crisis that, if they became involved in war, Britain would remain neutral; in that case Russia would have hesitated to mobilize, and France would have exerted her influence to restrain St. Petersburg. Sir E. Grey clearly could do nothing of the sort without betraying his duty to his country. He realized that, if France and Russia were not

¹ Fay, *op. cit.*, ii. 556; Gooch, *Before the War*, ii. 132 f.

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aided, they must succumb to Germany and Austria-Hungary, while Russia could not allow the destruction of Serbia, and France could not fail her ally. The necessity of preserving Britain from ruin at the hands of Germany after defeating France dictated that Britain should succour France before that fate befell her.

There is then no real doubt that the cause of the war was the aggression of Germany and her allies, though the prime responsibility does rest with Austria. The position of Serbia¹ is of minor importance. That she should desire to secure the union to her territory of Slavs who were suffering from misgovernment was eminently natural, and the dual monarchy was seriously to blame in failing to realize that good government is the best antidote to unrest. The Austrian attitude has been excused in whole or part on the score of Serbian complicity in the plot to assassinate the Archduke, but it is clear beyond doubt that Austria had no knowledge of such complicity; as was later alleged, at the time when the decision was taken to use the murders as the ground for the destruction of Serbian aspirations. Nor, it must be added, has any sufficient explanation ever been adduced of the slovenly if not disloyal failure of the responsible authorities in Bosnia to safeguard the royal visitor.² In any case, after the Austrian ultimatum Serbia behaved with dignity and moderation, and gave Austria no excuse for persisting in the determination to destroy her.

It is, however, natural that the true facts of the responsibility for the war have never been brought home to German opinion, and it can safely be said that one of the

¹ Fay, *op. cit.*, ii. 550.

² *Ibid.*, ii. 152ff.

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causes of the present war is the widespread conviction ¹ in Germany that she was brought against her will into the Great War, and that, defeated after a magnificent resistance by superior numbers alone, she was induced to enter into an armistice on promises which were not kept.

2. *The Versailles Treaty and the Fourteen Points*

It is a fixed conviction of the German people that the surrender of 1918 was induced by the offer of terms to be deduced from the Fourteen Points ² laid down by the President of the United States as the basis of a satisfactory peace, and that after the surrender of German power of resistance advantage was taken by the Allies of their power to compel Germany to accept a settlement which sinned grievously against these points. When first this view won acceptance in Germany is uncertain. Herr Hitler ³ in his early efforts to raise revolt against them as a shame, an outrage, and an unheard-of robbery, was confronted by the reminder of the terms given to Russia by Germany at Brest-Litovsk in 1918. But that it has long been an accepted view in the Reich is beyond question, and the opinion has won fairly wide acceptance even among those who are not moved to accept it by national spirit.

It is, of course, patent that to base an agreement for

¹ Hitler, *Mein Kampf* (E.T.), pp. 160f, insists that propaganda must be absolute; the war guilt of the Allies must be declared as beyond question. His speeches since this war have been categorical, e.g. October 6, December 30, 1939.

² Keith, *Int. Aff.*, 1918-37, i. 1ff.

³ *Mein Kampf* (E.T.), pp. 389ff, 514f.

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peace on the principles enunciated in the most general terms indicating the bases of a new world order was a blunder. No person could possibly imagine that there would or could be accord in the meaning of the terms, and it is plain that the interpretation given to them, with the approval of the President on October 30, 1918, was one of a very generous kind from the Allied standpoint. But the German Government was fully entitled to press for precise definition, and, since it failed to do so, it must be taken that it preferred the ambiguities of the Fourteen Points, hoping to rely upon them in the course of working out the treaty to achieve results which would suit their purpose. If they did so, they can hardly be blamed, though, as events turned out, they certainly had cause to regret the results. On the other hand, they may have realized the advantages of having in reserve the prospect of manufacturing a grievance of the first magnitude out of alleged discrepancies between the Fourteen Points and the treaty. Moreover, Germany was in no case to lose time in securing an armistice; General von Ludendorff had as early as 1st October insisted that it was impossible to tell how long the troops could continue to hold their own.

The Allies received the United States proposals late, but they acted properly in insisting on revising them. They secured¹ from the President the definite assurance that his first point, "open covenants of peace openly arrived at, after which there shall be no private international understandings of any kind, but diplomacy shall proceed always frankly and in the public view," would be

¹ Lansing note, November 5, 1918; Lloyd George, *The Truth about the Peace Treaties*, i. 73ff.

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satisfied by the rule of publication of treaties forthwith. The embodiment of this rule in Article 18 of the League Covenant fulfilled all needs, and clearly could not legitimately be made a ground of complaint. But it struck at the secret accords which Germany had delighted to conclude, and which at one time seemed to afford her insurance against any risk of encirclement.

The second point of the President, the freedom of the seas, could not be accepted by the Allies without much modification. Britain obviously could not agree without the accord of the Dominions, and to consult their governments would have involved serious delay, Mr. Hughes only being available in London, though he was not in fact consulted.¹ Eventually the issue was left open, and Germany duly informed. There could therefore be no grievance on this head.

The third point was more difficult. It demanded "the removal, so far as possible, of all economic barriers, and the establishment of an equality of trade conditions among all the nations consenting to the peace and associating themselves for its maintenance." Patently the project was incapable of precise definition, and it seems that the President, who must have known that he could not bind the United States on this head in any event, would have been satisfied with the principle of most-favoured-nation treatment of all members of the League, while not prohibiting non-discriminatory tariffs within the circle of League members, and allowing absolute freedom in respect of non-members. In fact, the treaty of peace did nothing beyond the instruction to the League by Article 23(e) of

¹ Keith, *Letters on Imperial Relations*, 1916-35, pp. 12f.

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the Covenant to make provision to secure and maintain freedom of communications and of transit, and equitable treatment for the commerce of all members of the League, and the placing by Articles 331-62 of the treaty of certain rivers under international administration. The subsequent policy of the Powers certainly departed from the President's ideal, his own country being a main offender in the matter.

The fourth demand, that national armaments should be reduced to the lowest point consistent with domestic safety, was fully carried out by the terms of Article 8 of the Covenant, and by the assurance given in the preamble to Part V. of the treaty, that the limitation of German armaments was a preliminary to the initiation of the general limitation of the armaments of all nations. That that policy failed will be seen below, but the treaty certainly faithfully observed the principle of the demand of the President.

The German colonies formed the subject of the fifth point. It demanded simply "a free, open-minded, and absolutely impartial adjustment of all colonial claims, based upon a strict observance of the principle that in determining all such questions of sovereignty the interests of the populations concerned must have equal weight with the equitable claims of the government whose title is to be determined." Germany has contended that it is impossible to style an adjustment open-minded and impartial which was in fact determined upon without allowing her to state her case. This objection has been dismissed¹ as "superficial and unimportant," but the weight of this opinion seems

¹ G. M. Gathorne-Hardy, *The Fourteen Points*, p. 22.

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dubious. Even though the result might have been the same had Germany been admitted to the discussion of the issue, the fact remains that it is merely an assumption that this would have been the case, and that Germany ought in any event to have been given the satisfaction of presenting by her own spokesmen her own case. It is quite true that, when the terms of the treaty were presented to the German delegates, they were able to reply on May 29, 1919, and that the points they then took had already been considered by the Allies, but it is idle to claim that a discussion by German delegates in confidence might not have altered the final result. Once the treaty had been determined upon, there was no chance of any concession of importance. Britain had the Dominions to consider and their insistence on the retention of the colonies which they had conquered.¹

But, apart from this issue, the question of the propriety of the decision in view of the terms of the point is certainly an open one. The claim of Germany could be supported on the score of her right as a great Power, even after defeat, to hold oversea possessions. Queen Victoria² no less than successive ministries had been willing to accept the right of Germany to expansion overseas, and in 1913-14 Sir E. Grey had been engaged in completing an accord, based on the earlier negotiations of 1898,³ favoured by Mr. J. Chamberlain, which held out to Germany the prospect of her acquiring part of the Portuguese possessions, if and when that Power proved unable to maintain

¹ Lloyd George, *op. cit.*, i. 114ff, 665f.

² Keith, *Current Imperial and International Problems, 1935-36*, pp. 71, 72, 197.

³ Gooch and Temperley, *British Documents*, i. 71ff; Gooch, *Before the War*, ii. 117f.

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them on financial grounds. To dismiss this argument as merely a matter of prestige is to show remarkable indifference to a vital matter. It would plainly inflict grave dishonour on Germany if an impartial investigation showed her unworthy to own colonies; had she merely been deprived of them on the normal principle of *vae victis*, her honour would have been less seriously impugned. The second German ground of claim, her economic requirements, could be answered to some extent by stressing the fact that she drew but 0.5 per cent. of her imports of raw material from her colonies, and her exports thither was likewise negligible. But the answer, of course, was incomplete, for it ignored the prospect of future expansion of trade. Thirdly, the claim that the colonies offered an outlet for surplus population was relatively unimportant. In thirty years the whole colonial empire had absorbed less than twenty thousand Germans. Here again, it must be noted, the question of value for this purpose in the future must not be passed over. Against the German claim the Allies alleged the necessity of protecting themselves against the German use of the colonies as a means of interference with and intimidation of other Powers. She would establish in them submarine bases, would train the natives in arms—the unsuccessful campaign of General Smuts against the native levies of East Africa had filled him with deep anxiety on this head—and she would use the colonies as headquarters of intrigue. In fact, of course, South-West Africa had gravely embarrassed the Union of South Africa by fomenting rebellion therein. The Dominions certainly were deeply concerned to prevent the future proximity to their territories of German colonies, and their voice urged

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strongly the argument from risk. But stress was also laid on the mistreatment of the territories by Germany, and evidence was collected which seemed to show that the natives had suffered severely and that they would deeply resent being placed again under German rule.¹

Germany could, of course, produce evidence² which takes away a good deal of the weight of the accusations of maltreatment of the natives, and the steadfast loyalty of her native troops in the East African campaign was, so far as it went, an argument in her favour. Nor is it at all clear that if placed under mandate as was decided upon, in lieu of annexation as desired by the Dominions, Germany could not have been allocated the territories once more. There was little to say against her actions in New Guinea, and her difficulties in Samoa were speedily shared by New Zealand to whom the mandate was given. On the whole it is by no means clear that we are justified in saying that the solution reached in the treaty was in fact on the lines which a free, open-minded, and absolutely impartial adjustment should follow. Candour compels the admission that the result, so far as Britain was concerned, was really inevitable in view of the attitude of the Dominions, and as regards France of her natural desire to secure the return of the territory which she had sacrificed by the treaty of 1911, which ended the affair of Agadir, and to eliminate the possibility of danger to her own lands from Germans as neighbours. Belgium's sufferings and war services were deemed to merit an increase of her Congo area; there was the further ground that Germany had there also commenced hostilities.

¹ Cd. 9210.

² G. L. Steer, *Judgment on German Africa* (1939).

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Over the sixth point, the evacuation of Russian territory and the grant to her of an unhampered opportunity for the development of her national policy, no issue could arise. Germany duly evacuated her captured territory under Article 433 of the treaty, and the treaty of Brest-Litovsk, which destroyed Russian freedom in vital aspects, was abrogated by Article 292.

The reparation issue will further be considered below.¹ But, while the President's points did not cover more than the restoration of Belgium and the invaded portions of France, together with the return to France of Alsace-Lorraine, the Allies insisted on, and the Germans accepted before the armistice, the obligation to make compensation for all damage done to the civilian population of the Allies and their property by the aggression of Germany by land, by sea, and by air. Whether or not it was wise thus to expand the President's terms must remain a matter of opinion, apart from the question of the interpretation put on the demand; but there can be no question of departure from the President's points, for on this head the Allies took the necessary course of making the most explicit declaration of the interpretation they put on the idea of restoration. The question may be raised whether the insistence of France on receiving the coal mines of the Saar as compensation for the damage done to the coal mines of the north of France, and as part payment towards the total of German reparations, was wholly wise, although the provision of a plebiscite in 1935 to decide the political sovereignty of the area and the power given to Germany in the event of the plebiscite going in her favour, as it

¹ Chap. II., § 4.

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emphatically did, to reacquire the mines rendered the provision less objectionable.

Points nine and ten gave rise to serious difficulties. The former required the readjustment of the frontier of Italy along clearly recognizable lines of nationality, and the latter the freest opportunity of autonomous development for the peoples of Austria-Hungary, "whose place among the nations we wish to see safeguarded and assured." Italy, however, had already been promised under the secret treaty of London, April 26, 1915,¹ the Brenner frontier of the Trentino, which involved the transfer to her of about a quarter of a million people of German race, as well as Trieste and a considerable area of Yugoslav population. Her government, therefore, made a formal reservation when asked to accept the Fourteen Points, but it was not communicated to Germany as a modification of the terms, on the score that it was not relevant to the negotiations with that Power. It is difficult to accept the position as satisfactory, and it seems clear that the final placing of a Germanic population of long historic possession of the relevant territory under Italian rule was an act difficult to justify.² The dislike of the detached population for its new masters remained clear; Austria was unable to aid them, and when the accord with Italy negatived the recovery by Germany of the ceded territory and Herr Hitler definitively accepted the boundary, the solution of permitting them to leave Italy and to acquire nationality and domicile in Germany had to be resorted to.

¹ Lloyd George, *op. cit.*, ii. 765, 791.

² Hitler, *Mein Kampf* (E.T.), pp. 387, 510ff.

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The case of Austria-Hungary involved a much greater deviation from the Fourteen Points.¹ The movement for independence among the Czechoslovaks had progressed so far that they had won acceptance as belligerents,² and the creation of a reunion of the Yugoslavs had become part of the Allied policy. The Austro-Hungarian Government, therefore, was informed on October 8, 1918, in reply to its request for peace on the basis of the President's proposals, that the peoples formerly subject should be "the judges of what action on the part of the Austro-Hungarian Government will satisfy their aspirations and their conception of their rights and destiny as members of the family of nations." The acceptance by that government on 27th October was followed by the collapse from within of the whole imperial structure, and the surrender of 3rd November was made unconditionally, without waiting for an acceptance by the Allies of the programme of the President. It is no doubt possible to hold that the terms of Point Ten were not therefore legally binding, but there is no doubt that the final outcome of the treaty in securing the reduction of Austria to a small and impotent state contrasted markedly with the apparent purpose of the programme of reconstituting Austria-Hungary on the basis of autonomy for its constituent parts. Moreover, the sense of injury natural to Germany under all the circumstances was materially increased by the provision of the treaty which negated the natural desire of Germany to secure union with a territory, whose power of independent life was so obviously doubtful, by insisting that Austrian

¹ Lloyd George, *op. cit.*, ii. 902ff.

² Beneš, *My War Memoirs*, p. 407.

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independence was inalienable save with the consent of the Council of the League.

Under the thirteenth point an independent Polish state¹ fell to be erected, which was (1) to include the territories then inhabited by indisputably Polish populations, and (2) to be assured a free and secure access to the sea, and whose political and economic independence and territorial integrity should be guaranteed by international covenant. In the main, German complaints regarding the steps taken in the treaty to carry out these provisions must be ruled invalid. The ethnographic limitation was in the main strictly observed to the detriment of Poland, whose claims were severely cut down, both by the expert commission charged with delimitation, and by the Supreme Council to which it reported; it is probable that the recommendations of the commission were preferable from a strategic point of view, but that consideration was properly overruled. In the case of Allenstein and Marienwerder, the issue was properly decided by plebiscite which went in favour of Germany. In Upper Silesia² there was ethnographically no doubt as to the right of Poland to claim the whole area, for Poles were about twice as numerous as Germans on any fair estimation of relative population strengths. But the decision to defer to German protests and to allow a plebiscite led to a rather unexpected outcome. The figures of the voting showed in the area as a whole a majority for union with Germany. The reasons for the preference were various, but one obvious incentive to prefer Germany was the comparative security of this

¹ Lloyd George, *op. cit.*, ii. 97off.

² Osborne, *The Upper Silesian Question* (1920).

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relation as against forming part of a state still in the making, and certain to have a difficult time of construction to face. On the other hand, it was easy and natural to argue that, while the vote was decisive in many parts for connection with Germany, in other areas the demand for union with Poland was clear and convincing. There remained only the solution of drawing a boundary line so calculated as to include in the new state those territories where the majority was strongly in favour of a Polish affiliation, and the determination of the line by the Council of the League, though resented bitterly by Germany, was not deliberately unfair. But Germany could point to facts which enabled her to regard the whole affair as unjust. A plebiscite of 717,122 to 483,154 might well be said to be sufficiently decisive as to justify the allocation to her of the whole area. Moreover, the just solution was prejudiced by the rising of May 3, 1922, under the leadership of M. Korfanty, the Polish plebiscite commissioner, which deprived for a time the Allies of control of the area, and which was in fact openly connived at by French forces. Moreover, the fact that Mr. Lloyd George was believed to favour the German claim rendered the final decision of the Council, though accepted by him, suspect. On the whole it can hardly be denied that the episode was unfortunate, and it is not surprising that from the first German aspirations to recover Upper Silesia have been extremely vocal.¹

The promise of access to the sea clearly demanded the transfer to Poland of Danzig. The famous dictum of Frederick the Great was unanswerable: "He who holds

¹ For loss of iron and coal see Keynes, *Economic Consequences of the Peace*, pp. 81ff.

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the mouth of the Vistula and Danzig has greater power over Poland than the King in Warsaw." True a republic under a democratic constitution might well have greater authority than a Polish king under the wretched régime before the partitions, when the Polish constitution by the *liberum veto* rendered the state helpless, but the fact remained that the only means of giving Poland real access to the sea was by allowing her control of Danzig.¹ Absolute transfer might have been the wisest course of action, but the population was emphatically non-Polish, and a compromise was reached under which Danzig retained wide autonomy as a Free City under the final control of the League of Nations, while important rights were provided for Poland so as to secure her free use of the port for her external trade. It cannot be said that in this solution Germany had any grievance. The terms of Point Thirteen were express in demanding access to the sea, and no one then or since has suggested any better means than by making use of the obvious suitability of Danzig by its history to form the port of outlet for Polish produce.

The fourteenth point emphasized the formation of a general association of nations under specific covenants for the purpose of affording mutual guarantees of political independence and territorial integrity to great and small states alike. The carrying out of this provision by the creation of the League of Nations was in clear accord with its terms, and the one inconsistency was the failure to arrange for the immediate inclusion of Germany in the new organization. This omission was motivated ultimately

¹ Toynbee, *Survey Int. Aff.*, 1920-23, pp. 261ff. See Chap. VI., § 4, below.

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by distrust of Germany, and in all probability this distrust was an error of the most expensive kind. It might have been possible, had Germany been forthwith brought into the new comity of nations, to induce her government, still seeking to be democratic, to co-operate fully and freely with the other Powers, and thus to open up a new era in the management of the affairs of Europe. As it was, she was treated as if she were still under the control of the Hohenzollern dynasty and of the military clique whose advice often outweighed that of the Chancellor in the ears of the Emperor, and the way was paved for that growth of resentment which was to prove fatal to the League, even after Germany had too tardily been accorded membership in 1926. What was urgently needed was cordiality and trust in the new régime,¹ but France especially felt herself unable to ignore the sufferings of invasion and occupation, and British policy never attained any definite aim.

Some other points were included in the treaty to which objection might be taken as not covered by the Fourteen Points. The transfer to Belgium of Eupen, Malmédy, and Prussian Moresnet was of dubious legitimacy; the Allied answer to the German objections rested on various reasons, strategic requirements, history, the desire of the inhabitants, and even reparation; it may be doubted if the point should have been pressed. The case of Memel was difficult; the creation of an independent Lithuania rendered her possession of a port of her own just and proper, but, while the main territory ceded by Germany was Lithuanian in population, the town itself was German, and thus its position was analogous to that of Danzig, and the solution

¹ Cf. *Lord D'Aberton's Diary*, i. 3ff.

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of making it a Free Town under Lithuanian protection might have been adopted. Here the illegal violence of the Lithuanians intervened; the attack on the garrison which held it for the Allies in January 1923 forced the hands of the Allies, and resulted in the incorporation of the area in Lithuania under a statute which certainly was not adapted to meet the special rights of the townspeople.

Though the creation of Czechoslovakia primarily concerned the fate of Austria-Hungary, it involved the grant to the new state of the Sudeten area whose people were unquestionably German by race, though never part of Germany. To a Germany which naturally, on the destruction of Austria-Hungary, aspired to secure union with Austria, the placing of Germans under Czechoslovak rule was as unwelcome as it was difficult to bring within any of the principles of the President.¹ Herein Germany, as in the case of Memel, was presented with a grievance of substantial character.

On the other hand, it is impossible to regard the occupation of the Rhineland as in itself a serious grievance. France had urged with some warrant that her minimum for security should be the detachment of the Rhineland, which should receive autonomy under French protection, and thus become a buffer state destined to prevent another invasion of French territory. The neutralization of such an area might have served important purposes, but it could not be made consistent with the Fourteen Points and it was not persisted in. The demilitarization of a zone of the Rhineland and the temporary occupation, for a maximum

¹ Lloyd George, *op. cit.*, ii. 933ff; E. Wiskemann, *Czechs and Germans*, pp. 87ff.

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of fifteen years, of that territory were reasonable guarantees of peace, but the unilateral character of the former unquestionably furnished Germany with a quite plausible argument that she was being treated unfairly and in a humiliating manner by indicating the impossibility of trusting her.

By an innovation the treaty contained provision for the punishment of the Kaiser¹ and other persons charged with violations of the laws of war. The Kaiser was to be arraigned before a court containing one representative of each of the Allied and Associated Powers for a supreme offence against international morality and the sanctity of treaties, and the court was to determine his guilt and decide the penalty. The basis of the idea was clearly that he was responsible for bringing about the war, but it was impossible to take very seriously the idea that any useful purpose would be served by a trial, and it was obvious that the Netherlands Government could not possibly surrender a monarch who had sought safety therein and had been admitted. No doubt, if it had been worth while, and if his presence in Holland had constituted a real danger to the Allies, they might have pressed for the refusal of the Netherlands to afford him a continuance of hospitality. As it was, the royal exile continued to remain in safety, refraining from any overt act which could endanger the position of the government which had consented to receive him. After all, to those who cited the punishment of Napoleon by exile to St. Helena the obvious answer was that the Kaiser was not Napoleon, and that it would be very difficult indeed to establish that he was the true author of the war.

¹ Lloyd George, *op. cit.*, i. 94ff, 136ff.

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The proposal to try other persons guilty of crimes against the laws of war was not unreasonable, but the project was ruined by the grave error by which, instead of selecting a brief list of clear crimes, the Allies drew up long lists of persons whose degree of guilt varied greatly. Naturally, the proposal to carry out the trials was deeply resented in Germany, where there must have been much discomfort in recollecting in cold blood many of the atrocities committed in the passion of war, and ultimately a rather feeble compromise was adopted, under which in lieu of trial by an Allied court twelve of the criminals were tried by a German court at Leipzig.¹ The results of the trials were not impressive as vindications of German jurisprudence, and the sentences inflicted were quite inadequate. Virtually the attempt brought nothing but unpopularity on the Allies. Yet there can be made out a very strong case for the creation of an international tribunal before which there could be arraigned any officer or man who during war committed deeds in violation of the established rules of war. No doubt such persons, if they fall into the hands of the opposing belligerent in the course of war, can be punished by its courtmartial, but such action is far from satisfactory, since such a tribunal is not likely to command trust as impartial, and the creation of an international jurisdiction of standing character, as opposed to its erection *ad hoc*, might be an improvement on the existing anarchical condition of affairs. It is at any rate not right that it should be open to officers or soldiers with impunity to defy such rules of humanity as may be imposed by international law. It is equally unjust that,

¹ C. Mullins, *The Leipzig Trials*, (1921).

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after the occupation of territory as in the case of Poland, wholesale massacres should take place as punishment for alleged breaches of law in the defence of the country against invasion, the accused parties being given no chance of proving either that the alleged crimes never took place at all, or that they were not guilty of any complicity therein.

Though in the main the treaty of peace did not violate the terms of surrender, the losses suffered by Germany were necessarily severe. She lost her colonies, no recompense being made for land, railways, harbours, and other public property, as would presumably have been the case if they had been annexed out and out instead of being placed under mandate. She lost an eighth of her home territory, East Prussia being severed from the rest of Germany by the Polish Corridor. Alsace-Lorraine was lost, nearly all West Prussia, Posen, and part of East Prussia and Silesia. Danzig became a Free City, and small areas were lost to Denmark and Belgium. The Saar went to France for fifteen years, and she took over the stateworks of the mining and iron industries, and transferred certain private enterprises from German into French hands. The industrial centre of the Ruhr with its coal was cut off from the ores of Lorraine, and the Saar. In this way Germany, one of the chief exporters of finished iron and steel goods, lost 74 per cent. of its iron ore, 26 per cent. of its coal, and 68.3 per cent. of its zinc deposits. The transfer of Lorraine deprived Germany of its potash monopoly. The loss of important areas of Upper Silesia cost Germany the loss of great coal mines, and iron and zinc works, creating a formidable competitor in coal in Poland. To these losses was

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ascribed in part the utter collapse in German currency which coincided with the occupation of the Ruhr in order to enforce reparations. Further, Germany had to hand over the bulk of her war vessels and her merchant marine, together with much rolling stock, and she was humiliated by the internationalization of her rivers¹ and the restrictions on aviation which maimed the advance of her transport methods. It is easy to understand how bitterly the treaty came to be resented, apart altogether from the deplorable burden of reparations.²

3. *The Allied Blockade before and after the Armistice*

The Great War witnessed remarkable, and in the main unfortunate, developments of the system of blockade. Germany, eager to use the weapon of starvation against Britain created by the submarine, found it impossible in the nature of things to employ that instrument in accordance with the established rules of naval warfare. If the submarine were to be effective, as Britain and France controlled the seas, through which their supplies came, it was necessary for it to sink its prey, and it was safer to do so without exposing itself to risk of destruction by the defensive armament which was placed on British merchant vessels to protect them against this modern revival of piracy. Nor was

¹ This régime was unilaterally abrogated by Germany on November 14, 1936, and a law of February 10, 1937. The restrictions on the Kiel Canal also went; *Survey Int. Aff.*, 1937, i. 370ff. Protests were made but not pressed.

² W. F. Bruck, *Social and Economic History of Germany, 1888-1938*, pp. 145ff. See, for a full case, F. Berber, *Das Diktat von Versailles* (1939).

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it easy to discriminate between neutral ships, which normally could not be sunk, and Allied vessels. The results of the campaign on merchant shipping were at times serious; in 1917 for a period there seemed to be real danger that British supplies of essential foodstuffs might fail, but in due course it was found possible by improving methods of detection and destruction, and by arranging for convoys, to defeat the menace.

For her part Britain, followed by France, and, when she entered the war, with the support of the United States, applied stringent rules of blockade.¹ Modern conditions clearly rendered it impossible to observe the older rule under which a blockade was restricted to the coast of the enemy, and recourse was had to a principle which had been laid down as against Britain by the United States in the civil war, under which the fact that goods had ostensibly a neutral destination did not prevent them from being contraband if they were intended to reach the enemy by transit from neutral territory. This doctrine was of fundamental importance as regards supplies of war materials and other articles for Germany, when consigned to Holland or other neutral territory. To allow these countries to act as agents for supplying Germany with the means of carrying on her resistance was impossible, and it became necessary to assert the right to allow neutral countries to receive only such amounts of articles declared contraband as would represent their normal consumption for home use, due allowance being made for increased consumption necessitated by reductions in imports from Germany and her allies. Naturally Germany resented the disadvantage thus

¹ See Wheaton, *Int. Law* (ed. Keith), ii. 1050ff, 1103ff, 1122ff.

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involved, but the legality of the action taken was affirmed by the Privy Council.

Further action was necessitated by the action of Germany in seeking to prevent neutral shipping dealing with Britain by declaring the waters surrounding the British Islands a war zone, in which any vessel found was liable to attack. An Order in Council of March 15, 1915, provided that any ship which had sailed after 1st March on her way to a port other than a German port, carrying cargo destined for the enemy or being enemy property, might be required to discharge such goods in a British port, where they would be detained in the custody of the Marshal of the Prize Court, and, unless contraband or requisitioned by the Crown, would be restored on such conditions as the Court found proper to the owners. On February 16, 1917, a further Order was necessitated by Germany and her allies declaring unrestricted submarine warfare in certain areas. Under it goods of enemy origin or destination were condemned, and ships which conveyed goods from one neutral country to another were subjected to risk of condemnation if they failed to put in at a British or Allied port for examination of their cargoes. In this case, as in that of the earlier Order, Germany protested that Britain was violating international law.

But a more serious grievance was that caused by the actual sufferings through shortage of food imposed on Germany by the British measures.¹ Naturally strong denunciation was pronounced of British efforts to starve women and children, in complete oblivion of the fact that Germany was nearly successful in bringing starvation on British women and children by the success of her utterly

¹ Lloyd George, *op. cit.*, i. 293ff.

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illegal submarine warfare. Unfortunately, on grounds of military necessity it was deemed proper to continue the blockade after the armistice, and this obstacle to the replenishing of the depleted supplies of Germany had some effect in adding to considerable hardships arising from lack of foodstuffs, largely, of course, due to consumption by Germany for war ends. When the difficulty was realized, effective measures were taken to secure transit of supplies, but naturally the episode was early exaggerated into an accusation of Britain for deliberately starving the Germans after the defeat. Propaganda has inevitably exaggerated the incident out of all proportion; it is significant to note the deliberate starvation in 1939-40 of the Poles in the occupied area.

To the experience of the blockade is to be ascribed the widespread demand in Germany for the destruction of British domination over the seas. It is not open to Germany to allege that the Allies broke faith in this matter, for they declined to pledge themselves in any way to this one of President Wilson's Fourteen Points, and the League of Nations Covenant was so framed as to eliminate any possibility of British misuse of sea-power. The grievances of enemies and neutrals alike were to cease under a system which abolished any legitimate excuse for war and provided that if war were wrongly made all members of the League would co-operate against the aggressor in such a manner as to rule out the possibility of legal neutrality.¹ Naturally, of course, the issue has been revived since the outbreak of war, and German suggestions of terms of peace stress the limitation of British naval power, the giving of free access to all

¹ Wheaton, *Int. Law* (ed. Keith), ii. 1129ff. (Cf. *Cmd.* 6108 (1939).
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sources of raw materials in war as in peace, and the surrender by Britain of such strongholds as Gibraltar, Malta, and Singapore. It is confidently assumed that both Italy and Spain must have sympathy with the taking from Britain of Gibraltar, which enables Britain to exercise effective influence on the exit of traffic from the Mediterranean, though Italy might be reminded that her own thesis is that her fortification of Pantelleria¹ has placed her in a position to command the passage between Tunisia and her territory, and to shut off the eastern Mediterranean from British naval activity. But Britain has never accepted the thesis of the Duce that while the Mediterranean is *vita* to Italy, it is but *via* to Britain, and the possibility of a British surrender may be ruled out.²

4. Reparations

It has already been noted that the Allies demanded that Germany should pay compensation for all damages done to the civilian population of the Allies and their property by German aggression. The insertion of this demand was natural; it resulted, however, in the war guilt Article of the treaty of peace above discussed, and the demand therein made for the reparation of all the loss and damage was modified by Article 232, which admitted that the resources of Germany were not adequate after taking into account

¹ M. Boveri, *Mediterranean Cross-Currents*, pp. 130, 148f. Italy resented deeply the ban on exports of coal from Germany enforced from March 1, 1940, and protested; the *Times*, March 6-8: an accord was reached (*ibid.*, March 11); reprisals restricting German Commerce Order, November 27, 1939; Keith, the *Scotsman*, March 6, 12, 1940.

² Keith, *The King, the Constitution, the Empire, and Foreign Affairs, 1936-37*, pp. 130, 137, 141, 155, 171f, 180.

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permanent diminutions of such resources, which would result from other provisions of the treaty, to make complete reparation for such loss and damage. There was no sufficient reason for muddling up the claim with the issue of war guilt; the Allies had under international law and practice every right to demand an indemnity, and the most strict moralist could hardly deny that, if there were ever a case for indemnity, it was one wherein the defeated party had wrought an enormous amount of damage, much of it wanton, much of it consisting of the abstraction of the machinery and other forms of property of the people in the countries they had ravaged. Moreover, Germany had exacted from France in a war to which France had been provoked by Bismarck an indemnity alleged to have exceeded the costs of war.

If only the Allies had been able to fix a reasonable sum, say not over £2,000,000,000 to be paid in moderate instalments over a fairly extended period, the issue might have been settled for good.¹ But this proved impossible. The British Government was anxious to be able to assure the country that Germany would be made to pay to the utmost she could, and it failed to make it clear that this utmost must fall far short of covering the damage done. The total was also increased by the foolish decision to accept an entirely unconvincing argument of General Smuts,² under which it was reckoned fair to include the cost of pensions and separation allowances paid during the war. This point was made, no doubt, for the purpose of securing what

¹ Toynbee, *Survey Int. Aff.*, 1920-23, pp. 140ff; Keynes, *Economic Consequences of the Peace*; Lloyd George, *op. cit.*, ii. 435ff, 488ff.

² *Hist. Peace Conf.*, v. 372.

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seemed to the General a fairer distribution of the sums which could be extracted from Germany among the contending claimants, but while it might be said that it did not increase the actual burden on Germany, which was confined to such sums as she could pay, it is obvious that it afforded a quite effective argument that the terms of peace had been distorted.

Germany made no serious effort to meet reparation payments, and the Reparation Commission established under the terms of the treaty received scant help in its task of fixing what she could pay. The sum decided on, on April 27, 1921, was 132 milliard gold marks, say £6,600,000,000, an amount doubtless beyond the resources of Germany to meet. It was agreed to let her pay by fixed instalments according to a schedule, and a milliard was actually paid by borrowing from London financial houses. But the Allies were soon at loggerheads over the allocation of the amount as among themselves. Matters were patched up at a Conference at Cannes in January 1922, but the fall of M. Briand from power in France, and the substitution for him of M. Poincaré brought serious difficulties, for M. Poincaré was stubbornly convinced that Germany could pay, and was merely evading the discharge of her obligations. In Britain there was rather more insight, and on 1st August Mr. Balfour¹ communicated the offer to abandon rights to German reparations and Allied war debts, if this could be done as part of a full settlement, while Britain would ask from her debtors only so much as would enable her to pay her indebtedness to the United States. The suggestion fell on deaf ears, and evoked no gratitude from the Allies, who

¹ Keith, *Int. Aff.*, 1918-37, i. 78f.

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thought that Britain should set off reparations against war debts, and go on paying the United States out of her own pocket, while, more excusably, the United States adhered to the plain rule that an honest man should meet his debts, remaining unresponsive to the British argument that she had been compelled to incur heavy indebtedness to the United States in order to finance her Allies, the United States having declined, despite her entry into the war, to undertake this very natural share of the joint endeavour.

Germany fell into difficulties owing to the decline in the value of the mark, and a failure of delivery of timber as part fulfilment of reparations was used by M. Poincaré as an excuse to occupy the Ruhr in January 1923, having obtained from the Reparation Commission, despite the opposition of the British representative, a declaration of default.¹ The British Government disliked the proceedings and denied that it was even legal, while the German Government stopped all reparation deliveries and actively furthered the refusal of the railwaymen to work the railways and miners to operate the mines. France and Belgium then resorted to severe measures of reprisal, and a customs line was drawn between the occupied and the unoccupied territory, goods save foodstuffs being prohibited from transit to the latter area. To these measures France added the promotion of a separatist movement in the Bavarian Palatinate, going so far as on January 2, 1924, to secure from the Rhineland High Commission recognition of the Palatinate as an autonomous government. But Britain protested, and demanded a reference to the Permanent Court of International Justice, with the result that France withdrew

¹ Wheaton, *Int. Law* (ed. Keith), i. 197f, 504, 1211f.

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her support, and the separatists, who had no real popular backing, disappeared.

Naturally the unrest thus created had evil effects elsewhere ; in Bavaria itself, on November 9, 1923, General Ludendorff headed a rising in which Herr Hitler took part ; his imprisonment in a fortress after the failure of the movement gave him the opportunity to develop his National Socialist philosophy, and to bestow upon the world *Mein Kampf*, though it was not finished before his release.

But both France and Germany found financial catastrophe awaiting them if they could not compose their quarrel ; it was now that the franc lost nearly a quarter of its value, and that the mark became worthless, and an emergency currency of Rentenmarks had to be initiated in November. The United States now came to the aid of Europe by the suggestion of Mr. C. E. Hughes, made in the preceding December, being given effect. Mr. Baldwin asked the United States to collaborate in an investigation of Germany's capacity to pay, and thence emerged the final adoption on August 16, 1924, of the plan which bears the name of General Dawes, the American expert.¹ It was an elaborate arrangement, but Germany was to pay to begin with a milliard gold marks a year, rising after five years to two and a half milliards ; the amount was to be found in part from the budget, in part from state railway bonds and industrial debentures, together with a transport tax, while the exchange was to be protected by the rule that payment was to be made in marks, while the new marks were to be rendered stable by the reorganization of the bank of issue, with elimination of governmental interference and under

¹ Dawes, *The Dawes Plan* (1925) ; Stresemann, *Diaries*, i. 254ff.

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supervision to protect foreign interests. In 1925 the shares of the Allies in the payments to be made were adjusted, and the matter slept for a time.

In 1929, however, in accordance with discussions carried on from September 1928, a new scheme was worked out by a Committee¹ under the chairmanship of an American representative, Mr. Owen D. Young. The agreement arrived at placed in future on the German Government and not on the creditors the business of securing transfer of payments. But it divided the sums payable into unconditional annuities, which corresponded to the interest derived from the state railways under the Dawes scheme, and conditional annuities; in their case the German Government might postpone payment in foreign currencies for two years, but had to lodge marks in the newly established Bank of International Settlements set up to perform *inter alia* the functions of control exercised by the agencies set up by the Dawes scheme so far as these were necessary under the change of régime. The allocation of the sums payable raised serious difficulties, but at a Conference at The Hague in August Mr. Snowden won a reputation as a staunch defender of British rights against the greed of foreigners. A further Conference in January 1930 cleared up some difficulties, and the opposition of the German Nationalists under Herr Hugenberg was rejected decisively both by the Reichstag and at a referendum, so that the plan came into operation from 17th May.

But the scheme took effect under conditions fatal to it. In 1929 sudden depression fell on America where speculation had been rife, values of shares fell calamitously, and lending

¹ Parl. Pap. Cmd. 3343.

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ceased, speculators recalling all the funds they could lay hands on. Hitherto Germany had been carrying on comfortably by borrowing on a large scale from the United States to pay reparations, while the recipients returned the money to Germany on account of war debts. Germany had also borrowed freely on commercial account, and, while public revenue had risen, expenditure had more than kept pace with it. In May 1931 the failure of the Austrian Credit-Anstalt was threatened; credit was shaken and a demand was made for the return of short-term loans from Germany, a milliard Reichsmarks having been withdrawn by the middle of June, while both hardship and anxiety were caused by the issue of a decree imposing drastic cuts in expenditure and increases in taxation. The Bank of England gave aid to the Austrian National Bank, the President of the United States secured a moratorium on inter-governmental debts, and in August a bankers' agreement prolonged for six months all banking credits in Germany. In Britain anxiety as to the financial stability of the government led on 24th August to the formation of a National Government,¹ but the naval mutiny at Invergordon in September, though slight in extent, was exaggerated by rumour, and prevented the government succeeding in its earnest effort to preserve the gold standard, which had been restored in 1926. This was followed by an appeal to the people for a mandate to restore the situation; a crushing majority was accorded, public confidence restored, and next year the most important step was taken of abandoning the policy of free trade which so long had preserved Britain as the one free market in a world of constantly increasing

¹ Keith, *Const. of England*, ii. 115f.

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tariffs. All danger of unbalanced budgets disappeared, but the success was only won by much retrenchment and readiness on the part of the public to face the necessity of hard work.

Reparations were patently impossible on the Young Plan for long ; in June 1932 a Conference¹ met at which the United States could not be represented, Congress having ruled in December against the cancellation or reduction of any of the indebtedness of foreign states to the United States. The Conference, however, decided that Germany should be rid of reparation payments by depositing with the Bank for International Settlements five per cent. redeemable bonds, with one per cent. sinking fund, to the amount of three milliard Reichsmarks. The bank might, not sooner than three years after the date of the agreement, issue the bonds at not less than ninety per cent., but a contemporary accord made ratification of the result of the Conference dependent on a settlement satisfactory in character between the creditors of Germany and the United States.

Such a settlement was ruled out by the temper of the American people, who could not appreciate the fact that they would gain nothing by insisting on gold payments, while they blocked payment by services or imports. The Presidential election saw both parties insistent on no cancellation,² and after it the requests of Britain and France for reconsideration were ruled out. Britain paid one more instalment in gold, two token payments of 10,000,000 dollars in silver, but in 1934 Congress negatived further acceptance of such payments. Britain, which had made no attempt

¹ *Cmd.* 4126, 4129.
(26)

² *Cf. Keith, Int. Aff., 1918-37, i. 232ff.*
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to recover from her own debtors, then ceased further payments, a course morally defensible.

The United States also dealt a fatal blow at the chance of any result from the World Economic Conference of 1933.¹ It did so by refusing to allow war debts to be discussed; then after intimating approval of currency stabilization, it suddenly reversed its policy, and thus brought the whole pretentious Conference to an end in utter failure. The President had found that departure from the gold standard offered some relief to the difficulties of the American situation, and that outweighed in his mind the advantages of co-operation. Not until 1936, after much suffering in America and Europe alike, was accord reached between Britain, France, and the United States to seek to attain as far as possible stability of exchange, creating exchange equalization funds for this purpose, and expressing the intention to relax progressively the system of quotas and exchange controls with a view to their abolition. The result of this decision was to bring the whole of the former gold bloc reluctantly into line, with the further result of tentative efforts to increase international trade by freeing it from barriers, on which, at the request of the French and British Governments M. van Zeeland prepared an elaborate report issued in January 1938.

5. *The Effect of Reparations and the Struggle for Autarky*

The effects of reparations on German economic policy were far-reaching. The situation which was reached in 1923 was admittedly deplorable. In January 1923 the

¹ Toynbee, *Survey Int. Aff.*, 1933, pp. 35ff; 1936, pp. 161ff.

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government, taking advantage of the temporary cessation of payment of reparations, sought to stabilize the currency at 20,000 marks to the dollar, but the attempt broke down by April, and, as the result of reckless conduct on the part of industrialists and financiers alike, the mark lost all value, for a loaf of bread notes being paid the face value of which was milliards or even billions. The speculators of the financial world, the great industrialists, and estate owners prospered greatly, but the inflation deeply injured the lower middle classes, the wage and salary earners, and swept away the savings of all thrifty classes. The state was still essentially bourgeois, but it failed entirely to protect the middle classes. As Herr von Stresemann insisted,¹ the intellectual and productive middle class, the backbone of the country, which had sacrificed itself freely during the war, was rewarded by reduction to a proletariat status; incredible hardship befell unfortunate retired people and those who had hitherto lived in modest comfort on savings. The working classes were equally hard hit, though unemployment was small. The wages of a trained and skilled worker for one week were said to have sufficed in October 1923 to buy no more than a cwt. of potatoes, and nine or ten hours of work were needed to purchase a pound of margarine. A suit of clothes absorbed twenty weeks' pay, a pair of boots six weeks'. From this date can be traced the trends of opinion which were to reveal themselves in the National Socialist movement in 1933. It is, of course, true that for this chaos Germany had herself in high degree to blame, but it is also true that reparations and M. Poincaré's

¹ W. F. Bruck, *Social and Economic History of Germany, 1888-1938*, pp. 165f.

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adventure in the Ruhr played a serious part, and the bitterness of German opinion on reparations can be understood. It has been easy to keep the resentment alive.

The settlement of the chaos was partly the work of a determined effort to stabilize the currency by the introduction of the new Rentenmark, partly the outcome of the Dawes scheme, which reflected from the standpoint of Germany the will of Herr Stresemann to adopt a policy of co-operation with the Allies in the settlement of economic and political relations. That conditions became easier has been already noted, but the American collapse of 1929 was certain to affect deeply the whole structure of German economy. The suffering caused by the new state of affairs brought about, as we have seen, the collapse and end of reparations, but the economic reaction was hostile to any idea of co-operation. We have instead the development of a system of autarky by the National Socialists. They had denounced the Stresemann plan of fulfilment,¹ and declared the burden too great for the country to bear as worked out in the Young Plan. They could point to the disaster of 1929 and the following years, and insist that the whole tendency of the Stresemann policy was wrong. Further, their political prospects gained greatly from the difficulties into which Dr. Brüning, who became Chancellor in 1930, was plunged by the economic chaos. Parliament failed to realize his position and to give the support essential.² It forgot that this failure to aid must drive him into the

¹ Stresemann's motives have been made doubtful by his letter of September 7, 1925, to the Crown Prince (*Diaries*, ii. 503f), but see Sutton, i. p. xxvii; ii. p. xi for a fairer view.

² Cf. K. Heiden, *Hitler*, i. 276ff; A. Rosenberg, *A History of the German Republic*, pp. 271ff, 308ff.

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expedient of governing by decrees, dispensing as far as possible with the effective approval of the Reichstag, which met only at rare intervals for the sole purpose of homologating measures taken by the ministry, which in effect it could neither reject nor alter, as they had already gone into execution, and the social state of the country demanded energetic action. From this it was but a short step to the system under which, when Herr Hitler on January 30, 1933, became Chancellor of the Reich, on 23rd March an Act was passed by a Reichstag, newly elected after the episode of the fire in the Reichstag building on 27th February, and the suppression of the Communist representation, under which Parliamentary government was terminated for four years—later prolonged—and a Nazi dictatorship set up.¹

It must be recognized that the result of the collapse in American and Europe had disastrous results for Germany. The problem to be faced first by Dr. Schacht as Governor of the Reichsbank and head of the Ministry of Economic Affairs was the existence of an army of six million unemployed with all the misery thereby created, of which no doubt Britain then and later had no adequate realization. His conception² of the method of approach was that "the secret of financing Germany's political and economic tasks lies in a centralized and rigid concentration of the whole public and private activities of the German Reich, that is,

¹ By law of January 30, 1934, Germany was completely unified and constituent power given to the government. See *Survey Int. Aff.*, 1933, pp. 139ff.

² Bruck, *op. cit.*, p. 212. See N. Mühlen, *Hitler's Magician: Schacht* (1938). All restrictions on governmental control of the Reichsbank were removed by a law of February 10, 1937.

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public finance as well as private economy. The concentration is only possible within a state based on authoritative rules." He admitted that the task could not be accomplished within a democratic and Parliamentary system; liberty and social progress must suffer under a planned economy. His ideas are carried out more fully, but with no vital change of principle by Field-Marshal Göring under the Four Years' Plan, with the working of which he was entrusted from 1936.

The programme of creating work necessarily involved the utmost control over all aspects of German economic and financial activity. Wages must be maintained at the lowest rate reasonably possible to maintain the workers in activity, and prices must be stabilized so that this plan could be worked. The wisest possible use must be made of the services and savings of the people. Just as Germany was to become repossessed of full sovereignty for military dispositions, so must she have complete economic freedom of action. Her own resources must be used to finance the expenditure; everything that concerned the market for money and capital must be subjected to the strictest control, and everybody must be brought under full discipline. No expenditure was right which did not serve the purpose of creating work, and of enabling the nation to rearm. The essential modification of the existing system was made under which capitalism of the British style was transformed into a capitalism in which interference by the state plays the decisive part in business management. It is not merely that public capital has a great part in production and distribution, but the whole economic life has been regimented, and socialistic principles have been so applied that economy

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has to serve the nation. No doubt the system adopted is less completely official than the Soviet régime, so that it is possible, though hardly accurate, to speak of a degree of private initiative still being left to the entrepreneur. But the essential fact is that the theory of the state, which will be further discussed below, seeks to combine the tasks of the state as formerly conceived with all the activities of private life, and above all, with the economic activities. Just as in Russia a planning committee adjusts all the needs of the people to the available means of subsistence, whether produced locally or imported, so in Germany there is complete direction through the varying forms of the supreme control of economic affairs working with the Reichsbank for a single end.

Under this system were created economic groups for the chief branches of activity, industry, trade, handicrafts, banks, insurance, the production of power, with subdivisions. All matters relating to food and agriculture, including the vital issue of prices, were placed under strict regulation. The Weimar constitution had legalized strikes¹ and sought to secure peace in industry by an elaborate arbitration system. The new policy, which negatived any class warfare, has substituted a Labour Front wherein employers and employed are bound together in a régime whereby strikes and lock-outs are absolutely forbidden. The planned development of agriculture as well as industrial development, including the construction of houses and communications, was undertaken. Currency became completely regulated, and production followed suit. Industry

¹ Hitler's hatred of strikes dates from his war experience, *Mein Kampf* (E.T.), p. 172.

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is regulated according to whether it produces security goods or consumption goods, such as buildings, household requisites, furniture, cloth, etc. To the former is allocated preferentially foreign raw material. Hence, while the building trade enormously increased in its use of steel from 1932 onwards, the increase lay in much greater proportion in the production of public buildings as against the building of houses. In like manner iron is rationed strictly from the point of view of the greatest national advantage. In 1938, when the need for further expansion of the iron industry was realized, the Government stepped in with an elaborate plan for direct development of the hitherto low-grade iron deposits in North Germany, thus vastly increasing its hold on the ironworks of the country and opening up the prospect of the shifting of the location of industry, and securing that a substantial portion of the needs of the country for iron and steel should be met in regions less vulnerable to enemy attack than the already congested Rhineland and Westphalia.

The results of the system of planning were such as to strengthen in public opinion the new régime. Agriculture and industry expanded; the purchasing power of the people grew as well as their deposits. There was an increase in exports, in income from taxation, and a reduction in foreign debts. From 1932 to 1937 industrial production grew from 37,800 million marks to over 75,000 million marks.¹ The output of coal increased in the same period from 104.7 to 184.5 million tons, lignite from 122.65 to 184.7 million tons, steel from 9.66 million tons in 1933 to 19.207 million tons in 1937. In iron ore the growth

¹ Hitler, Reichstag speech, February 20, 1938.

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was from 1.3 to 9.6 million tons, while it was hoped to increase the output by the development of German low-grade ore by 21 million tons in 1940, and Herr Hitler envisaged even a total of 45 million tons in 1941. From 1933 production of petroleum rose from 238,000 to 453,000 tons in 1937. Moreover credit must be given to the skill and patient research which produced ever-increasing quantities of synthetic rubber, artificial silk, soap from coal, and other synthetic oil and fat materials, even though at first the substitutes fell short in durability of the originals, and though *prima facie* it was possible to hold that importation by normal trade would have been wiser policy.

There was improvement in transport facilities. The cost of production and distribution of commodities was reduced by the development of canals and waterways,¹ hitherto inadequately used, and a system² of motor roads accelerated and facilitated conveyance of goods. Despite demands for public purposes, building of houses for private use was of substantial extent. Control of credit produced marked results; in 1932 short-term credit cost 6.23 per cent., in 1937 it had fallen to 2.93 per cent., while long-term credit has fallen to 4.5 from 8.8.

The planned economy permitted, despite difficulties, an increase of imports from 4,200 million marks in 1933 to 5,500 millions in 1937, while in the same period exports rose from 4,900 to 5,900 millions.

But these results could only be reached by the manipu-

¹ Cf. *Bull. Int. News*, xvii. 66ff. For Germany's mineral supplies, see xvi. 1238ff, 1307ff, 1366ff.

² Todt, *Germany Speaks*, pp. 251ff.

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lations of public finance and the creation of credits by the government with complete disregard of normal financial principles.¹ From 1933 the essential increase of employment which afforded, no doubt, justification for very radical departures from normal methods, was achieved in part by the issue of work creation bills, with the co-operation of municipal authorities, certain public organizations, and banking corporations. Capitalists, German and foreign, were naturally then reluctant to lock away money in long-term loans, but they had to employ their capital somehow, and these bills solved the problem. Goods and money were brought into active circulation again; trade and industry, receiving these bills in part payment for their services, held them as short-term investments, while sending a relatively small proportion to their banks, which in their turn held them for the like purpose. Any orderly budgeting system disappeared, and taxation took many forms, contributions and subscriptions to the Nazi party, to charitable funds such as winter relief, fees to corporative organizations, and fees for import and raw material supervision boards and exports subsidies, and so forth. Some imposts are compulsory, some virtually so, and few really voluntary. From workers' wages for social benefits and income tax as much as 14 per cent. may be deducted, and it seems probable that, whereas before the Nazi régime some 25 per cent. of the national income was absorbed by taxation and contributions, the total is now about 50 per cent., ignoring, of course, the war additions. According to Herr Hitler the Reich revenues in 1938 would reach 17,000 million marks as

¹ An idealist view is given by F. Reinhardt, *Germany Speaks*, pp. 131ff. For guesses on German financial strength see *Bull. Int. News*, xvii. 63ff.

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against 6,600 million in 1932.¹ Expenditure was correspondingly large, but the figures of increase of the public debt cannot be estimated with any attempt at accuracy. There has been need of enormous sums for the process of rearmament, and naturally enough Germany has displayed scant readiness to permit other countries to know what was the real amount which she was expending for that end. On the other hand must be set the relief afforded to the country by the governmental policy of forced reduction of interest rates, which began in 1933 by reducing interest of agricultural debts and municipal debts, extended in 1934 to private credits and loans, in 1935 to public loans and bank interest rates, and is now secured by agreements among the banking associations which regulate the maximum rates for credits. The advantage of the restoration of full employment, and of the reduction in interest rates, has been seen in the increases in the savings of public and private business alike.

It is, of course, natural to wonder how an economy of this type on its financial side can be stable, but though under normal conditions the amount of unfunded debt and the use of such unorthodox instrumentalities as work bills would spell danger of disaster, it is patent that under a totalitarian economy there is really no predictable limit to what the state can do in matters of finance. With dictatorial powers over the money and capital market, the Reichsbank can prevent sudden inflation of currency, and so it can insure the continued issue of bills by use of which the deficit of the Reich can be duly financed. Hence it has

¹ From 1932 to 1939 the debt rose from 12,200 to 41,000 million marks, and revenue before the war had reached 19,000 millions.

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been that finance has never been a factor capable of calling a halt to the process of rearmament at an ever-increasing cost. *Solvitur ambulando*; Germany has realized that the solemn warnings of those accustomed to the normal working of international trade and finance have no real application for any comparatively brief period to its doctrine of self-sufficiency, or to use the current if far from euphonious term, autarky.

This policy in the field of foreign trade¹ is necessarily aimed at making the country to the greatest measure possible self-sufficient, and thus avoiding the results which are inevitable if a country must carry on normal business with others. There is, of course, much excuse for the German decision to turn to this remedy for her evils. In the Great War her successful resistance was impaired by the power of Britain to blockade her, and thus to diminish her supplies of foodstuffs for her people, and of raw materials for the manufacture of munitions. The Nazi propaganda has taken up and widely extended the vogue of the attractive belief that it was not the strength of Allied arms, but the starvation by the blockade of the people that compelled a victorious Germany to yield. Hence Field-Marshal Göring strikes a sensitive and responsive chord when he declares² that "the condition of dependence on the greater or lesser goodwill of foreign Powers is, for a

¹ Cf. *Survey Int. Aff.*, 1937, i. 459ff.

² Speech to International Chamber of Commerce, Berlin, 1937; *Survey Int. Aff.*, 1937, i. 80. See A. G. B. Fisher, *Economic Self-sufficiency* (1939), who seeks to distinguish "autarky" as literal self-sufficiency from "autarchy" as power to control one's own destiny, including control over others necessary thereto. See also *Political Testament of H. Goering* (Ryan, 1939).

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self-conscious people that has the desire to live, simply intolerable." So the Nazi Party Conference was assured by Herr Hitler in 1938 that his success in securing autarky was such that the idea of a blockade "can now be buried as a completely ineffectual weapon," a prediction which patently has considerable but not conclusive weight, since the Russian pact removed the danger of war from the east. As often, Herr Hitler is in accord with the attitude of Italy, for there the date of the application of economic sanctions in respect of Ethiopia, November 18, 1935, marks "the beginning of a new phase in Italian history, a phase dominated by the fundamental postulate of seeking to achieve in the least possible time the maximum possible amount of economic autonomy."¹

But the motive of self-sufficiency for purposes of national security² has been greatly reinforced by the development of similar efforts at autarky among peoples who are not primarily at any rate concerned with the idea of assuring safety in time of war. The British decision to adopt protection, though it was motivated by substantial reasons of immediate necessity in 1931, was adhered to in subsequent years, and it was confirmed and extended by the Ottawa Agreements with the Dominions in 1932. Germans may be excused not finding it possible to ascribe to anything but hypocrisy the pious assertion of the ministry which concluded these rather dangerous accords that they would aid to expand world trade; patently the confining of trade to an imperial group was a step towards autarky, the importance of which Germany might exaggerate

¹ *Survey Int. Aff.*, 1935, ii. 424ff.

² *Ibid.*, 1936, pp. 238ff.

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but did not create.¹ The contemporaneous policy of regulating capital lending overseas, no doubt urgent in 1931, in later years afforded another departure of important type from the régime of freer exchange, and, as we have seen, the Economic Conference of 1933 ended, partly through the erratic and selfish policy of the United States, in a disappointing negation even of the duty of stabilizing currency. When sanity was forced on President Roosevelt by the unsatisfactory results of his narrowly nationalist policy, and a new spirit appeared in 1936, it was too late to undo the injury produced. Those who had criticized Ottawa had the somewhat barren satisfaction of seeing Britain compelled by generous concessions to purchase from the Dominions the right to secure a freer exchange of goods with the United States, an action followed later by Canada, which had learned that there are very definite limits to the profits to be gained from seeking to erect barriers to foreign trade.

Other countries also were hampering trade at every turn by the devices of exchange control, quotas, prohibitions, barter bargains, and so on, and even Holland was departing from the completeness of her free trade policy, despite the patent advantages it offered to a country which drew so much profit from its forwarding trade. Britain abandoned in considerable measure her former policy of keeping her oversea territories open to foreign trade, and the Dominions persisted and added to their economic nationalism, implementing their obligations to aid British

¹ Cf. *Survey Int. Aff.*, 1937, i. 340ff. But the use for political purposes of the Exports Credit System falls only into 1939 as a means to prepare for war.

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manufacturers by the pleasing simplicity of increasing to prohibitive heights their tariffs against foreign imports. Germany could claim that she was following approved models, and she proceeded to act with ever-growing thoroughness. A policy, adopted probably first merely as a matter of urgency for self-defence, was soon taken up by Nazi thought and converted into a fundamental principle of national life.

Complete control of capital¹ was assumed early, only such issues on private account being permitted as served public ends. The government took the right to regulate quotations of stocks, to prevent credit business on the stock exchanges, and to control absolutely all dealings in foreign securities. The whole freedom of business in regard to foreign payments disappeared. A central office took over the regulation of the use of foreign bills. All import and export transactions were subjected to full control, and allocations of permits to import were rationed strictly according to principles of national economic purpose. Dr. Schacht inaugurated the principle of a heavy levy on industry to further exports, and a wide system grew up virtually of barter trade, such as that stipulated for with Russia in 1939-40. The vital importance of the new system lay in its political aspect. The countries of south-eastern Europe were in urgent need of outside markets for their surplus production; hence a technique was developed under which a market was offered for what they were eager to sell, and less was exported in exchange; the resulting credits were then blocked, and the states had to accept in discharge of the German indebtedness not so

¹ Cf. Hitler, *Mein Kampf* (E.T.), pp. 183f.

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much what they actually wanted as what it suited German manufacturers to supply, armaments in special. The advantages of this procedure were obvious, and have been illustrated in 1939-40 in the continued German efforts to control the Rumanian oil industry and to secure a much larger share of its output than that to which it has any title. The other states became more and more economically dependent on Germany, and it was possible for Germany to add to this dependence by extending the activities of German capitalists and technicians in their boundaries. The supply of armaments at the same time rendered the states increasingly unable to risk war with Germany or to treat her in economic matters with true independence, since a cessation of supply of armaments might gravely embarrass them in maintaining themselves against their neighbours, and, luckily for Germany, the claims of Hungary¹ and Bulgaria on their neighbours afforded a constant opportunity of preventing any union to resist German blackmail.

The demand, therefore, for self-sufficiency has a definitely depressing effect on the smaller states, and it is a source of grave danger for all states. Germany admits that she cannot, despite all ingenuity in the production of substitutes for imported goods such as wool or rubber, succeed within her present boundaries in making herself independent, and this leads to the demand that true independence can only be secured when all her vital imports are assured of regular delivery, without risk of interruption from trade fluctuations or war. On the one hand this leads to the demand for the actual expansion of state territory, on the other to

¹ C. A. Macartney, *Hungary and Her Successors* (1937); *South-Eastern Europe* (1938).

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the determination to establish such a stranglehold on minor states as will rule out the possibility of their asserting economic independence. The system of long-term contracts for purchases proposed for Bulgaria in 1938, and in some measure realized for Rumania in 1939, by Germany, serves to link the other states in a most firm connection, whence the minor state may find it most difficult to extricate itself.

Moreover, autarky in the nature of things makes for conflict with foreign states, especially if these have autarkic aims, as they may well have, for nothing spreads more swiftly than an evil example. There are few states which can really hope for autarky without dominating others. Even the United States is deficient in such things as manganese, chromium, and tin, and if she determined that areas which were sources of supply of these commodities must fall under her control she would find herself brought up against the rival claims of other Powers. Nor would even the U.S.S.R. be comfortably autarkic, despite her vast expanse of territory, if her people were to be given a higher standard of life. Autarkic Powers are in the awkward position that by the determination to be self-sufficient, they tend to deprive themselves of the essential benefit of world trade, the reduction of cost under the system by which each part of the world tends to produce those articles for which it has special qualifications, and thus there exist large quantities of cheaply produced goods which, under a natural system, can be sold profitably for other products also cheaply produced elsewhere.

The system of autarky has important results in the agricultural sphere, for food supplies are so vital that all

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efforts must be directed to ensuring their presence, above all in a state which must be ready to wage war for the expansion which autarky invites. German agriculture has been subjected to a régime of the most rigid control in every respect.¹ Since 1936 even the death penalty may be inflicted for failure on the part of producers to supply the amounts stipulated. But there are limits to success in this regimentation. It has proved impossible to expect complete autarky in food production, and the situation as to fodder for livestock production has been still worse, with the inevitable result of a decline in the amount of stock. A bad potato crop might even in peace time prove disastrous if it were at the same time difficult to purchase foodstuffs from abroad. Hence again we have the motive for expansion and for the domination of border states.

Yet the improvement of agriculture has to meet with difficulties based on racial considerations. It is important to preserve and strengthen the yeomanry as the fine flower of the Nordic race. Hence the system of hereditary farms, of area not exceeding 125 hectares, which must pass by the laws of primogeniture, other children being compensated. The result, it is suggested, has been the increase of landless younger sons, the breakdown of the agricultural credit system since the farms may not be mortgaged, and the promotion of slackness in farming on the part of the owners who cannot lose their land. In any case, it is suggested that the present system with a large number of independent farmers is inefficient for the purpose of autarky, and that recourse must be had to the Russian system of large-scale collective farms, which alone can

¹ Bruck, *op. cit.*, pp. 256ff; R. W. Darré, *Germany Speaks*, pp. 148ff.

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produce large amounts of the staple crops, for the small farmer is dependent on those high-quality crops which give the highest profit. The difficulties of the situation are patent. Despite ministerial declarations of the high merits of yeoman husbandry, the great estate owners of central and eastern Prussia, who before the Nazi régime were in grave danger of ruin because they could not compete in the world markets, now prosper from the monopoly of cereal and potato production which they enjoy. Even the Nazi régime seems thus reluctant to expropriate them, as in theory it should be ready to do.

The regimentation of agriculturists necessary to increase production applies also in the whole sphere of labour.¹ Through the machinery of the National Labour Front all labour is closely supervised in its relations with employers, and wages are strictly regulated. It is significant of the closeness of control that, when the war broke out, it was deemed possible to forbid overtime payments and to require an increase of hours, but so hard worked is the employee already that prudence dictated the withdrawal of the project, which would have failed to work. Care is taken to avoid unemployment, and to provide social benefits, though not on the British scale. But the fact is clear that for all workers in agriculture and industry alike Germany imposes a strict control, which extends to their employers, but naturally falls with much less severity on the latter in so far as affects their opportunities of enjoying the pleasures of life.

It is easy and natural for the Nazi régime, while vaunting its success in destroying unemployment and creating

¹ Müller-Brandenburg, *Germany Speaks*, pp. 189ff.

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prosperity from the misery of the pre-Nazi period, to insist that the hardships which are under the system inflicted on the German people are the outcome of the hostility of other Powers. Germany, on this doctrine, which has long been effectively propagated, is not suffering because of any desire on her part for a needless autarky. The German people is in a virtual state of siege, and with this assertion is coupled the pernicious doctrine of encirclement, dealt with elsewhere. Hence it is a motive for accepting the Nazi dogma of the necessity of expansion that thus only can the German be relieved from a life of constant labour. Moreover, thus only will there be attained that living space to which the Germans as a superior race are on that score clearly entitled, and room found for the development of the yeomanry, the glory of the Nordic race, whose increase is hampered by the narrow limits of the Germanic home.

6. *Pride of Race*

Though the racial pride which has brought about such difficulties in Europe has naturally been severely censured by British opinion, it must be admitted that it is merely an exaggeration of a feeling of race superiority conspicuously British. Like the Germans, the British have shown a marked dislike to treating any coloured race on terms of equality. Despite the proclamation of Queen Victoria in 1858 when she assumed the direct sovereignty of India, in which discrimination based on race was renounced, it was not until the contribution of India to the British effort in

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the Great War had demanded recognition that Indians were admitted to commissioned rank in the army serving in India, nor until the opening of the present war that the rule which forbade the entry of non-Europeans into the British Army was withdrawn, and Indians and Africans allowed to find a career due to their talents. As against even Indians there has been erected in Kenya Colony a racial barrier, excluding them from the occupation of lands in the highland area, nor have all the protests of the Indian Government availed to abolish a discrimination without excuse, and morally indefensible. In the Dominions entry of persons of colour is virtually forbidden, and in the Union of South Africa governmental policy denies any possibility of equal treatment for coloured persons, however civilized, and Europeans, and aims at making the native population subservient to European interests. Their complete inferiority is symbolized by forbidding them to be trained in arms, and in Southern Rhodesia, where native interests are not so completely postponed to those of Europeans, public opinion forbids the training of natives¹ to defend their country. If we seek to find any close parallel for Herr Hitler's denunciation of affording higher education to natives, it is available in the determination of the Union of South Africa to close entry into skilled occupations to persons of colour.²

In the United Kingdom itself racial prejudice has happily been held in check. In large measure this may be ascribed to the fortunate fact that, except in limited areas, there are no large aggregations of racial

¹ Keith, *United Empire*, 1940, pp. 81f, 161f.

² Cf. Keith, *The Dominions as Sovereign States*, pp. 712ff.

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character to provoke resentment by their special mode of life. Where there are such aggregations, as in the east end of London among persons of Jewish race,¹ anti-Semitism is not rarely found, and Sir O. Mosley's Fascist movement has anti-Semitism as part of its character. This fact renders more intelligible the anti-Semitic movement² in Germany, even if it affords for it no scintilla of an excuse. It gathered force from the fact that persons of Jewish extraction were eminent in science, in law, and in medicine, as well as powerful in finance and commerce, and racial prejudice could be excited by hopes of plunder. From September 30, 1938, the practice of medicine was forbidden to Jews, and in November the ruin of the Jews for the benefit of the state was consummated by the infliction of a penalty of £80,000,000 imposed in punishment for the murder in Paris of a German diplomat, although there was no shadow of evidence to ascribe blame to the Jewish community. Other steps were taken to exclude Jews from any real chance of earning a living by any form of labour, while their emigration from Germany was rendered difficult by the prohibition of their taking with them any of their property. The policy was doubtless motivated in part by the desire to render German refugees unpopular even in those countries where humanity dictated their reception as a means of saving them from the ferocious savagery of their treatment in concentration camps.³ As was inevitable, the widespread and vocal

¹ Note Dr. Weizmann's testimony to the marked difference between Jews and Germans in *Lord D'Abernon's Diary*, i. 236.

² W. Gross, *Germany Speaks*, pp. 66ff; *Mein Kampf* (E. T.), pp. 238ff.

³ *Cmd.* 6120 gives ghastly details.

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condemnation of German action in Europe, and not least in Britain and France, added to the coldness existing on other grounds between the western countries and Germany, and German feeling, irritated by this condemnation, was confirmed in the belief that the superlative character of its nationality, which had compelled it to measures to eliminate Semitic influences, was not realized by the inferior races of Britain and France, whom it accused of having been contaminated by Jewish influence.

The German attitude was confirmed by the efforts of a large number of scholars,¹ especially after the initial successes of the Nazi movement made it clear in which direction security for their future advancement lay, to prove that Germany was the home of the Aryan race, whence was derived all that was best in human polity and culture. It must be admitted that the task was difficult. Tacitus in his *Germania* at the close of the first century A.D. sides with those who regarded the Germans as a pure unmixed race, attested by the similarity of physical type throughout a vast area. But the fierce blue eyes, red hair, and huge frames, which he marks out as peculiarly German, are patently not characteristic of the whole of the people now claimed as Germanic. Herr Hitler himself cannot claim to have the features which Tacitus deemed specifically Germanic. Modern ethnography distinguishes clearly several racial types in Germany and among kindred peoples.² Perhaps a half of the total belong to the Nordic stock, tall,

¹ See Hirt - *Festschrift* (1936), i. 284ff, 407ff.

² H. Günther, *Rassenkunde des deutschen Volkes* (ed. 14, 1930). See also *Race in Europe* (1939), by J. Huxley.

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long-headed, with light or golden hair, and deep-set light blue or grey eyes, prevalent in the north, and in history associated with the Vikings. In Westphalia, Northern Hesse, and Western Thuringia we find a somewhat similar race, but of heavier build, broader of face, and with ash blonde hair, similar to that found in Dalecarlia in Sweden and in parts of Eastern England. In the south, however, a quarter of the population belongs to the Alpine race, short in stature, broad-headed, with black or brown hair, brown eyes, and sallow skin. In the region of the Danube and the Austrian Alps we have the tall, dark-haired, brown-eyed Dinaric race, marked by prominent noses and short heads with steep backs, while the dark, long-headed Mediterranean type appears in the Rhineland. The Germans are essentially, like all important peoples, of mixed racial composition. The much-despised Jews do not differ in racial make-up from south Germans, belonging like them to the Alpine race. Their language, Yiddish, is simply a German dialect based on East Middle German with some Upper German characteristics, which has been influenced in phonology and syntax by Hebrew.¹ Their specific character is not racial; it is based on religion, culture, and historic tradition.

The idea that Germany, especially Northern Germany, was the home of the people who created the Aryan speech, and that from it proceeded waves of conquerors who carried it far into southern Europe and Asia, has no sound basis. All that we know is that, widely spread, we find the presence of speeches which are most conveniently called Indo-European to express their extension in space. We

¹ R. Priebisch and W. E. Collinson, *The German Language*, p. 328.

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assume that there was once an Indo-European home¹ where an early form of this speech was spoken, whence we hold Sanskrit, Persian, Latin, Greek, the Baltic and the Slav speeches, Celtic, Albanian, Armenian, and others to be derived. But of the physical characteristics of those who used this speech we have no knowledge whatever. It is just as legitimate to claim that they were Nordics² as that they were of Alpine race,³ or that they were of mixed race. The most that can be said is that it is surprising, if the original source of Indo-European speech were in Northern Germany, that Germanic should have wandered so far away from the original as reconstructed from comparison of the existing speeches. The famous sound shift⁴ familiar to us from Grimm's Law is much more easily explained by the view that Germanic is the result of the imposition on a race of lower civilization—as revealed by the early archæological remains in Northern Germany—of the speech of a body of conquerors, not necessarily numerous. Further, on the whole, it is easier to explain the historical distribution of the Indo-European speeches and what we know of the movements of their speakers by the assumption that the Indo-European speech was developed in eastern Asia. At any rate the idea that the present Germans are in any sense a pure Aryan race of high qualities has no scientific basis. It is a mere myth, but its effect as a cause of war must not be under-estimated. It expressed itself in the German contempt for the Czechs, and above all, in their

¹ Cf. Keith, *The Home of the Indo-Europeans* (*Ind. Hist. Quarterly*, xiii., No. 1).

² Karsten, *Die Indogermanen* (1928).

³ S. Feist, *Kultur, Ausbreitung und Herkunft der Indogermanen* (1913).

⁴ Pribsch and Collinson, *op. cit.*, pp. 40ff.

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violent hatred of the Poles. The denial to the Poles in the occupied territories of any right to adequate living space was justified by Dr. Ley on the score that an inferior race needs less food, less culture, less land than a higher race.

In fact the German claim of racial superiority must meet with considerable reserves. The courage of the race is recognized by Tacitus :¹ " When they go into battle, it is a disgrace for the chief to be surpassed in valour, a disgrace for his followers not to equal the valour of the chief. And it is an infamy and reproach for life to have survived the chief, and to have returned from the field. To defend and to protect him, to ascribe one's own brave deeds to his renown is the height of loyalty. The chief fights for victory; the vassals fight for their chief." We may admire one aspect of this picture, but the subservience of the followers, elsewhere also insisted on by Tacitus, affords early evidence of the besetting fault of Germans, their deference to leadership. Modern Germany has been prolific in hero worship, and her heroes have seldom been of attractive personality. Force, rather than virtue or intelligence, has been held in honour, and Herr Hitler himself has borne effective testimony to their susceptibility to dictation, to their dislike to have freedom of choice forced upon them, and to their readiness to yield to doctrines destructive of liberty, provided they are expressed with ruthless brutality. He himself saw these characteristics in the Viennese Socialists² and the Social Democrats of Germany; they expanded their power, not by fair argument, but by consolidating attacks on any opponent of note, regardless of truth or decency, until his party in a vain search for peace sacrificed the object

¹ *Germania*, c. 14.

² *Mein Kampf* (E.T.), p. 49.

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of their dislike. His own rise to power has clearly been marked by the same ruthless methods, and it has been rendered possible by the inclination of Germans to subordinate their intellects and wills to dynamic individuals. This characteristic, among others, has helped to render relations with the western democracies difficult. A certain degree of contempt is inevitably felt by British and French alike for subserviency, and German opinion, always sensitive to contempt, has been thus embittered.

It is, in fact, clear that German mentality suffers from an excess of a sense of inferiority towards the Western Powers on account of their achievements in the political, economic, and cultural sphere, which explains their readiness to accept the doctrine of the necessity of destroying the British Empire, and the merit of assailing the French, whose mixture of race is tending to the production of a mulatto empire.¹ On the other hand, the merits of Germany, the devotion of its people to hard work, their cleanliness of person and abodes, their adoption of high standards of sanitation, and their love of education, tend fatally to cause them to despise the relatively illiterate, backward, and often insanitary Slavs, and to hold that a superior race should be entitled to take possession of lands occupied by persons less worthy to hold them.

7. Racial Expansion and Living Space

It follows from the superiority of the German race to all others that it is the duty of Germans both to multiply and

¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 524f.

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to extend the area which they occupy. The, at first sight monstrous, determination after the conquest of Poland to reduce drastically both the area of Polish territory and the number of the Polish race appears logical when it is realized that from the fundamental doctrine of German superiority arises the corollary of the justice of clearing away races such as the Slavs of less capacity ; if indeed there is only a limited possibility of maintaining population, utilitarian theory may justify the substitution, even at immediate cost to those affected, of a race of higher quality for a lower. It is true that this doctrine ignores the possibility that a race, in some respects of inferior civilization, may owe that inferiority rather to accidents of history, education, location, or religious outlook than to fundamental defects of character or intelligence, and that it might by training be brought up to the German standard of excellence. But it is easy to understand that expansion of the true German race seems far more attractive to the average German, once he is convinced that the superiority of his race is patent.

In *Mein Kampf*¹ Herr Hitler laid down the results of the position as envisaged by him. Germany was already overpopulated, but not merely was the population increasing at an annual rate of 900,000, but it was its duty to increase more rapidly. He negatived utterly, as was inevitable, the idea of limiting population by birth control. He might have appealed to Tacitus' famous praise² of the German matrons for their abhorrence of any such policy. He recognized that a process of increasing small holdings or internal colonization would afford scant relief, and he re-

¹ (E.T.), pp. 121ff.

² *Germania*, c. 19.

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jected the obvious suggestion of increasing manufacturing for export. His grounds for rejecting this obvious solution are interesting. He disliked the process of driving the people from the country into the towns. Moreover, a country which depends on manufactures makes herself liable to severe fluctuations of prosperity according to the variation of foreign demand, which she cannot control. Lastly, a country with a large closely-packed population is in a dangerous position in time of war. Extension of area as in Russia, the British Empire, or the French Empire affords a much greater measure of safety to a large population; of such a state of affairs the United States presents a classical example. There remained only the alternative of territorial expansion, and in the nature of things that must be accomplished by extending German control over large areas of Central and Eastern Europe, whose contiguity with Germany made them ideal as objects of acquisition.

The same demand for expansion, as due by all common sense, logic, and all principles of human and divine justice, was voiced by Herr Hitler in the Reichstag on April 28, 1939, with reference to President Roosevelt's appeal for a settlement of international problems at the conference table, and it stands out in his speech from the Sportpalast on January 30, 1940, the seventh anniversary of his advent to power. In it he compared the sad plight of Germany, whose 80,000,000 people owned but 230,000 square miles, while 44,000,000 British held 15,500,000 square miles, and France had 3,500,000. It is, of course, absurd to ignore the population of the British Empire in asserting its extension, but there is no doubt that this conception of the handicap of narrow limits is deeply held in Germany. It is, of course,

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shared by Italy,¹ where also growth of population and expansion of territory are deemed the just reward of the youthful vigour of the regenerated people of Italy, freed from the fatal incubus of democratic institutions. The claim is specious enough, and demands close investigation.

The facts at first sight are in favour of Germany. With 635,000 sq. km. she possesses only 0.5 per cent. of the world area with, including Bohemia and Moravia, 86 million population, or 4 per cent. of the world population. Italy, with 3,823,000 sq. km. and 53 millions, has 2.8 per cent. of the area and 2.5 per cent. of the population. The British Empire, with 34,946,000 sq. km. and 525 millions, has 26 per cent. of the area and 24.6 of the population. Soviet Russia, with 21,176,000 sq. km. and 171 millions, has 15.7 per cent. of the area and 8 per cent. of the population. The French Empire, with 12,370,000 sq. km. and 111 millions, has 9.2 per cent. of the area and 5.2 of the population. The United States of America, with 9,682,000 sq. km. and 145 millions, has 7.2 per cent. of the area and 6.8 per cent. of the population.² But such figures are not really comparable, including, as they do, areas of very disparate character. It is more important to note that Belgium has 274 persons to the square kilometre, as against 247 for Holland, 195 for the United Kingdom, 186 for Japan, 143 for Italy, and only 135 for Germany.

Moreover, the increase of population in Italy as in

¹ The Duce in the Chamber, May 26, 1927; R. R. Kuczynski, "Living-Space" and Population Problems, pp. 10ff. For the stopping of emigration see Macartney and Cremona, *Italy's Foreign and Colonial Policy*, pp. 282f.

² Kuczynski, *op. cit.*, p. 8, based on *Wirtschaft und Statistik*, 1939, p. 34. Cf. A. Gütt, *Germany Speaks*, pp. 34ff.

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Germany has been encouraged deliberately by various devices, and any excess of population cannot be ascribed simply to natural causes. In Italy the policy of Signor Mussolini, as announced in 1927, was to raise the population of Italy to 60,000,000 by 1950, in order to strengthen her against the 90,000,000 Germans and 200,000,000 Slavs. To accomplish this end Italy has penalized by discrimination in taxation bachelors and childless couples, provided marriage premiums, birth premiums, and family allowances, honoured those possessing large families, provided cheap houses and flats, and made available maternity and child welfare services on a generous basis. All these efforts have not prevented a decline in the originally high birthrate and in the natural increase of population by excess of births over deaths, which, from half a million in 1923, sank to an average of 391,000 in 1936-38. It may fairly be concluded that Italy by her measures has prevented a much more considerable decline, but that the 60 million ideal will not be reached until long after the middle of the century.

In Germany from 1933 the grant of marriage loans, intended to relieve unemployment among men by withdrawing women from the market for workers, had substantial success in increasing the number of marriages. Even after it had fulfilled its share of the work of reducing unemployment it was retained, since it had obviously increased the birthrate, and at the same time measures similar to those of Italy were employed for the same purpose. The annual number of births for Germany without Austria, which was only 971,000 in 1933, rose to 1,347,000 in 1938. Similarly, the increase of population by excess of births

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over deaths rose from 233,000 in 1933 to 546,000 in 1938. But, taking Austria into account and the Sudetenland, the net reproduction rate, which shows, on the basis of current fertility and mortality, the average number of future mothers born to a mother of the period under consideration, was in 1938 no more than 0.910. The claim, therefore, that Germany can look forward to a large growth in population by natural increase is without foundation, and the prospect, therefore, that Germany must look forward to providing fifty years hence for 130 millions, as suggested by Herr Goebbels on May 19, 1939, is visionary. There exists accordingly no urgent question of finding room for the German people. The German statistical office's calculations¹ for Germany, with Austria, showed that it was deemed that a population of 75,340,000 in 1939 would rise to 80,535,000 in 1970, and thereafter would decline gradually, falling in 2000 to no more than 77,031,000. What is even more important, the number of people between age 15 and 45, that is, those of chief economic and military importance, would reach 36,112,000 in 1941, and thereafter would steadily decline to 32,158,000 in 2000. Clearly a substantial increase in the fertility rate would be essential if from 1960 on there were to be brought about a real increase in the number of those between these ages. Whether such an increase of fertility is possible is obviously beyond prediction. But it is essential to note that the figures prove clearly that there is no problem whatever of natural increase of Germans demanding territorial expansion; if such increase comes to pass, it will be due to measures carefully devised to counter the plain tendency of the German

¹ *Wirtschaft und Statistik*, 1938, pp. 971ff.

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population, like that of Britain, to become at no distant date stationary or regressive.¹

Nor is there the slightest reason to suppose that with her present population Germany has any difficulty in finding work for them. The fact that a large population can be supported on a small area is proved by the assertions of Germany herself, and her action under the Nazi régime. The policy for production enunciated on December 15, 1934, insisted that, if poor in space, Germany was rich in population and in the necessary resources to feed the people from her limited space, and to produce industrial raw materials to a considerable extent. The problem of unemployment was then serious, but rearmament and public works speedily found employment for all. In the five years following 700,000 agricultural workers passed into industrial employment, and even so at the beginning of 1938 there was reckoned to be a deficit of half a million workers, and early in 1939 the total was put at a million.

The real character of the position was manifested when Bohemia and Moravia passed under German control; considerable numbers of workers were transferred to Germany. Moreover, emigration of Germans has been carefully restricted, and, on the other hand, the immigration of Germans from other lands has been encouraged. The desire thus to consolidate and add to the German population was strikingly shown after the outbreak of war by the arrangements with Russia for the return of the Germanic elements from the Baltic States, and the encouragement given to Germans in the Polish area taken over by Russia

¹ Admitted by Gütt, *Germany Speaks*, p. 55.

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to migrate into the German territory annexed to the Reich.¹

8. *The Need for Eastern Expansion*

The needs of national self-sufficiency, and of development and extension of the areas for the maintenance and growth of the highest of European races, plainly required,² as a preliminary step, the inclusion in the Reich of every German living in reasonable contiguity, and this objective was to be secured by the addition of Austria, of the Sudeten area, of Upper Silesia, Danzig, and the Polish Corridor. But there could be no such moderate limitation of German expansion, and Germany has never forgotten the plans which for a time seemed to have reached fruition when she concluded the treaties of March 3, 1918, with Russia, and of 9th February with the Ukraine, and the supplementary accord with Rumania.

The Russian treaty³ was the fruit of the demoralization of the Russian forces after the Bolshevist revolution in November, which had driven M. Trotsky and his colleagues to recognition that it was not possible for them to contend on equal terms with Germany, and that their best plan was to seek to encourage revolution in the western lands which would overthrow the governing régimes. But neither in Germany nor Austria did the hoped-for revolution materialize, and on February 9, 1918, the Ukraine, which had proclaimed its independence from Russia under a

¹ *Bull. Int. News*, xvi. 1231ff. For the Tyrol and possible returns from the Balkans, see *ibid.*, xvii. 281ff.

² Cf. Stresemann, *Diaries*, ii. 503.

³ J. W. Wheeler-Bennett, *Brest-Litovsk: The Forgotten Peace* (1938).

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social democratic government, concluded with the Central Powers a treaty, which gave these Powers a virtual protectorate over her, and assured them of a supply of a million tons of foodstuffs of which they were in urgent need. Thus weakened Russia yielded to the menace of a German advance on St. Petersburg, coupled with the knowledge that the counter-revolutionary forces were being mustered south, north, and east to seek to overthrow the Bolshevik régime, and on 3rd March accepted terms dictated by the German Supreme Command.

The terms accorded contrasted strangely with the principles of "no annexations, no indemnities, and the principle of self-determination" on which the Central Powers had originally intimated their readiness to negotiate if the Western Allies were willing to accept the suggestion of joining at Brest-Litovsk with the Russians in negotiation. Russia was compelled to surrender Lithuania, Courland, Livonia, Estonia, and Russian Poland, to recognize the independence of the Ukraine as well as of Finland and Georgia, and to pay six milliards of marks in gold, bonds, and goods. She lost 32 per cent. of her agricultural land, 85 per cent. of that under sugar beet, 54 per cent. of her industrial undertakings, 89 per cent. of her coal mines, and 34 per cent. of her population. She was entirely cut off from the Black Sea, and her access to the Baltic was drastically limited.

The fate of Rumania under the treaty of Bucharest of 7th May was equally drastic. The line of the Carpathians was given to Hungary, the Dobrudja was assigned in part to Bulgaria, in part to Austria-Hungary and Germany in condominium. Rumania was cut off from the Black Sea,

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though she might use Constanza, constituted a free port. But she was to be allowed to secure from Russia, if she could, Bessarabia—undoubtedly a consolation. The terms compelled the leasing of her oil wells to Germany for ninety-nine years, and foodstuffs were for a prolonged period to be supplied to Germany and her allies at fixed prices, thus anticipating the efforts of Germany in peace time to make Rumania an economic dependent. An army of occupation was provided for, and evacuation indefinitely postponed in this moderate and just peace, as Baron Burian for Austria was pleased to call it.

For Russia the peace was vital; it enabled the Bolsheviks to reconstitute an effective army, and thus to save the movement from destruction from their various enemies. For Germany the treaties opened up visions of surrounding Russia with German dependencies, and ultimately bringing it into the status of a German colony. General Ludendorff, as a forerunner of Herr Hitler, claimed that "German prestige demands that we should hold a strong protective hand, not only over German citizens, but over all Germans," and the German colonies in the Crimea were encouraged by the presence of an expeditionary force to put forward a claim for annexation to Germany. How far Germany would have gone in seeking to accomplish this idea we do not know. The failure of her March onslaught in the west to secure the defeat of the Allies was in part due to the immobilization of enormous forces in the east, including three cavalry divisions in the Ukraine, whose presence at the critical moment might have compelled a general retreat of the hard-pressed Allies. When troops were transferred, they came too late, and they had

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been infected with the virus of Bolshevism, and thus tended to weaken the national will of Germany for resistance.

Moreover, the terms of the treaties not merely strengthened the will to victory of the Allies, but persuaded President Wilson that there was but one possible answer to the spirit shown by Germany: "Force, force without stint or limit, the righteous and triumphant force which shall make right the law of the world and cast every selfish dominion down in the dust." The offending treaties fell with the armistice, and the treaty of peace finally cancelled them; Rumania having on the eve of the armistice repudiated that binding her, and thus resuming her place as a belligerent, which she had lost when in July the treaty of Bucharest had been formally ratified.

After the war the German Government naturally abandoned the policy of hostility to Russia, and, acting with the accord of the head of the General Staff, secured, with considerable difficulty, appeasement in the treaty of Rapallo, the Russo-German Non-Aggression Agreement, and a Military Agreement of April 3, 1922. Naturally this trend of opinion had no sympathy from Herr Hitler,¹ whose reaction was to applaud the purposes and to approve the boundless humanity of the pact of Brest-Litovsk. In like spirit he denounced the German migration to the south and west of Europe, and urged that the lands of the east, above all Russia and her border states, should be the object of their gaze. His hatred of Russia was dominated by his dislike of the international Jew, who dominated Russia and who regarded Germany as ripe for Bolsheviza-

¹ *Mein Kampf* (E.T.), pp. 524ff

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tion. Germany must resume the process of colonization of the Middle Ages in the east and south-east of Europe, Germany must include all Germans, and provision must be made for 250,000,000 in due course. All frontiers are man-made ; Germany has a right to land and soil, and, if without an extension of soil she seems doomed to ruin, that right changes into a duty. The duty of the Nazi movement is to remove the disproportion of the numbers of the population and the extent of the soil, which is the source of sustenance and the fulcrum for power policy. Germans, as guardians of the highest type of humanity, have a correspondingly high obligation, and it is fundamentally necessary to make Germans race-conscious, so that they may fulfil this obligation. Germans need space ; they are not to be crowded together as factory-coolies for the rest of the world—a curious description of a strong industrial population—but must have ample room. This ideal involves acquisition of the vast expanses of eastern Europe which stretch with continuity of cultivable areas into Asia, setting no boundary to German ambition.

It is characteristic that Herr Hitler denounces the pre-war policy of Germany, simply because it failed to concentrate on this essential need of space. It should have sought in conjunction with Britain to secure at the expense of Russia the land necessary for development ; instead it embroiled itself with Britain by colonial ambitions and naval construction in support of exports. Equally it lent its force to prop up Austria-Hungary, which served as a barrier to German penetration of eastern Europe in accordance with her destiny. Land is needed to secure due equilibrium between the agricultural population, to which

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his youth in Austria had made him deeply attached, and the industrialists who are necessary to provide for those in the country those things which they themselves do not produce. That his policy will involve the subjection of other peoples matters nothing : Poles are manifestly an inferior race ; are not their children on the same low level as Jews, negroes, and Asiatics :

Nor, of course, is the urge to penetrate to the east confined to the Nazi movement. German colonization in Russia was mooted by Dr. Schacht at a Conference at Rome in November 1932,¹ and inevitably, with the advent of Herr Hitler and his allies to power, the issue was touched on in Herr Hugenberg's memorandum laid before the World Economic Conference in June 1933, when its frankness was the cause of some surprise. Much more commented on was his own indiscretion at the Nürnberg party celebration of 1936² : " If the Urals with their incalculable wealth of raw materials, the rich forests of Siberia, and the unending cornfields of the Ukraine lay within Germany, under National-Socialist leadership the country would swim in plenty." No doubt it follows that, if this Utopia were realized, Germans would produce, and every single German would have enough to live on.

It is clear that domination over foreign territories can be achieved only by war in the long run, and it is to the credit of Herr Hitler that from the first he has been prepared to wage war for his ideals, an attitude which seems natural enough now, but certainly involved courage

¹ J. W. Wheeler-Bennett, *The Treaty of Brest-Litovsk and Germany's Eastern Policy*, p. 31.

² Toynbee, *Survey Int. Aff.*, 1936, pp. 381f.

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to proclaim in 1922 and for many years later, before the indecision and insincerity of the western statesmen made rearmament a matter of no risk. For him¹ the pacifist-humanitarian ideal is sound, but only if the highest human type has conquered and subjugated the world to such an extent that renders it sole lord of the earth. The idea thus ceases to have the possibility of harmful consequences just in so far as its practical application becomes rare and finally impossible. Pacifism then may come, but battle first. Any alliance therefore must involve the contemplation of war ; else it lacks sense and value.²

It is needless to add to these citations of views. We find them put in force in the destruction of Poland, though under stress of circumstances the spoils are shared with Russia, which in *Mein Kampf* and later was still the home of a bestial, mad doctrine, where there was devastation, grim murder, and ruin in contrast with the laughter, happiness, and beauty in Germany, while the whole world is kept in a state of decomposition and spiritual uproar by the Jewish Bolshevists of Moscow. But Poland by October 6, 1939,³ had become, after an interval of friendship, a place whose people were turning most flourishing provinces back into steppes in accordance with their low cultural level and economic inferiority. The Vistula, despite its essential importance for Poland, owing to the lack of any care was already unsuitable for any real traffic, and, depending on the season, was either an unruly stream or a dried-up rivulet. Towns as well as villages were neglected ; roads with very few exceptions were badly out of

¹ *Mein Kampf* (E.T.), pp. 241f ; R. C. K. Ensor, "*Mein Kampf*," p. 28.

² *Mein Kampf* (E.T.), p. 537. ³ *Int. Concil.*, 1939, No. 354.

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repair and in a terrible condition. "Any one who travels in that country for two or three weeks will get the proper idea of the classical German term *Polnische Wirtschaft*, meaning a 'Polish state of affairs.'"

In the same speech we find the essential doctrine of German living-room, wherein peoples not German must fit themselves in with due regard to the supreme interests of the great German people, who have an absolute right to seize space necessary for their existence as a great Power. This is to him axiomatic, and it enables him to forget all his pledges to content himself with only German lands, or his earlier asseverations of a wholehearted determination to live at peace with neighbours and to constitute an element of peace in a troubled Europe. It is only a disordered genius which can so fearlessly repudiate all its previous declarations, but it is fair to say that there is no reason to doubt the sincerity of his eastern visions in *Mein Kampf*. Whether he has sincerely revised his intentions now towards Russia, it is certainly impossible to say. But all the symptoms indicate that, while he may be willing to use Russia¹ for the purpose of deriving thence the supplies of food and raw materials² necessary to aid Germany in her conflict with the Allies, he has not fundamentally changed his mind as to the desirability of acquiring the Ukraine. Incidentally his outspoken contempt for the Poles for incompetence in military and other matters is much more applicable to Russia, whose forces should have had an overwhelming advantage over the Finns, and whose ability

¹ For his denunciation of a Russian alliance on the score of the worthless nature of Russian rulers and the dangers of Bolshevism, see *Mein Kampf* (E.T.), pp. 536ff.

² Cf. *Raw Materials* (R.I.I.A. publication, Nov. 1939).

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to provide the economic aid expected from her seems to be far below any reasonable standard.

It must be added that, while Germany, which lost 70,000 square kilometres of territory under the treaty of Versailles, regained 165,000 by her aggressions of 1938-39, she would still be far from a satisfied Power, even if she added Hungary, Slovakia, the Baltic States, Poland, Rumania, and the Ukraine to her dominions. She would still have no more than 1.5 per cent. of the world area, and would have 8.8 per cent. of world population to provide for. Hence, so far as living-space goes, she would still need colonial territories for expansion of population no less than the acquisition of raw materials.

The final answer to the doctrine of living-space is doubtless effectively put by Lord Halifax on June 29, 1939,¹ when he insisted that the true line of action is to develop the resources of a country by means of co-operation with others, and reminded Herr Hitler that the wide spaces and natural resources of the British Empire and the United States did not avail to save them from much distress in the period of great depression from 1929 to 1932. The obsession of conquest as the means of securing the power to live and to develop is one which must simply be resisted, because it is hopelessly irrational, and, like most irrational forces, is of grave danger to those who come into contact with it.

One development of the war must be noted. By agreement with the Baltic States it was found possible to acquire an accession of population for Germany, while the value of their immovable possessions was made available for use

¹ *Cmd. 6106*, pp. 58ff. Contrast C. Schmitt, *Völkerrechtliche Grossraumordnung* (1939).

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by the Reich in purchases locally of German requisites, while the repatriated Germans could be settled in lands whence the Poles were expelled. It has been suggested that like steps might be taken with the 479,000 German-speakers in Hungary, the 740,000 in Rumania, and the 514,000 in Yugoslavia, who between them are possessed of considerable resources in land, which might be sold on German account, providing thus substantial sums to aid German purchases on war account. The carrying out of removal would, on the other hand, deprive Germany of strong nucleuses of Nazi propaganda and of pleas for intervention, and considerable numbers of the Germans are attached to their homes, though there is no doubt of the great strength of Nazi sympathy now rampant.¹

9. *The Demand for Colonies*

On the question of colonies it has already been noted ² that Germany had a fair case for complaint that there was less than an impartial investigation of her position in view of the doctrines laid down by President Wilson. But Herr Hitler certainly obscured the case for Germany by his insistence in *Mein Kampf*³ that German expansion should lie in eastern Europe, not in oversea possessions, the claim for which would involve reviving the bitterness with Britain which aided to bring about the Great War. It is recorded,⁴ however, that after coming into power he declared that Germany had not renounced her colonial aspirations ; there were a large number of products which

¹ *Bull. Int. News*, xvii. 281ff.

² See § 2 *ante*.

³ (E.T.), pp. 510, 517, 532.

⁴ Kuczynski, *op. cit.*, pp. 20ff.

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Germany must obtain from the tropics, and her need for colonies was as great as that of any other Powers. But this change of view though often repeated was not taken very seriously in Britain, where the comforting theory was promptly excogitated that all he wanted was to use the colonies as a bargaining counter in order to insist on his right to achieve expansion in the east. That there never was any real ground for this invention seems to be certain, but it did harm in obscuring the situation. Yet as early as February 25, 1920, the National-Socialist Party had included in its programme the demand for land and colonies "for feeding our people and for settling our surplus population."

The fundamental reason for the German claim is one which is not stressed in German claims, and is as far as possible ignored in British discussions of the question. It is simply the humiliation which falls on any Power which has possessed large oversea areas, and which, as the result of a desperate war—wherein she certainly won high military glory, and proved her troops equal to the best British and French forces, and superior to all others, including those of Italy—is deprived of her territories, not on the mere ground of conquest, but on the score that she is not fit to have colonial territories entrusted to her care. It is a bitter disgrace, and it is to be regretted that this aspect of the position has not been frankly recognized by British opponents of the German thesis. Up to the outbreak of the war the German demand was one which prudence¹ would have rendered Britain ready to consider, and, in return for other

¹ Keith, *The King, the Constitution, the Empire, and Foreign Affairs, 1936-37*, pp. 137ff, 146ff, 151f, 171f, 180f.

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concessions, Germany might have been told that the return of her colonies would be considered, so far as the areas under Britain alone were concerned—Tanganyika, the Cameroons, and Togoland. Instead, the answer given was of the most peculiarly injudicious and, on the face of it, dishonest type.¹ The critics of Germany insisted that colonies were no real advantage to their holders, and that Germany would not really profit by their return, inviting as a retort the obvious comment that, if the British did not really derive profit from holding the mandated territories, she certainly would not have been willing to take them in the first instance, and would not now be anxious to retain them. No German could be expected to treat these contentions with respect, and the failure to admit this fact has done nothing but harm to Britain by encouraging the belief that her arguments were dishonest.

It is, however, perfectly legitimate to consider not what value in fact the territories in question had for Germany when they were in her possession, but what value they would be likely to have at the present day. Germany is quite right in contending that it is not to the point to show their comparatively slight importance in 1914. She had not been very long engaged in seeking to develop them intensively, and her circumstances were then so different from now, that it is impossible to derive any valid contentions from her then position. For one thing, Britain then maintained a free-trade régime in her colonies, and had not started raising difficulties for German trade with the colonies. At the

¹ Von Epp, *Germany Speaks*, p. 309. Cf. G. Maroger, *L'Europe et la Question Coloniale* (1938); von Freytagh-Loringhoven, *Das Mandatsrecht in den deutschen Kolonien* (1938).

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present day Germany would have every motive in a world full of economic difficulties to apply intensive efforts, by use of capital and her technical skill, to make a wide use of colonies, and would derive thence much larger supplies than she did in the period before the Great War. Further, she would gain enormously by reason of the fact that the currency would be German,¹ and the appalling difficulties arising out of exchange questions would disappear. In German eyes, of course, the obvious retort that exchange difficulties are due to her policy of autarky and exchange control have no validity whatever ; her difficulties, as we have seen, are ascribed by her to the deplorable reparations policy which brought her finances and economy to ruin.

The German case, as put by General von Epp,² the leader of the Reich Colonial League, insists that with intensive economic exploitation an export increase from 10 to 30 million gold pounds, that is, 600 million marks would certainly be attainable in the course of eight years, and that Germany would thus, within a very short time, satisfy about 15 per cent. of her import requirements from her colonies. There seems no reason to doubt this claim ; it seems to be suggested that as the amount of 600 million marks is thrice the total of the imports from the Dutch colonies into Holland the claim is exaggerated, but for this

¹ Herr Hitler, Reichstag speech, February 20, 1938. Mr. Duff Cooper's statement in G. Roberts, *The Nazi Claims to Colonies*, p. viii, that Germany wants colonies for one reason only is not true ; commerce motives count as much as strengthening of her strategic position and prestige is a vital factor ; G. K. Johannsen and H. H. Kraft, *Germany's Colonial Problem* (1937).

² *Germany Speaks*, pp. 299ff ; *Zeitschrift für Politik*, 1935, p. 35.

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suggestion there is no obvious ground. Moreover, there is no real answer to the statistics which show on the basis of the figures for 1936 that, if her former colonies were restored to Germany, she could draw from New Guinea, East Africa, and the Cameroons about half the gold required for industrial purposes ; from the latter two an eighth of the tin needed ; from South-West Africa more vanadium than she needs, a quarter of her lead consumption, and at least a seventh of that of copper. From South-West Africa and East Africa she could derive more diamonds than are necessary for her precious stone-cutting industry and her jewellery industry, from East Africa the total amount of mica needed, from Nauru all the phosphates required for agriculture, and from Togo the largest part of the iron ores which she lacks. It is rather absurd to dismiss this list as not particularly impressive, but against the claim as to iron ores a better case is made out. The German import of iron ore was in 1938 22 million tons. In Togoland there are large deposits in the hills along the frontier, but their distance from the coast diminishes their value. On the other hand, German skill could doubtless procure important results. It would, however, be difficult to obtain adequate native labour ; Germany, however, believes in the Reich in forced labour, and would, therefore, resort to it both to supply miners and the carriers and labourers necessary for road and rail construction for the transport of the mined ore to the coast. These workers could not be obtained from Togo itself, so that there would have to be large scale importation of forced labour from German East Africa and the Cameroons. There is little doubt that this would result in a high death-rate, as under the pre-war German régime,

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and that it would affect much larger numbers of natives than were then in question.

It is easy, of course, for Germany to pick serious holes in the argument. When we talk of the atrocious death-rate in the pre-war days, are we not ignoring the scandalous death-rate of the natives in the mines of the Transvaal? Are we not ignoring the fact that of these doomed miners vast numbers came under virtual compulsion from Mozambique? If things are changed for the better in the Transvaal, is it not simply because experience has proved that care of native health is good business, so that the mine-owners in their own interests safeguard the health of their essential labour supply? Would not German efficiency secure equally good results? There is clearly some danger of exaggeration. Germany might well secure larger supplies of ore from Togo without wholesale injury to the population.

Nor is it possible to refute Herr Hitler's claim that "there is no recipe in world economics which can offer a full substitute for the possibility of an intensive economic exploitation within a territory having the same currency." All that can be done is to show that in the special case of the Cameroons this evil has been minimized. But the demonstration suggests rather unfortunate considerations of a different order.¹ From 1916 to 1924 Germans were excluded from the Cameroons; in 1924 the former German plantations were offered by auction, and were mostly bought by their former owners, who took possession in March 1925; by the end of 1937, of 281 Europeans in the territory, no less than 176 were Germans, mostly employees of the

¹ Kuczynski, *op. cit.*, pp. 21f.

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plantation companies, while the 61 British were government officials with a few missionaries. In that year of a total value of exports of £526,554, no less than £419,946 went to Germany, and only £33,700 to the United Kingdom, and the difficulty that sterling is the official currency of the mandated territory was ingeniously met. The German staff were paid in marks, so that they imported as much of what they required as possible from Germany, and even the labourers received part only of their wages in sterling or its equivalent, a considerable portion of their earnings being paid by credit notes on the German stores maintained by the plantations. It is not very satisfactory, in view of the current belief in the inferiority of German to British administration, to learn that this unfair system of payment in truck, which the German régime forbade with every justification, has been permitted to flourish under the British régime, which condones also the insufficient medical care and the bad sanitary and housing conditions on the plantation estates. Unhappily we know from Jamaica and Trinidad, and indeed from the West African and West Indian colonies and protectorates in general, how slight has been the care taken under British rule to secure the welfare of the natives employed on estates. The population figures show that what prosperity the territory has from European activity in exploitation of its resources is due, not to British, but to German enterprise, and naturally Germany cannot be impressed by the demand that Britain should retain territory which her subjects will not develop. In Tanganyika, in like manner, no person can deny that much development work was accomplished even under the mandate by Germans.

In the Cameroons, as a result of the activity of Germany

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in its exploitation, the German share in exports thither was naturally large—in 1937 £156,771 out of £328,943, while the United Kingdom sent but £39,210—and it is argued thence that we have proof that Germany, despite the loss of territory, could still derive considerable profit from trade with her former colonial possessions. If France's share in the imports of Morocco amounted to 43.7 per cent., and the British share in those of Nigeria to 55.2 per cent., and that of Belgium in those of the Congo to 43.4 per cent., is not the German share in the imports of the Cameroons 47.7 per cent. ? But it must be observed that this state of affairs does not apply to the other territories, and that the figures merely strengthen German feeling that an area whose trade connections are so essentially German ought to be under German sovereignty.

It is true that Germany could not derive from her former colonies any substantial amount of foodstuffs in the narrower sense of the term, and, so far as her colonial ambitions are based on the demand for secure supplies of food, grain, fodder, meat, butter, cheese, and so forth, they imply a demand for the acquisition of colonies which never were her property. On this aspect of the question Herr Hitler has not been wholly clear.¹ His normal thesis has been that from Britain and France he demanded nothing save the return of the former German colonies, as in his Reichstag speech of January 30, 1939, and there is the assertion of General von Epp himself almost contemporaneously that this marked the limits of German claims. It is true that the same authority² after the Führer's speech demanded, over

¹ Dr. Schacht, *Germany Speaks*, p. 291, claims the former colonies only.

² See L. S. Amery, *The German Colonial Claim*, p. 127.

and above this, for Germany as one of the leading civilized nations of the world a share in a coming planned distribution of world space, which was necessary for the future of a nation of 80 million people. We may remember also that in 1898 and in 1913-14 the Conservative and Liberal governments of the day were ready to consider the probability of Germany falling heir to a large portion of the territorial possessions in Africa of Portugal, while Britain obtained the rest. We cannot, therefore, say that before the war Germany made any claim on Britain or France for the surrender of any territory which had not been hers originally. Post-war claims¹ patently are irrelevant save as indicating what may have been in German contemplation, but it may be assumed as natural that his insistence on the extension of living space for Germany would finally have impelled Herr Hitler to seek lands not once German. In addition to the Portuguese territory, which that state has only very recently begun to develop scientifically, but at no great rate, there is the Belgian Congo, under the sovereignty of a very minor power, and to control of part at least of it Germany might well have raised claims. But in any case Germany's own former possessions were palpably of such magnitude, 2,678,000 square kilometres, as to afford her overwhelming motives for seeking to regain them.

There are other aspects of the matter which it is important not to overlook. It is useless to insist that the territories could not afford any important outlet for German settlers, and that such settlers had been few and far between in the pre-war days. Certainly, just as the colonies could not

¹ On February 24, 1940, Herr Hitler insisted that he claimed former colonies only.

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make good German deficiencies in foodstuffs of general importance, though they could provide some important materials for fats—copra, palm kernels, and palm oil—so they could not relieve pressure of population. But they could offer opportunities for those with an ambition for the freer life of oversea territories, even though Nazi organizations there affected all, and they afforded opportunities of employment for officials and technicians of many kinds, whose numbers would have been greatly augmented under the intensive development which was contemplated as necessary. No estimate of these numbers, it is clear, could be based on the figures of the pre-war régime when colonial development was in its infancy.

Another consideration weighing with Germany in addition to the pride of sovereignty, which no doubt was of paramount importance, was the sense of the desirability of strengthening and expanding the domain of the German language and German culture, of which Germany is so proud. Moreover, German firms could under a German régime be assured of opportunities to develop their business by providing and operating public works such as railways. It is hardly surprising if the general sentiment of Germany in favour of colonial claims was clear, and if in conforming to it Herr Hitler was not merely accommodating himself to views which were rather those of his people than personal predilections. Against these considerations it was useless for British opponents of return to stress the fact that the League Committee on Raw Materials reported in 1937 that the total present production of all commercially important raw materials in all colonial territories is no more than about 3 per cent. of world production. The world, it may be

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pointed out, is not stereotyped, and Germany might well feel that facts of this kind were wholly irrelevant to the consideration of her claims.

Much more serious arguments were, however, available, and the British case would have gained in clarity and honesty if they had alone been stressed as justifying refusal to return. If Germany desired return, it was no answer to argue that such return would not be of much value. That was for Germany to judge, and her point of view had, in fact, much to support it. But it was a very different thing¹ to argue that the return of the colonies would involve the gravest of dangers to the British Commonwealth by the creation therein of submarine and air bases. Moreover, Britain was in this regard especially in a delicate position due to the peculiar structure of her Empire. The Dominions had as mandates South-West Africa under the Union, New Guinea under the Commonwealth of Australia, and Western Samoa under New Zealand. All three Dominions had taken an important part in the acquisition of these lands, they had insisted on securing them after the close of the war, and they had with considerable reluctance accepted them under the mandatory system in lieu of annexation. For Britain to act alone as regards Tanganyika, and her small sections of the Cameroons and Togoland, the rest falling to France, would be difficult. These were reasons of substance for Britain to consider, but naturally they had no weight for Germany, nor could they be justly ascribed much force by impartial observers. The obvious solution of the difficulty would have been to offer to restore the lands

¹ E. M. Ritchie, *The Unfinished War* (1940); A. L. C. Bullock, *Germany's Colonial Claims* (1939).

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in question subject to the mandate system, which would have prohibited construction of naval or air bases and the training of natives for more than local defence. Had Germany declined such an offer, then she would have shown that her demand for the colonies was based on other than the commercial motives which she was wont to stress as those actuating her claim.

The second reason adduced as fatal to the German demand was that the natives of the colonies under mandate could not honourably be handed back to a Germany which was dominated by the views of the Nazis as to the inferiority of all races to the German, and as to the right of Germans to treat such races as subservient to German needs. This argument was strengthened by reviving memories of the many and serious instances of German misgovernment¹ in the pre-war period, which, it was added, had formed the justification of the decision of the Associated and Allied Powers to deprive her of territories which she had so misused. This argument when adduced lacked the strength since given to it by the many atrocities committed by Germany in her Polish conquest, and on the record of Germany before the present war it was hard to justify. There had been cases of bad misgovernment by Germany in the early days of her rule in East Africa, but her later régime, though inferior to the best British principles, was not seriously unsatisfactory, as was indicated by the definitely effective defence for her put up by the natives, who formed the bulk of her African troops. Nor could German protagonists be expected to forget that the early régime in many British

¹ General Hertzog on January 28, 1927, asserted the falsity of the former accusations.

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colonies was marked by disgraceful episodes, which have been reprobated by British official reports. Nor was it difficult to discover even in comparatively recent times cases, such as the Hut Tax revolt in Sierra Leone,¹ where misgovernment had brought about a rising, and candour must compel us to admit that the treatment of the Matabeleland chief, Lobengula, at the hands of the South Africa Company does not bear examination. But unhappily from the fate of the German colonies under mandate there could be drawn evidence which was decidedly unfortunate. Though General Smuts accepted South-West Africa as a sacred trust of civilization, the most striking feature in its history was the bombing from the air, with loss of life of women and children, of the Bondelzwarts tribe,² which in 1922 worried the Mandates Commission of the League of Nations, and which is an indelible blot on the reputation of General Smuts and the Union of South Africa. Even in 1936 the report³ of the Royal Commission set up by the Union Government to investigate unrest in South-West Africa among the Germans there resident and others, revealed that the Union had performed its sacred trust for the most part by the mere process of neglecting native welfare completely, so far as the natives were not likely to prove of service to Europeans, and, so far from native welfare being the prime interest of the administration, its efforts were confined to promoting the happiness of the two branches of the European population, German and South African. Nor was this surprising, as the essential doctrine of the Union is that natives of every class are never to be allowed equality in

¹ Keith, *West Africa*, pp. 168f.

² Wright, *Mandates*, pp. 90, 135, 200, 209.

³ U. G., 26, 1936.

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church or state, but exist to be subservient to the advantage of Europeans. In New Guinea no such crime as the bombing of the Bondelzwarts marks the Australian administration, but naturally enough, as Australia has only with extreme slowness done anything for the development of her own possession, Papua, New Guinea has made but slow progress under her ægis, and Germany may quite fairly argue that, if the territory were now under German rule, its development might be greatly accelerated. In Samoa, New Zealand found great difficulty with the Samoans, not from any lack of anxiety to help, but from some failure to grasp the best method of giving aid. Matters have been improved by the Labour administration, which naturally appears to German opinion proof of mismanagement under the earlier régime. In the little island of Nauru, which would be of great value to Germany for phosphates, the administration has settled down, after some considered criticism from the Mandates Commission, to efficiency and just care of native rights. But taken all in all, it would not have been difficult for Germany to do more for these lands than have the Dominions as mandatories.

In Tanganyika, Britain has had more success,¹ largely, however, owing to the presence there of a useful nucleus of settlers in the old German settlers. As we have seen, in the small area of the Cameroons under British mandate it seems essentially to be due to German enterprise that there is a moderate degree of prosperity, and the iron ores of the British mandate of Togoland remain undeveloped because for Britain there is no need for action.

¹ The Permanent Mandates Commission in 1938 noted neglect of health conditions in the Lupa goldfields.

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Germany can also stress the fact that during the Locarno discussions, when it was decided that she should enter the League on a footing of equality, it was expressly admitted¹ that she was qualified to receive a mandate. There is, in fact, no legal difficulty in the matter. All that is requisite is for the mandatory Power to agree to surrender with the accord of the League of Nations. It is naturally claimed by those who oppose transfer that the assent of the native population would be essential. It must be admitted that there is no ground for this claim. It cannot be said with any truth that the assent of the populations concerned was received for transfer to Britain. The natives of South-West Africa then and since have seen no reason why they should not have been allowed to remain in possession as owners of their own lands, and the Samoans have never been convinced that they could not govern themselves sufficiently well for their purposes. In New Guinea, naturally, no attempt could be made to attain assent, and Tanganyika could not be consulted in any intelligible way. The further plea that Britain could not transfer without the sanction of the European British subjects resident in that territory possesses no validity whatever.

It must be added also that the existence of Article 19 of the League Covenant, with its reference to reconsideration of treaty provisions, was clearly applicable to the case of the colonies. But Britain and the Dominions would have been within their rights if they insisted that the matter should be dealt with by simple transfer under mandate, thus ensuring that the natives should be safeguarded from oppressive treatment.

¹ Cf. *Lord D'Abernon's Diary*, iii. 169, 202, 220 ; *The Colonial Problem* p. 81.

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A way out of the obvious duty of serious consideration of transfer was found by the Labour Party in the proposal that, while Britain should retain her mandates; she should extend the system to all her colonies and protectorates not ripe for self-government. The proposal was utterly destitute of morality.¹ The colonies and protectorates were treated in it as if they were chattels to be bargained about. Yet the people of the colonies are British subjects equally with those of the United Kingdom, and to subject them without their consent—which would never be accorded—to international control and international administration would be utterly dishonourable. The protectorates are essentially in like position. They are subject to the Crown in many cases by express agreement, and to transfer control over them without their consent would be an act of force deeply discreditable to the Crown. It must be added that the repetition of this plan in the terms for a peace settlement put out by Labour is indefensible. The suggestion involves either the complete disregard of the wishes of the peoples concerned, which is utterly to be condemned, or the making of an offer which is utterly deceptive, if it is intended by Labour that transfer to international control should be subject to the consent of the peoples involved. The truth is that the failure of Britain and the Dominions, together with France and Belgium, to recognize the reasonable character of the German request for retransfer has placed them in a false position, and has created a difficulty to which no end is yet to be seen. When all is said and done, if peace is made with Germany under

¹ Cf. Keith, *United Empire*, 1939, p. 1084. Contrast Lansbury, House of Commons, December 7, 1938.

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a new régime, it will become shortly after increasingly difficult to maintain the principle that colonial possessions should richly be enjoyed by Britain, France, Belgium, Holland, and Portugal, while a state representing say 70 million people goes without. The case will be worse if, as is possible, Italy¹ emerges from the war with her territories, already won by flagrant aggression, added to by concessions forced from the Western Powers as a means of keeping her out of the conflict.

On the other question of the change of British free trade policy as adding difficulties to the position of Germany in obtaining supplies overseas and exporting her manufactures there in lieu, it is difficult to achieve any definite results.² It is true that in principle the British colonies and protectorates are normally free to sell to any purchaser their products, and many of them are only too glad to find in Germany a market for supplies which are surplus to British needs. But in such purchases Germany is hampered by her own policy of autarky, which deprives her of foreign exchange, so that in this way she injures British colonies rather than is injured by them. Again, it is true that the British system of preferences to the colonies in such a case as sugar allows them to sell to Germany more cheaply than to the United Kingdom. But it must be remembered, on the other side, that preferences to British manufactured articles render German competition hard, and incidentally prevent her buying all the colonial

¹ For Italian demands see E. Monroe, *The Mediterranean in Politics* (1939); A. Werth, *France and Munich*, pp. 398ff.

² Cf. *Raw Materials* (1939); E. Staley, *Raw Materials in Peace and War* (1937).

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products she might else be glad to have, even if it is certainly true that her determination to acquire articles of use for war purposes—iron, manganese, nickel, and from the colonies copper and bauxite—has limited her power of purchase of fats and other matters.

Japan, of course, has been far more severely treated than Germany, in the fact that her goods have been subjected to a system of quotas enforcing a considerable loss of trade. This has been excused as caused by the loss to British manufacturers, and by the advantages of regulation over *laissez-faire*. But how seriously Japan is affected is seen in the reduction of her imports, and in their extension, according to the existence or not of the quota limitation. In Kenya and Uganda, it has been pointed out, where restrictions are not in force, her exports of cotton goods increased to 88 per cent., as opposed to 40 per cent. in 1929. But the loss to Japan is not the essential point. It is necessary to face the fact that as a result of the higher cost of British goods the natives are prevented from acquiring goods desirable for their health. It is not a satisfactory policy which reduced the power of the Ceylonese to clothe themselves, and may have contributed to the severity of the malarial outbreak which took a heavy toll of life on the island. Nor was it satisfactory that the British Government enacted the quota restrictions over the head of the local legislature, which refused thus to subject their people to misery for the sake of the profits of British manufacturers who supported the government in power. In like manner the cutting off of cheap supplies of shoes to African natives may have hindered the reduction of the hookworm disease.

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There is wide currency for the view that the restoration of free trade to the colonies¹ is a step desirable in the interests of goodwill throughout the world. It is objected² that the system of preferences from the mother country is beneficial to them, and that Britain can hardly be expected to give such preferences unless it is reciprocated by preference for her manufactures. The argument does not seem wholly convincing. If the colonies and protectorates are regarded as integral parts of the Empire, the grant to them in difficulties of financial aid without requiring any return seems reasonable enough. The other course seems perilously like a reversion to the eighteenth century, when colonies were valued only for what they could add to British trade. At the least, the offer should be made to open up colonial trade on equal terms to every country which is willing to reciprocate in respect of its oversea possessions; to countries without such possessions admission to colonial markets might be allowed on condition that they gave to the colonies an advantage equivalent to that conferred by Britain. But in any case it is undeniable that it is since the régime of colonial preferences, in return for preferences to the United Kingdom, became established that the British possession of colonies has become a matter of substantial resentment. In the pre-war days the task of exciting enthusiasm among Germans for their colonial possessions was almost hopeless, for the simple reason that Germans found it more profitable and convenient to deal with the already well developed British territories than to

¹ *The Colonial Problem*, chap. iv. and xv. ; R. R. Wilson, *A.J.I.L.*, 1939, pp. 120ff.

² H. D. Henderson, *Colonies and Raw Materials*, p. 26.

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seek trade in the newer German possessions. Whether it is wise to add to the causes of international hatred is doubtful, but the idea of international administration to be imposed on the colonies is contrary to right reason and morality.

A conclusive argument against change of status of the colonies is afforded by the decision of the British Government to devote about £5,500,000 a year, for ten years to begin with, to improve conditions of life and the social services, as well as to extend the development of the resources of the colonial Empire. This supervened upon the realization that, as shown by the report of the Royal Commission on the West Indies, far too little was being done for these oversea territories.¹ The decision is a tardy proof that the trusteeship for the native races so long asserted in speeches is going to be converted into deeds, and it is in part due to the national stocktaking of British ideals as a result of the war. It is plain that sums of this magnitude cannot be handed over to any form of international administration to deal with, and the Labour policy is thus ruled out definitively.

The British decision regarding the future of Palestine, clearly enunciated and defended in the House of Commons on March 6, 1940, illustrates the dangers of international control. The majority—four to three—of the Permanent Mandates Commission pronounced the view that the policy of Britain, adopted to give just and equal effect to the rights of Jews and Arabs, was not in harmony with the mandate. Had they possessed more than advisory status, Britain might have been compelled to accept this bare plurality, and to enter upon a course of destroying Arab

¹ *Cmd.* 6174, 6175.

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liberty for the sake of immigrant Jews, an action utterly unworthy of the British Crown, whose undertakings to the Arabs¹ can only by extreme charity be said to have been fulfilled. If any shadow of excuse can be found for the hatred of Jews in Germany, it is presented by the continuous efforts of Zionists to induce Britain to crush the Arabs and to sanction their being driven as landless wanderers from the land which for so many centuries has been their home. It is also a cardinal error of Zionism to forget that by insistence on the national home they afford a justification to those who argue that Jews are aliens in the lands wherein they dwell.

10. *The Fear of Encirclement*

There is no doubt that one cause of the readiness of Herr Hitler to face a war with Britain, and of his people's willingness to support this action, lies in the belief that British policy was deliberately planning the encirclement of Germany as a preparation for the waging of successful war. Herr Hitler himself adduced on April 28, 1939,² this belief as a ground for the denunciation of the Naval Treaty of 1935, and there is not the slightest reason to doubt the sincerity of his belief. It is equally impossible to doubt the truth of the claim of Mr. Chamberlain³ on June 8, 1939, when he declared that "Any suggestion that we wish to isolate Germany, or to stand in the way of the natural and

¹ *Cmd.* 5957, 5964, 5974 (1939). Cf. Keith, *Current Imperial and International Problems, 1935-36*, pp. 101ff, 222; *The King, the Constitution, the Empire, and Foreign Affairs, 1936-37*, pp. 182f.

² *Cmd.* 6106, p. 51.

³ See also Lord Halifax, *Cmd.* 6106, p. 53.

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legitimate extension of her trade, or to plan some combination against her with the idea of making war upon her, is fantastic." But that a belief is unreasonable does not prevent it being potent to work serious mischief.

The popularity of the idea in Germany is natural, since a like belief was deliberately inculcated in Germany after the decision was taken at the beginning of the nineteenth century to rival Britain as a naval Power. It was natural that the new policy should be regarded with coldness in Germany, where no sufficient reason was apparent for the adoption of a policy which must place grave burdens on public finance, and, as the Emperor had been finally persuaded by Admiral von Tirpitz of the wisdom of the new policy, Herr von Bülow as Chancellor doubtless thought it an excellent stroke of policy to find a reason for the action taken which would render it popular in Germany. Encirclement therefore appears from his speech in the Reichstag of November 14, 1906.¹ There is no reason whatever to suppose that Herr von Bülow deceived himself by this doctrine, but it is no doubt true that it rapidly gained favour, and a convenient method of establishing it as a general belief was afforded by King Edward VII.'s European visits.² It became fashionable in Germany among all circles to treat his action as dictated by a deliberate policy of securing allies with a view to an eventual attack on Germany, whose commercial success was endangering British trade supremacy. The view came patently to be an obsession of the Emperor's confused

¹ Gooch, *Before the War*, i. 264f.

² Keith, *Const. of England*, i. 144f; Fay, *Origins of the World War*, i. 226ff, 240ff, 256.

intellect. It was undoubtedly fostered by the naval rivalry, and by such follies on the British side as the suggestion of Sir John Fisher that a surprise attack on the German fleet would be a wise and practicable policy. There is, of course, abundant evidence from the *British Documents on the Origins of the War* that encirclement of Germany with a view to war was very far from the minds of British statesmen, and the idea that the King indulged in a foreign policy of his own has long been shown to be fantastic.¹ But there is scant evidence to indicate that in Germany there has ever been any general recognition of the baseless character of the charge of encirclement, though occasionally its absurdity has been admitted by expert historians, who, however, have failed to carry their convictions to the minds of the public.

On the contrary, it has been found by German historians in general much more satisfactory to insist on the fundamental truth of the doctrine of encirclement as the most effective means of refuting the claims of the Allies in the Great War that Germany was guilty of the creation of that struggle. It may now be admitted,² in the light of the revelations of the events leading up to the war, that the guilt of Austria was greater than that of Germany, which made the fatal error of giving Austrian determination to destroy the Slav menace to the integrity of the monarchy freedom of action. But the suggestion that the responsibility for the war fell either on Britain, France, or even Russia is wholly untenable, though German opinion has never admitted the plain facts. Instead the power of

¹ Keith, *British Cabinet System*, pp. 488n, 491f.

² Chap. II., § 1, above.

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historians was directed towards establishing firmly the truth of the Kaiser's doctrine, and thus providing a basis for the demand that the Versailles Treaty should be nullified on the score that it was founded on the lie that Germany was guilty of the war. The Press eagerly seconded the efforts of historians, and the doctrine of British war guilt became a commonplace in the schools. The importance of this fact in explaining the present war is obvious. The youth of Germany has grown to manhood and womanhood under the sincere conviction that the Great War was brought about by British manœuvres, and that the policy of encirclement was the *modus operandi* that ruined Germany. It is small wonder if it reacts readily to the assertion of the Führer that encirclement again threatened the vital interests of Germany.

An effort has been made by Professor Brierly¹ to discriminate between the character of British "encirclement" of Germany before the Great War and that of the "encirclement" alleged since March 15, 1939, when the invasion of Czechoslovakia by German forces opened the eyes of the British Government to the error which it had made at Munich in accepting the belief that German ambitions stopped at the reincorporation in the Reich of all Germans. He suggests that the former was a myth deliberately invented, facts being distorted to support the charge, while in the latter case the facts are admitted, but the issue is a difference of interpretation. The distinction, however, is hardly of importance. Neither before the war nor after March 1939 had British policy any desire to encircle Germany in the essential sense ascribed to that

¹ *Encirclement*, pp. 12ff.

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term—the formation of accords intended to facilitate war on Germany. In both cases alike the British Government was solely concerned with the search of peace. The King's journeys were all undertaken in the hope of alleviating the existing tension in Europe, and in seeking to render an outbreak of war unthinkable. The sinister interpretation put on facts was utterly unjustifiable, and in exactly the same manner the British efforts after 1939 to ensure peace were distorted by German opinion to mean efforts to prepare for war. That was the fundamental fact.

It is of course true that circumstances gave the British efforts in 1939 a more definite connection with the risk of hostilities, because that risk was greater then than it seemed to be in the life of Edward VII. But the action taken was always solely inspired by the motive of preserving peace. The drawing closer to France, and the accords with Poland and Turkey for mutual defence, as well as the guarantees given to Greece and Rumania, were entirely pacific in intention. Their essential aim was to prevent Germany seeking war, by assuring her that, if she attacked, she would be defeated. But the idea of attacking Germany was palpably absent.

The accusation of encirclement is the more absurd since it could with far greater truth be alleged against Germany's own policy. By successful aggression in Spain, Germany and Italy secured that France should have potentially hostile neighbours on three frontiers. In September 1938 the destruction of Czechoslovakia was achieved by the combined action of Germany, Poland, and Hungary, and Germany, by seizing Czechoslovakia and Memelland, encircled Poland. Yugoslavia may fairly complain that

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Germany, Italy (in control of Albania), and Hungary are encircling her, and the Russo-German treaty of August 23, 1939, was designed to facilitate the destruction of Polish independence by encirclement.

Moreover, the essentially pacific character of the British action was made plain by the absence of any serious preparations for war, which must have taken place had encirclement been planned as a measure of offence. Even the shock to British confidence in the maintenance of peace caused by the affair of Czechoslovakia did not persuade the ministry to adopt compulsory service,¹ the obvious requisite preparatory to war, and it was only the forcible seizure of Bohemia and Moravia which compelled the ministry to proceed to enter into close relations with Poland and Rumania, and to contemplate, for the purpose of ensuring the ability of Britain to make good her promises, the imposition of compulsory military training on the youth of the country. Even then the idea of aggression on Germany was effectively denied. Lord Halifax gave the most categorical assurances on June 29, 1939,² that the growing strength of Britain would never be used save against aggression, and the Prime Minister on July 10³ reiterated this position.

II. *The New Conception of Law*

It was inevitable that the new movement should have an express philosophy of its new ideology. That was

¹ Refused on December 6 and 20, 1938, by the Ministry.

² *Cmd.* 6106, pp. 58f. ³ *Ibid.*, pp. 74f.

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supplied by Professor Carl Schmitt¹ in the early years of the Nazi régime in order to replace the theory of the liberal and democratic state. He denounced that conception as the result of atomism or pluralism on the one hand, and of Marxism, based on the demand for a class struggle, on the other. Both these elements fell to be combated with the utmost force by the new constitution, administration, law, and the community as a whole. The Nazi Party must be deemed an integral part of the state, the centre and embodiment of its life, and the organ whereby to defeat all forces in the state hostile to the Nazi cause. It is the high merit of Herr Hitler that his appointment as Chancellor first gave the necessary leadership for the overthrow of the public enemy, Marxism. With his assumption of that high office there perished the state of Hegelian tradition, wherein the official class forms a unity as the upholders of the state. The new structure is three-fold—the politico-static, the state; the politico-dynamic, the party; and the non-political element, the people. It is the essential difference between the liberal state and the Nazi state conception that the former opposed the state to the people, while the latter united them. The state thus is derived from the people, from German blood, and German soil.

This unity must be all-pervading; one Germanic state from blood and soil, one nation embracing all Germanic people throughout the world, one party represented

¹ *Der Deutsche Staat der Gegenwart* (1933). For Hitler's view see *Mein Kampf*, pp. 313ff. Cf. R. Bonnard, *Le Droit et l'Etat dans la Doctrine Nationale-Socialiste* (1939); *Law for ensuring Unity of Party and State*, December, 1933.

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by the leader, the point of unification, one system of administration of the national state, including economic administration, and belief in the nation as an article of faith. The leadership is one only ; there is no place as in Italy for a king beside Signor Mussolini. Herr Hitler combines the office of President and Chancellor, but his essential aspect is as Führer, the embodiment of leadership of the party which actively expresses the force of the state. There is power at the root of all state activity, one army and one political opinion support it under the control of the party, which thus is central. There is no longer any place for an objective conception of law, a concept ascribed to Roman origin ; there can be no subjection of administration to independent judicial power ; the law and its interpretation are controlled by the Führer and the party. The legal profession thus must be unified as a branch of the unitary administration ; all members must join the Union of National Socialist Jurists, and drastic steps have been taken to purge from that body all who are not deemed to be politically reliable, in the sense of being unstinted admirers of the Nazi régime. The judges, who under the Weimar Constitution were given complete independence and made subject only to the law, and were to hold office for life, are now simply instruments of the state, wherein there can be no opposition.

The demand for unity excludes any provincial autonomy¹ such as existed in marked degree under the Imperial Constitution of 1871, and of which certain remnants persisted in the Weimar Constitution, despite its unifying tendency under Socialistic influences. The states were

¹ See Dr. Frick, *Germany Speaks*, pp. 17ff.

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reduced in 1933 to the level of administrative units ; their governors are responsible to the Führer. It also demands unity of race. Germans alone should be permitted to share in the functions of government, the professions, education, and Press activities ; all non-Aryans must be banished thence. Jews are excluded from the rights of citizenship.¹ Germans out of Germany, however, remain Germans even if subjects of another state ; they can vote at plebiscites if they are in Germany or on a German ship on the high seas.

The power of the Leader rests on the fact that he represents the nation, not the collection of individuals constituting it from time to time. His relation to it is that of a point of unity which transcends empiric relations. Hence it is through him that the voice of the nation is heard ; hence his decrees are an expression of essential truths, not mere empiric decisions based on the reconciliation of contrasting views. On the other hand, the people by plebiscite or by their representatives in the Reichstag may be called on by him to accord homologation of his decisions, but there is no question of their criticizing them when laid before them ; to him too lies the initiation of all that is to serve the nation's needs.

The party is likewise one only ; to belong to another party denies the unity of the state, and is treason. But it does not embrace all the people ; it is an élite of leaders of the people, bound in closest fidelity to the Leader, and on terms of the utmost intimacy with other members. To the people they are united by the closest ties ; they are one in heart and mind with them, as contrasted with the essentially anti-democratic ruling class principle of Parliamentary

¹ For the purge of the universities see *A.J.I.L.*, 1939, pp. 112ff.

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democracy. In the like spirit we find among the principles of the constitution the working of leadership in industry. Employers and employed must form a unity. In each factory there is a confidential council, presided over by a leader, and including certain of the workers. Social honour courts under a judicial officer, and including as assessors a leader and a worker from the council, deal with the right to work and to employ ; fines and dismissal may be awarded. Leadership again in companies is awarded to the directors, who are not to be interfered with by shareholders in the delicate business of finance and management.

Even Nazi lawyers believe in law, but the law now is that declared by Herr Hitler, whether as a new enactment or as the interpretation of existing law. There is no room for a fundamental constitutional law which would bind the Führer or be respected by the judges, and it is left to the Führer to override previous legislation ; even the judges are not desired to undertake the task of adjusting the old law to the new conditions. Laws, too, should not descend to particulars ; they should enact general principles, leaving the outline to be filled up by official-made regulations, or by judicial interpretation based on the desire to make good the purpose of the law as expressed in the explanatory preamble, which is an essential desideratum for a German law. All this is subject to the Führer's will. The elaborate list of rights of the subject, which graced the Weimar Constitution, and gave him on paper a secure and free life, is now worthless.

Even that remarkable consolidation of civil law, the code of 1900, displeases the spirit of Nazi lawyers ; it is too much based on Roman law, and a Roman law influenced

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by Byzantine ideas, nay, even contaminated by Jewish influence, a theory little considerate of Signor Mussolini's feelings as the exponent of the true Roman spirit. Private property with unlimited power of disposition is alien to Nazi mentality; hence the hereditary freehold to be worked by its owner for state advantage, and regulation of patents and copyright in the interests of the state. Marriage again is ruled for the good of the state; hence the cruel prohibition of marriage with non-Aryans, and the still more inexcusable dissolution on racial grounds of happy unions.¹

In the region of international law the Nazi theory is still more objectionable.² The racial principle makes no union of states legitimate if they are not essentially homogeneous. Hence the League of Nations is condemned, since it commingles the east and the west, the Christian and the pagan, the highly civilized and the barbarian. Until the necessity of Russian aid became obvious, Soviet Russia was ruled out as fit to be a member of the family of nations, since it was based on the ideal of a proletarian world-state, resting on class distinctions; its inclusion in the League was arranged because thus it hoped to promote the dictatorship of the proletariat. It is obviously necessary now to revise the estimate of the U.S.S.R., and luckily that causes no difficulty to one whose word is law, and whose inconsistencies may be noted only by those who live beyond the radius of the long arm of Nazism.

Treaties cannot be regarded as static by a dynamic state.

¹ For a defence see W. Gross, *Germany Speaks*, pp. 76ff.

² Gott, *A.J.I.L.*, 1938, pp. 704ff; J. Fournier, *La Conception Nationale-Socialiste du Droit des Gens* (1939).

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They have their day and cease to be, when it pleases the Führer so to decide. No treaty binds Germany when it was forced upon her; the Diktat of Versailles is utterly condemned by the fact of its origin. But, if Herr Hitler or a predecessor since then has made freely a treaty for good consideration, does it bind? No, not if it conflicts with the evolution of the German people's divine right to living space for the higher race. Against weaker races the higher have the right to take the land they need for homes for themselves and their descendants. Still more obviously lawful and a matter of compelling duty is the taking possession of land in foreign countries which is inhabited in the main by people of German race.¹ It is an interesting corollary to this that, if Germany is to be saved from the necessity of going to war to vindicate this primal right, the temptation must be removed. Germans must abandon Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania, Russian Poland, and the South Tyrol, so that Germany may not be driven by the urge of her imminent destiny to make war on the U.S.S.R. or Italy, an act which for a people in conflict with Britain and France might bring bitter consequences.

The anarchic view of international law has its reflection in the law dealing with crimes against the law of the state. In 1935 were abolished expressly the three safeguards of personal freedom—the rule of the Weimar Constitution that no person can be punished for an action unless it was made criminal by the law before it was committed; the rule that any addition to the list of criminal offences must be distinctly provided by statute; and the rule that in

¹ J. W. Jones, *The Nazi Conception of Law*, pp. 27ff; E. Bristler, *Die Völkerrechtslehre des Nationalsozialismus* (1938), Pt. II.

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interpreting a statute a judge should not find that a crime has been committed which is not clearly indicated by the wording of the statute. Under the new régime, even if a judge cannot find any statute covering the alleged offence, nonetheless it is his business to convict the accused if his action seems to be covered by the general idea underlying some statute, and ought to be punished according to sound popular sentiment. It is an odious doctrine, in no wise improved by reference to the old popular courts of Germany where decisions rested on popular feeling, not on technical law. It appears at its worst, of course, in political trials, where the accused is in extreme jeopardy, as any departure from orthodoxy is suspect. Even too, if he be fortunate enough to escape condemnation by the court, he may be re-arrested by the Secret Police and interned in a concentration camp, either on the plea that his character is such that only thus can his future good conduct be assured, or on the ground that it is necessary for his own safety to guard him from popular vengeance, irrespective of the fact whether there is the slightest feeling save of sympathy for the victim of persecution. The miserable system is further degraded by the ready use made by the police of the common informer, and the high respect in which such infamy is held; there is something perverted in a society wherein it is recorded with satisfaction in the public Press that children spy upon and inform against their parents, often with palpable untruth.

Weight must be allowed to this deplorable destruction of all liberty under law in estimating the attitude of the people to the violation of international law, and the adoption of war as a legitimate means of extending the power of the

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Reich. There is no possibility of any reasoned opposition ; the will of the Führer is law to be enforced by death or confinement in a concentration camp,¹ often meaning death by torture or starvation. A nation thus disciplined is a formidable instrument for war.

12. *The State and the Churches*

A fresh element of difficulty for Germany has been presented by the doctrine of unity, for it has brought the state, as embodied in the person of Herr Hitler, into complex relations with the Roman Catholic and Protestant Churches.² With the former a conflict was inevitable, because the Roman Catholic Church has a definite philosophy of the state which confronts clearly the doctrines of law and right which derive from the Nazi conception of the state. Against the view that law is the will of the racial soul, embodied in Herr Hitler, and right whatever serves the destiny of the German people in his view, must be set the view that law represents the will of God, which finds expression in the law of nature enshrined in the hearts of men, and to which as the universal law of righteousness all states are subject. It is not surprising therefore that in 1930, before National Socialism received power, the Ordinary of Mainz had the authority of his bishop to declare that no Catholic could be a member of the Hitler Party, and the sacraments must be refused to a Catholic who was such a member.

The victory of the party naturally complicated things,

¹ See *Cmd. 6120* ; G. R. Kay, *Dachau, The Nazi Hell* (1940).

² *Survey Int. Aff.*, 1933, pp. 118ff.

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because the Nazi movement meant much to many Germans. Its triumph seemed to mark the restoration of unity in a much divided country, to rehabilitate a people whose enemies had hitherto been potent to humiliate them and prevent them from recovery; it gave them a new and pleasant self-confidence, courage, security, and determination. As good patriots, they felt that they should support Nazi principles, and they hoped that they could do so without risk of incurring the disfavour of the Church. This end seemed to be attained when Herr Hitler signed unexpectedly a concordat¹ with the Vatican, which acknowledged the rights of the Church as regards existing schools and provided for new schools under Church influence, declared that in Roman Catholic schools teaching should be in the hands of Roman Catholics, and there should be no interference with their training, while religious orders were guaranteed in their charitable, educational, and pastoral work. The conclusion of the concordat was regarded by the Centre Party,² which long had represented the political aspirations of the Roman Catholic Church, as a suitable ground for disbanding itself. It had won the bitter hatred of the Nazis because it was bold enough to oppose their views, because it had endeavoured to carry out the hated treaty of Versailles, because it was willing to co-operate with the hated Social Democrats, and because it had some idea of European solidarity which had by this time become obnoxious to the Nazi faith.

The disbanding of the party resulted in the development of the Catholic Action Movement, whose object was the

¹ *Survey Int. Aff.*, 1933, pp. 158ff.

² For Hitler's hatred see *Mein Kampf* (E.T.), p. 226.

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promotion of Catholic principles in personal, family, and social life. The movement, however, fell forthwith under Nazi displeasure, the accusation being at once made that it was merely a disguised form of the defunct party, though for this as for most Nazi assertions no evidence whatever was at any time adduced. An attack was at once launched against the Church Youth Movements in favour of the Hitler Youth Movement, of which Baldur von Schirach became head in June 1933. The Church Youth organization was rigidly restricted to purely church activities to the exclusion of any social activities, in the confident and justified belief that the Hitler Youth would be the gainer from this mean policy.¹

Then the law was invoked to bring discredit on the Church. No sooner had the Saar plebiscite been decided in favour of Germany, the Roman Catholics readily favouring return, than the religious orders were attacked on the ground of violation of the currency laws, and the utmost publicity given to offences which were in most cases purely technical violations of complicated enactments ; significantly the campaign on the Church was followed by wide investments oversea by Nazi leaders in complete violation of the laws which have been so savagely vindicated against the religious. Nor less scandalous were the accusations of immorality with which Germany was deluged in 1936 ; some cases of immoral conduct had undoubtedly taken place, but the treatment of these incidents was purely political and unprincipled. Far more serious than these measures were those taken to deprive the schools of pupils.

¹ N. Micklem, *National Socialism and the Roman Catholic Church*, pp. 163ff.

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The method adopted was that of giving parents the right of choice between church and national schools, and then exerting continuous and overwhelming pressure on parents to prefer national schools. It is not surprising that in 1937 Pope Pius XI.'s patience was exhausted,¹ and he protested in the encyclical *Mit brennender Sorge* against the Nazi violation of the rights secured under the concordat, and denounced organized bondage in matters of religion, blasphemies in word, writing, and picture, and the effort to assert the absolute validity of human above divine law. Further censure of the Nazis was understood to be about to be issued when he died, for the seizure of Austria was followed by a systematic assault on the Church. The action was the more ungrateful because Cardinal Innitzer had, with dubious wisdom, taken earnest measures to secure the support of the priests for the vote in favour of recognition of the *fait accompli*. A new technique was evolved ; masses of party members and hired ruffians were imported to attack leading ecclesiastics noted for their support of the rights of the Church, no official protection was assigned to them, and instead proceedings were then taken against them on the specious ground that they were disturbers of the peace.

The new Pope sought to stem the current of destruction by seeking accommodation with Herr Hitler rather than persisting in the denunciation intended by his predecessor. It is clear, however, that his efforts had failed, even before the outbreak of war ; and the cruel persecution of the priests in Poland, as well of the Poles in general, evoked denunciations from the Vatican, which were slightly altered in

¹ *The Persecution of the Church in Germany* ; Heiden, *Hitler*, ii. 228ff.

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form but not in substance at the remonstrances of Germany.

The action of the Nazis against the Protestants¹ was more easy, for there was no such unity in the Church, divided into Lutheran and Reformed or Calvinist Churches, as well as into numerous independent regional churches. It was easier to find among Protestants men who were willing to consider a revival of their religion, deemed antiquated and divorced from the living life of the day by adopting the current principles of race, soil, and blood. Nor were they unwilling to make concessions to the wave of anti-Semitism which the Nazis had aroused and were exploiting. These German Christians accept the rule of exclusion of non-Aryans from pastoral office, they accept absolute allegiance to Herr Hitler, repudiate the Old Testament as Jewish, and interpret Christianity in terms of race, soil, and blood. Numerous in Thuringia, elsewhere they are comparatively few, but their strength lies in the fact that it is the desire of the Nazi Party to give control over Protestantism in Germany to those who hold this weird and heretical faith.

Unfortunately it has been easy for the government to exercise undue influence on the Churches, and they have, for reasons intelligible enough, found it impossible to maintain a concerted resistance. It is true that in May 1934 a very representative synod declared that Jesus Christ was the one word of God to be heard and obeyed, and repudiated the idea that the Church must recognize other events and powers, figures and truths, as divine revelations; but this

¹ N. Micklem, *National Socialism and Christianity* (1939); *Survey Int. Aff.*, 1933, pp. 140, 150f, 157.

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denunciation of Herr Hitler as a new Messiah ¹ merely added fresh fuel to his determination to prevent the Church proving an obstacle to the carrying out of his plans for the establishment of a totalitarian state. The Secret Police and the Department of State for Church Affairs were mobilized for the purpose of crushing resistance, and they soon found weaker brethren within the Church organization. Thus when shortly before Munich a very responsible group of Protestants issued a form of intercession service in which acknowledgement was made of the sins of the Church and people, and prayers for peace were offered, their action was not only denounced as constructive treason, since prayer for victory was demanded to fulfil the national will, but the Lutheran bishops of the Regional Churches were induced to dissociate themselves from the action taken in Prussia. Here we see the result in part of the old particularism of the German state system which made the Regional Churches jealous of Prussian hegemony. Herr Hitler with much ability added to the confusion in the Church by demanding from all pastors an oath of personal allegiance and obedience, which was not easy to reconcile with the ordination oath of each pastor. This encouraged division in the ranks of the Church, for some members felt that on this issue compromise was forbidden, while others maintained that it was proper and prudent to seek to meet as far as possible the desire of the state.

The Department for Church Affairs has been given complete control over the finances of the Churches ; hence no salary may be paid without government assent, no money

¹ On December 21, 1936, Kerrl practically hailed him as such, speaking as Reichskirchenminister ; Heiden, *Hitler*, ii. 144.

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paid, and, what is decisive, no voluntary collection made. As the Churches have always drawn large sums from the state under old agreements, the position of all those who will not conform is made utterly hopeless. The leadership dogma has naturally been applied to Church administration; autocratic powers have been given to higher officials who are government nominees, and German Christians have been appointed to these posts, which they use to dismiss any pastor of independent mind. The Regional Lutheran Churches have largely submitted to this régime, thus earning favours denied to other pastors. The activity of the Secret Police¹ has been ubiquitous. Those who are suspected of independence are arrested, imprisoned, and held indefinitely in custody without even being charged, all liberty having been abolished. The faithful remnant endeavoured to set up a Provisional Church Government, which should uphold the former standards of the Prussian Union Church, but the fate of those who thus defied the omniscient state has been lamentable. Their ordinations are refused recognition, their theological training institutions have been closed by the police, their leaders dismissed from office, or forbidden to leave their parishes. The fate of Dr. Niemöller, who,² despite his services in the Great War as a submarine commander, and his absolute acceptance of the supremacy of the state in all temporal affairs, nonetheless has been detained indefinitely in custody, is a warning to even the most sincere Christians of the danger of opposition to the powers that be. It is easy to understand how im-

¹ Cf. H. Köhler, *Inside the Gestapo* (1940).

² Pastor Niemöller and His Creed. See also *The Church Struggle in Germany, A Survey of Four Crucial Years.*

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possible it has been for the Churches to affect in the slightest degree the policy of the state or to interpose any obstacle to its engaging in aggressive war. It is easy also to excuse the efforts of such men as Dr. Marahrens, Bishop of Hanover, who shared in the synod of 1934, to work for the accommodation of the Church to the dictates of the state. They may hold that the Church is enduring tribulation, but that, if it can remain united, the time will come when the blighting influence of the Führer may be removed, and the Church may once more enter into its inheritance. Still it must be confessed that, though certain dignitaries of the Catholic Church have shown weakness in their attitude to state demands, that Church, strengthened by its power outside Germany, has maintained a more consistent and effective position than have the Protestant Churches, hampered as they undoubtedly are by the domination of theologies already antiquated and not accommodated to the world as it exists to-day.

Ideologically the attack on the Churches has its exponent, not in Herr Hitler, who probably has no religious beliefs at all save that in himself as the saviour of Germany, and through Germany of the Nordic world, but in Herr Alfred Rosenberg, the author of *The Myth of the Twentieth Century*, a work well adapted to prove the utter mental failure of the leaders of modern Germany. The essential basis of this effusion is the effort to create a true Christinity, which shall be free from the corruptions introduced by the transmission of the faith through Jewish sources, especially the writings of St. Paul. It is necessary, of course, to disprove the idea that Christ was a Jew, the Aryan heresy must be applied to Him, and He must have been an Aryan,

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though naturally the claim is preposterous. The Christian virtues are not those of the New Testament ; they are the imagined qualities of fierce Aryan warriors, above all of ancient Germans, in whose stern natures there is no room for humility, gentleness, long suffering, meekness, or pity. God is in effect to be found in the racial solidarity of the German people,¹ to whom it is absurd to apply the idea that they have fallen from grace, and have to be redeemed through a crucified Saviour. To that racial soul the idea of universality of love is preposterous. It would, of course, have forbidden the view of Herr Hitler that Jews stand outside the obligations of humanity, or of Dr. Ley, head of the Labour Front, who denounces Jews as parasites like tuberculosis germs, and denounces compassion for them on the plea that those who suffer from tuberculosis do not have compassion on the germs of their disease. It is strange that any intelligent being should thus reveal himself lower than the worst of those whom he denounces. This curious creature reveals the positive side of his belief in a letter of instruction of April 1937 for school teachers, Storm Troops, the Hitler Youth, and his own Labour Front. Nazis believe in this world on Adolf Hitler alone ; there is indeed a Lord God in Heaven² who has sent Adolf Hitler, that Germany should be established for all eternity. What must be the fate of children brought up on this nauseous rubbish it is easy to see, but it may at least be said that they are taught to believe in something ; whereas it is recorded that of thirty-one refugee children, average age twelve, in

¹ Hitler has unconsciously adopted the tribal deity of the Old Testament ; *Survey Int. Aff.*, 1933, p. 150.

² Acknowledged by Hitler, February 24, 1940.

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a reception area in England, nineteen had never heard of the name of Christ.¹

This miserable faith, however, is what is to supersede the Catholic and Protestant Churches. Herr Rosenberg declared at Nürnberg in November 1938 that this was the viewpoint of the Leader. The failure to abolish both simpliciter was explained as due in part to the effect on international issues of the destruction of the Catholic Church, and stress was laid on the fact that the abolition of the Bolshevist parties had not achieved the extirpation of Marxism from the minds of the people. But the Hitler Youth Movement is bound to absorb the fragments of the Catholic Youth organization, and the anti-Jewish-Christian teaching of the schools is such as to forewarn them of the blackcoat swindle. Moreover, there were already true Nazis working within the Catholic Church, with whose help the last and extremely strong position of the Church would be occupied, while the financial weapon would be systematically used to dispose of those clerics who could not be won over.

There is also an even more absurd faith, the paganism inculcated by the violent Jew-baiter, Herr Julius Streicher, editor of *Der Stürmer*, a publication whose appearance in Germany negatives utterly her claim at the present day to be civilized. It is easy to understand atheism and agnosticism, but the return to pagan German worship is beyond the comprehension of sane humanity. To celebrate the summer solstice with fire rites is an ancient practice of magic import, and its continuation to-day as a popular but harmless superstition is natural enough. But

¹ See the *Times*, February 17, 1940.

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what can be thought of a man who, standing by a great bonfire on the Hesselberg, a hill deemed sacred by the Führer, declares that, "When we look into the flames of this holy fire and throw our sins into them we can descend from this mountain with clean souls," and ends up by bidding a huge throng of Nazis to be beautiful, godlike, and natural. The picture of God in the likeness of Herr Hitler or any of his satellites must evoke unquenchable laughter in any reasonable soul.¹

It is, of course, clear that rubbish of this sort is the outcome of a situation in which national sanity has broken down under the distress of violent emotion, and that the future for Germany lies either in a return to Christianity, or an advance to the comparative sanity of Bolshevik materialism. But it is idle to ignore the part played in bringing about the war by the disappearance of the restraining influences of religion, at a time when, above all, the spirit of love, which is the most vital element of Christianity, was urgently needed to secure peace in Europe. The trials of the Churches in Germany did indeed evoke a lively and sincere sympathy among other Christian Churches, but to the Nazis these demonstrations of solidarity had no meaning other than that hostile governments were mobilizing spiritual forces in Germany to oppose the irresistible march of a people who have found a new Messiah to lead them to their inevitable destiny of domination over all inferior races.

¹ For a defence see A. Bähr, *Katholische Solidarität und Volksgemeinschaft* (1939).

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13. *The Propagation of Grievances*

It has been rather ingenuously¹ suggested that all states take care by means of the universal popular education which each state provides to propagate the principles which it approves. No state, we are told, will allow its future citizens to imbibe in its schools teaching subversive of the principles on which it is based. In democracies the child is taught to prize the liberties of democracy; in totalitarian states to admire the strength and discipline of totalitarianism. In both he is taught to respect the creeds and institutions of his own country and to think it better than any other. This pleasing doctrine is far from representing the democratic practice of Britain. It ignores the fact that for the classes which are certain to play the greatest part in the organization and conduct of the political life and administration of the state, education is not provided by the state, and that there is nothing to compel in the actual schools where youth is educated any such teaching as is indicated. It equally ignores the fact that the systematic inculcation of the political principles of democracy plays no part in the actual practice in the teaching given in the schools provided in England or Scotland by the education authorities with the approval of the central government. In many schools the real influence lies in the direction of producing in the minds of children dissatisfaction with the existing condition of things. Enthusiastic supporters of the Labour faith or of Socialism in general find opportunities

¹ E. H. Carr, *Propaganda in International Politics*, pp. 5ff. On state responsibility for propaganda, see Van Dyke, *A.J.I.L.*, 1940, pp. 58ff.

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to implant those ideas in the minds of the more intelligent of their charges, and the attitude of many youths who come to the universities from schools not under education authorities reveal no appreciation of the principles of democracy, but leanings towards Fascism or Communism. As in the case of religion, the British democracy does not think it necessary or desirable to exert propaganda for its principles in its schools.

On the other hand, totalitarian practice is very different, and it may be more sensible, for obviously, if totalitarianism is firmly enjoined on the youthful mind, the child as it develops will be provided with a set of ideas which will prevent or hamper it attempting to assimilate new conceptions. Hence in Germany, as in Italy, there has been the most careful attention paid to the control of the education of youth. Even in Italy Signor Mussolini has not given effect to his original suggestion of willingness to allow the Roman Catholic Church a share in education. He felt, undoubtedly correctly, that the inculcation on Italian children of the doctrine of readiness for war was incompatible with the principles of love and pity which the Church was bound to teach; anti-Semitism, however moderate, was incompatible with a faith which claimed to be Catholic. In Germany, naturally, the principle was applied with the utmost rigour under Nazi rule. It would have been ridiculous to allow any remnant of the teaching of doctrines approving the Weimar Constitution. The complete control of all forms of education has been aimed at and achieved.¹ Moreover, everything that could tend to prevent the exclusion of false ideas has been destroyed.

¹ B. Rust, *Germany Speaks*, pp. 97ff.

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It would have been impossible to preach the Aryan racial creed and to allow persons not completely Aryan to teach children or youth in the universities. A rigid purge of all non-Aryans has been conducted, and, needless to say, doctrines which contradict in any way the Aryan creed of the philosophy of National Socialism have been barred. It is incumbent on a German student who presents a thesis on international law to mark with an asterisk the names of authors of Jewish extraction, thus giving a preliminary warning to readers that their opinions are suspect. Science has suffered enormously from the expulsion from their chairs of men of the highest distinction because their lineage has been at some period remotely sullied by Jewish admixture. The result is that German youth has been completely imbued with the Nazi faith. The advantages and dangers of the procedure are plain. The young people of Germany, enrolled in the Hitler Youth, are convinced of the reality of the wrongs of their country asserted by Herr Hitler and his satellites, and are deaf to any counter-suggestions (even if these reach them, which is seldom the case), for the control of opinion is far-reaching and the Secret Police vigilant, while delation is encouraged on every side. Students therefore are in constant danger of punishment if they voice unorthodox opinions, and every consideration of common sense induces them to avoid contamination with unsound views. The modern form of the inquisition is as vigorous as and probably more effective than the old.

The Press, of course, serves to maintain among the people, old and young, the most erroneous views of the relations between Germany and other countries. Nothing

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is more striking than the absence in Germany of any source whence knowledge of anything except Nazi views can be derived. Whereas even during the war British readers have abundant sources from which they can derive sustenance for support of Fascist or Communist doctrines, despite the fact that both sets of opinions are hostile to British ideals, in peace Germans can gather nothing of other than official views, and anything believed outside Nazi circles is available to them only in the form and to the extent which is deemed desirable. It is true that foreign newspapers, so far as they can be read, afford some possibility of knowledge of views not Nazi, but the greatest care is taken to ensure that anything not deemed safe is not allowed to reach readers. Even the *Times*, despite its long continued toleration of the antics of Herr Hitler, has now and then been censored, and papers likely to contain definitely anti-Nazi views have been banned altogether. When it is remembered how small even in this country is the number of those who make any serious study of the foreign Press, it is easy to understand that the effect of the admission of comparatively safe papers does little or nothing to counteract Nazi propaganda. Naturally too, such study is confined more and more to the older Germans, who still remember the time when there was far more liberty of speech and thought, and they are already suspect, and have to be most careful not in any way to seem to attack the new régime or the new philosophy. It is, of course, inevitable that there is no room for the teaching of any theory of politics which is not Nazi.

The cumulative effect of this policy in creating a Germany convinced of the overwhelming character of its

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wrongs, and ready to follow the Führer¹ in any steps needed to redress them, cannot be over emphasized as a cause of the present war. The spectacle familiar among us of serious discussion of the rights of the war, and the strong advocacy of the meritorious action of M. Stalin in invading Finland,² is one incredible to German ideas, just as were the resolutions, which at one time were favoured in the universities of Oxford and Cambridge among the rising youth there, against fighting for king and country. However we may deplore the state of things in Germany, the enormous strength which is given to a leader by the convictions of his followers must not be overlooked. No disillusionment can be expected unless and until the strength which is the Nazi supreme good is shown to be delusive.

But in addition to the work of the schools, universities, Press, broadcasting, and films in moulding the nation to the Nazi ideal, Herr Hitler has sought to aid his cause by propagating, not only in Germany, but also beyond its limits, not merely the merits of the Nazi system, but the demerits of all that opposes it. In the concluding years of the Great War the system of organized propaganda in foreign countries took firm root, and it was the earnest endeavour of the Great Powers by this means to hasten victory by influencing the ideology of their opponents. When backed by achievements in the war, the British propaganda attained excellent results in destroying the German belief in, and readiness therefore to work for victory, though

¹ On the effectiveness of allied propaganda see *Mein Kampf* (E.T.), pp. 164ff; on Versailles, pp. 515f.

² D. N. Pritt, *Light on Moscow* (1940), and *Must the War Spread?* (1940).

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as usual the authors of the propaganda tended to exaggerate the disruptive force on German morale of their intensive and highly ingenious work. Since the war the use of propaganda has been steadily more and more in vogue. Whereas it had seemed essentially a war weapon, comparable with the use of shells and poison gas, and was thus hastily abandoned on the termination of hostilities, or even at the armistice, by the warring Powers, Russia had learned too much from its use by M. Lenin and his friends (after Germany had let them loose on Russia) to drop so valuable a weapon. The Bolshevists had achieved their ends largely by use of propaganda to strengthen wavering sympathisers and to disintegrate opinion in foreign lands. They established, therefore, on a permanent basis the Communist International to serve as the method by which Russia might disseminate her views and might undermine the principles of government in lands of capitalist structure. The strength of this influence was admitted officially by Britain in the Anglo-Soviet trade agreement of March 1921, when each party undertook to refrain from conducting outside its own borders any official propaganda, direct or indirect, against the institutions of the other party. Needless to say, the Soviet Government promptly advanced the ludicrous claim that the Communist International was in no way its agent, a contention which Britain with complete justice refused to believe. In fact, however, Communist propaganda went on unchecked either then or later, which explains why such ready belief was accorded by British opinion in the general election of 1924 to the authenticity of the famous Zinoviev letter¹

¹ Keith, *Int. Aff.*, 1918-37, i. 104.

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with its instructions to the British Communists regarding propaganda for the faith in Britain.

Germany under Herr Hitler has employed propaganda with even greater effect and skill. The use of propaganda by broadcasting was not, of course, introduced into German practice by his régime. Already in 1931 the exchange of amenities between the German and the Polish broadcasts had led to such irritation that the companies made a compact under which the matter broadcasted was not to offend in any way the national sentiment of listeners who were nationals of the other party to the accord. But this meant nothing, and until in 1934 Germany and Poland came to terms and a bilateral agreement to terminate hostile propaganda was achieved, the miseries of the people of Danzig under Polish control, the sufferings of German minorities in Polish lands, and the wickedness of the existence of the Polish corridor separating western Germany from the loyal eastern Prussia, were effectively spread abroad by this device. The accord reached in 1934 was long kept, and it was a significant indication of coming war when in 1939 the restrictions imposed by German policy on attacks against Poland were abrogated, and a torrent of abuse was let loose. As the end of the season for a campaign drew near the whole world was made acquainted with the intolerable wrongs, torture, and mutilation inflicted on Germans by the unspeakable Poles,¹ and it seems as if Herr Hitler himself had worked himself up to the pathological condition in which he believed² these calumnies, though his refusal to consider the proper investigation of the

¹ Cf. *Cmd.* 6106, p. 94.

² Sir N. Henderson, *Cmd.* 6115, p. 7; § 14, below.

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rumours may suggest that he was deliberately feigning belief in the monstrous charges which Germany was broadcasting.

The same technique¹ had already been employed with full success against Austria, in the teeth of the agreement of July 1936, under which both countries were to refrain from all aggressive uses of the wireless, films, news services, and the theatre. The doom of the Schuschnigg régime was easily foretold when Berlin unloosed against it the vials of its wrath and a wealth of mendacity. The next to suffer was Czechoslovakia,² and it must be regretted that British opinion allowed itself to be misled by the worthless attacks made on that unfortunate country. Apparently considerations of common sense disappear when allegations are constantly repeated, and the fatal lead given by the *Times* to the government to secure the surrender of the Sudeten area to Germany would not have proved so generally acceptable had not the minds of British readers and listeners alike been won over to tentative acceptance of the long catalogue of German grievances, of which nine-tenths were false and the remainder grossly exaggerated. Germany by this tactic impressed simultaneously on her own nation and on the world that the Czechoslovak state was a danger to Europe, and the British Government was thus led to the policy of Munich in the knowledge that German propaganda had performed the necessary preliminary task of

¹ On the functions of the Press in World politics, see Dr. Dietrich, *Germany Speaks*, pp. 343ff. On its mendacity see V. M'Kenzie, *Here lies Goebbels* (1940).

² Cf. *Cmd.* 6115, p. 7 for Sir N. Henderson's admission of falsity. We were not so told in September 1938.

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preparing the British public for the exertion of coercion on Czechoslovakia to compel her to surrender.

Of the value of propaganda Germany has given convincing evidence in the war by forbidding listening-in to Allied and even to neutral wireless, and declaring that offenders may suffer even the death penalty. Some may risk ignoring this order, but in a land where delation enjoys high rank the risk is so great that the average listener dare not risk it. Moreover, German propaganda during the war has been most skilfully produced, and by a singular error of judgment such publicity has been given to German broadcasts that there is very real danger that the broadcasters may succeed in instilling into the minds of no small section of the British public erroneous beliefs as to the justice of the war and the competence and even the honesty of the government in its conduct. In like manner the British Government has failed to realize the risk of allowing the free circulation in the country of news letters and other forms of propaganda containing inaccurate information of a character tending to cast doubt on the sincerity and value of French co-operation against Germany. In France¹ the utmost care has been needed to counter the like propaganda by German broadcasts destined to show that Britain will carry on the war to the last Frenchman and the last franc.

As usual Germany had been anticipated in the use of

¹ For the methods of control of the French Press by ministers, which is very complete and dangerous, see A. Werth, *France and Munich*, pp. 380f. In Britain, criticism of the government was made criminal by Order in Council, September 1, 1939, but Parliament compelled its withdrawal by Order, November 23; see Keith, *J.C.L.*, xxii. 77.

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propaganda against British interests by Italy, though as in all else Herr Hitler is far superior to his master. The assault on Ethiopia was not merely excused but justified in a ceaseless stream of propaganda which represented the noble motives which led Italy to proceed on her mission of liberation and civilization against a remnant of the ancient powers of pagan wickedness ; even the Pope was induced to lend his aid to the good cause. Literature in profusion, only equalled by its mendacity, was poured forth and circulated at what must have been a very high cost. But the expenditure was far from wasted. Ethiopia could attempt no reply, and the British public was won over in this insidious manner to the stage when it could accept with pleasure the complete violation of the most plain British obligations in law and honour. Yet the falsity of much of the Italian broadcasts must have been plain, had those who implicitly believed in the iniquities of the Ethiopian régime reflected that from 1936 the Italian Government started a series of broadcasts from Bari filled with deliberate falsehoods, the admitted object of which was to destroy British influence in all lands of Arabic speech. If Italy could lie about Britain, why not about Ethiopia ? Yet only in 1938 did Britain take the long overdue step of starting in the spring broadcasts in Arabic to counter the pernicious work of the Italy to which so many sacrifices of British obligation and interests had been made, and only in September, during the crisis over Czechoslovakia, was news given out in French, German, and Italian in order to counter the utterly misleading broadcasts from the latter countries.

Yet another mode of propaganda is due to Italian

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initiative.¹ The maintenance of national schools abroad for the sake of nationals resident therein is natural, and since the war France, Germany, and Italy have continued or expanded or initiated the system, which has patent political and cultural advantages. But it was Italy which in 1927 created a department in Rome especially charged with the directly political work of spreading Italian influence and culture through the maintenance of contact with Italians settled or living temporarily abroad. In Germany the Nazis developed the same idea with their wonted assiduity and skill.² It is sufficient to note the great importance of the movement in the territories under British mandate. In Tanganyika and South-West Africa alike the Nazis secured an extensive hold over the Germans there settled, who found that, unless they were fortunate enough to have severed effective connection with their kin in Germany, it would be well to join the local branch of the Nazi party, and to treat themselves as in effect devotees of Herr Hitler, working in their new allegiance for the purpose of establishing German sovereignty at a later date. In South-West Africa their claims reached the highest aspect, and even General Hertzog before the war had to make hasty police dispositions in order to frustrate a revolt, while after the war there was found conclusive evidence of the activity of the Nazi organization in planning, under the ægis of the German legation in the Union, a plan for revolutionary action in the event of a European war. So effective was this propaganda in support of the Nazi standpoint that even

¹ On Italy's activities of all kinds of propaganda, see E. Monroe, *The Mediterranean in Politics*, pp. 199ff.

² G. W. Bohle, *Germany Speaks*, pp. 326ff.

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the Prime Minister succumbed to it, and adopted the incredible position¹ that the Union should remain neutral in the war because it was not a war of aggression, but a mere reassertion by Herr Hitler of indubitable German rights. Even when he failed to carry his Cabinet into the policy of neutrality, and, on the refusal of the Governor-General to give him a dissolution, he resigned, it was only later on to demand the conclusion of peace and to persist in denying the responsibility of Germany for the war, and in declining to disapprove of the German destruction of Poland. No more striking example can be cited of the enormous weight of propaganda steadily conducted on a mind, narrow indeed, yet through fifteen years of continuous office as Prime Minister not ignorant of men and facts. Moreover, though his followers as a rule did not imitate him in admiration for Hitler the Liberator, they were careful to refrain from censure, and they are all pledged² now to work for the separation of the Union from Britain, whose hostility to Germany appears inexcusable to minds now for years permeated by German propaganda.

Against the German use of publicity thus to stimulate resentment among their own people, and to weaken resistance abroad or even to secure sympathy, Britain has done little, for the British Council established in 1934 was strictly limited before the war to cultural functions and propaganda was barred. The British viewpoint stands out in the declaration of the Home Secretary on July 28, 1939, that he wished there was no necessity for any government

¹ House of Assembly, September 4, 1939, January 23, 1940; General Smuts answered in justly severe terms.

² Programme of Reunited National or People's Party, January 28, 1940.

publicity anywhere, and he alluded to propaganda as an objectionable relic of the years of the war. Will Britain always be hopelessly ¹ behind the times ?

14. *The Personality of Herr Hitler*

It was the good fortune of Herr Hitler and disaster for Europe that he secured and held power in a time when there was a marked dearth of statesmanship in Europe. In France the commanding figures of the period of the Great War had disappeared, and the tradition of high competence had vanished with them. Their successors were men of limited views, chiefly engaged in manœuvres to secure themselves in power amid the confusion of the French party system ; in MM. Flandin, Blum, and Daladier nothing could be discerned above a tolerable mediocrity. Moreover, the preoccupation in social reforms, long overdue, of the Popular Front rendered it increasingly difficult for French politicians to regard with steadfast earnestness the growing dangers in Germany. In Poland the death of Marshal Pilsudski,² who had at least a reputation as a soldier, and who exhibited at times some signs of statesmanship, was followed by the passing of power into the hands of Marshal E. Smigly-Rydz, who showed no hint of competence in civil affairs, and whose monumental lack of strategic ability doomed the gallantry of the Polish soldiers to utter destruction in a war whose brevity undoubtedly adds lustre

¹ Cf. the issue of aid to Finland, the *Times*, March 14, 1940 ; Chap. VI, § 8, below, and Norway in April, 1940.

² W. F. Reddaway, *Marshal Pilsudski* (1939).

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to the annals of German skill in war. Foreign affairs were in the hands of Colonel Beck,¹ who exhibited so obvious an effort to balance France against Germany as to excite in both countries equal dislike and distrust. The successive Presidents of Czechoslovakia, Drs. Masaryk and Beneš, exhibited indeed calm courage, but the limited resources of their state excluded them from affecting seriously the European position.

In Britain indeed the supremacy of the Conservative Prime Ministers was untroubled by any serious opposition; the Labour party was annihilated by the election of 1931, while that of 1935 merely raised its numbers sufficiently to make it effectively vocal but impotent. The Liberal leader had a fractional following. But Mr. Baldwin, despite his great skill in managing Parliament, and though he was virtually Prime Minister before Mr. Ramsay MacDonald retired from a situation which he had ceased to guide, was not an expert in foreign affairs, and he held the fatal doctrine² that it was not the duty of a leader to warn his people of the dangers into which they were falling through lack of defence preparations lest this might cause loss of by-elections, or still worse, of a general election. His successor, a business man imbued with the ideals of pacifism, felt only discomfort at the programme of securing collective security which his brother had worked for, and held that, just as in business it is best to cut losses, so in public affairs it was desirable to retire with the minimum

¹ His hostility to the League and general incompetence can be seen from *Survey Int. Aff.*, 1937, i. 382ff.

² Keith, *Int. Aff.*, 1918-37, ii. 175ff. On the fall of R. MacDonald, see Weir, *Ramsay MacDonald*, pp. 471ff.

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loss from commitments which had proved inconvenient to keep. No British Premier, perhaps, could have been less well fitted to deal personally with men of enthusiasm and purpose for the aggrandisement of their peoples, such as Signor Mussolini and Herr Hitler.

Herr Hitler himself had the supreme advantage of faith in himself and his destiny as leader of the German race to higher things, thus contrasting most conspicuously with the head of the vital state whose enmity he might have to fear. There is no doubt of the deep impression made on his mind by the abasement of Germany after 1918, nor of his conviction from the treatment accorded to her by the Allies that in strength alone rested the chance of restoring his country to the greatness which was its right. Nor could he be expected not to resent the confusion and uncertainty imposed on Germany by the gravely erroneous policy of reparations, which would have defeated the efforts even of a willing Germany to put her house in order. He cannot be blamed for desiring urgently to restore self-respect and orderly progress to his country, nor for holding that only through an essentially autocratic system could he achieve these ends. If his attainment of power seems amazing, yet it must be regarded in the light of the utter chaos which prevailed in Germany as a result of the collapse of the economic situation after the crisis in the United States in 1929.

The record of the dishonest intrigues¹ by which the Nazi party achieved power in 1933, culminating in the affair of the Reichstag fire, is unedifying in the extreme, but Herr Hitler plainly felt that nothing should be allowed to stand

¹ *Survey Int. Aff.*, 1933, pp. 134ff; K. Heiden, *Adolf Hitler*, i. 248ff.

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in the way of his advent to power. His use of power to bring back self-confidence to his people, and to restore the economic position, no doubt brought advantages of great value, and explain among a docile race ready to recognize leadership the failure of opposition of any effective kind. But this result was strongly aided by the methods of the Secret Police, which marked out for destruction any who endeavoured to maintain views of their own. In the main, however, criticism was halted by the obvious advantage of a people to be restored rapidly to a commanding position in a world in which, but a short time before, they had appeared to others and to themselves as humiliated and reduced to impotence. Stress must also be laid on his flair for accepting popular devices; the "Strength through Joy" movement, the care for the physical¹ fitness of the nation, and the organization of the labour camps displayed the best side of a benevolent dictator.

On the other side must be set the numerous signs of an ill-balanced intellect and of a fundamental lack of morality. The murders of his former associates, now feared as rivals, on June 30, 1934,² passed with less reprobation than was deserved in a Europe which had grown used to horrors during the Great War, and was accustomed to the mass murders of Bolshevik Russia. But it was a deed for which no excuse can be found save the temporary obscuring of his intellect by insanity. The desperate urge to decisive

¹ But not mental. Sir N. Henderson ignores this in his eulogy (*Cmd. 6115*, p. 2); cf. *Mein Kampf* (E.T.), pp. 214ff.

² *Survey Int. Aff.*, 1934, pp. 324f; Heiden, *Hitler*, i. 409ff. On immorality in the Nazi party see Mickletham, *National Socialism and the Roman Catholic Church* pp. 161f.

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action was patently a figment of a disordered brain. Accepting the personal depravity of some of those slaughtered, it remains clear that it was in them no new development, and that they had been guilty of it in equal measure in the days when they were the Führer's closest friends and indispensable helpers. Nor is it surprising that his critics should have declared that these men died, not for their sins, but simply because they were eager to keep true to the faith which at one time they had shared with him. Yet another sign of a mind diseased may be discerned in his securing for himself a mountain home, securedly guarded by nature and human contrivance alike, where he can dream fantastic dreams of reconstructing the political map of the world, or can contemplate devotion to art as the suitable end for his life.¹ It is clear also that threat of disease explains his impatience for decisive action, his preference for war when he was fifty to when he was fifty-five or sixty.²

The evidence is conclusive³ that Herr Hitler did not desire war for itself; this is natural enough in one whose pride in himself was so colossal. He realized no doubt that in war he could not hope to emulate the feats of a Napoleon, and that even his driving arms might shatter against the resistance of the heads of the defence forces. But he was a convinced believer that only by readiness for, and threat of, war could his aims be secured; hence he developed German forces in overwhelming strength in the belief that by menacing war at the psychological moment he

¹ M. François-Poncet, October 20, 1938; French Y. B., pp. 24f.

² *Cmd.* 6115, p. 10. On his sex relations, see Heiden, i. 353ff.

³ Contrast *Cmd.* 6115, p. 23. But this view seems dubious.

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could crush the resistance of men less resolute than himself, and thus achieve German supremacy with a minimum loss of German life. But he had the courage to face war if victory were, as in the case of Czechoslovakia and Poland, normally secure.

Unfortunately for the world his belief in the power to terrorize by threat of arms was only too fully justified, and it was in this point that the lack of statesmen of his own force was disastrous. He alone was willing to face the risk of war, much as he desired to avert it. But his error was in failing to realize that, though Mr. Chamberlain had shrunk, even before he became Prime Minister and held responsibility for war and peace, from withstanding Signor Mussolini's threat of war, and, though as Prime Minister he had quailed at Munich, there was a limit to the surrender which a British Prime Minister could make and retain the confidence of his people, and that in September 1939 that limit had been reached. This was, no doubt, largely due to the misleading views of Herr von Ribbentrop, who, while in England, mixed largely in rather degenerate social circles, devoid of patriotism and courage, and nervously afraid of the bogey of Communism, as if the British people could be saved from it by the exertions of a foreign socialist.

It has, in fact, been disastrous for Herr Hitler's mentality that he has by his preference for "yes-men" deprived himself of all contact with those of high intelligence and moral courage, and has had to fall back on men like Dr. Goebbels, Herr Himmler, Herr von Ribbentrop, and other sycophants. It is rather amusing to see Sir N. Henderson ¹

¹ *Cmd. 6115*, pp. 6f.

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regarding as a major disaster the curious incident of Field-Marshal von Blomberg's marriage outside the circles approved for the high command ; this incident is alleged to have severed relations with that officer, Baron von Neurath, Generals Fritsch, Beck, etc. But it is more plausible to assume that the Führer's alienation from these men was simply due to the fact that they did hold views of their own, and that with his growing dislike of counter advice he availed himself of this new Helen of Troy to sever relations.

One point, however, deserves to be stressed. While he unquestionably can issue decisions without possibility of their being questioned—even as regards the war in Poland he is said to have determined its course against expert advice, but with success—he is the victim of propaganda by the extremists of his own party. If he seems to hesitate, they can by a Press campaign sway his mind to the worse course ; thus against Czechoslovakia, and Poland alike, reckless lies of ill-treatment were freely disseminated to determine him to act. But perhaps, despite the view of Sir N. Henderson,¹ we may suspect that Herr Hitler rather inspired the propaganda than was deceived by it.

It seems indeed that sadism is an essential part of his character, as of that of a large number of the German race. It is only possible to understand his speech on October 6, 1939, in its denunciation of Polish atrocities, as laying a foundation of justification for the massacres to be effected in that country under the allegation of just punishment for alleged wrongs inflicted on Germans. Since March 1939 truly satanic terrorization by the Poles is alleged, the

¹ *Cmd. 6115*, p. 7.

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abduction of unknown numbers, the slaying of all the men in populous villages, the violation and murder of women, even girls and children outraged and killed ; “ just as tens of thousands of Germans were slaughtered and sadistically tortured to death, so German soldiers captured in fighting were tortured and massacred.” We can hardly deem these utterances those of sanity, and the vile excesses of the German forces in the conquered area of Poland must be ascribed to their knowledge that the Führer would welcome their action. Here unconsciously the spirit of the Old Testament reveals itself in this worshipper of the tribal deity, and we are reminded also of the vengeance taken by Arminius on the hapless legions of Varus.

But his moral defects must not blind us to his intellect and courage, which have achieved a striking victory in Norway, from an enterprise carried out only three days after Mr. Chamberlain had said that Herr Hitler had “ missed the bus,” while Lord Halifax denounced him on account of it as a “ homicidal lunatic ” or a “ mad dog.”

CHAPTER III

THE EFFORT TO ESTABLISH COLLECTIVE SECURITY AND THE RULE OF LAW

1. *The Problem of Security and the Locarno Pacts*

(a) *The Draft Treaty of Mutual Assistance*

WE have seen¹ that the League Covenant was based on the ideal of terminating war by the obligation imposed on all members of the League to respect the sovereignty and territory of other members, and to co-operate in guarding them against aggression whether from a peccant member of the League or from a non-member state. But France had accepted the terms of the treaty of peace regarding Germany only on the promise that she would be guaranteed against German aggression by Britain and the United States, and the failure of the latter Power to implement what for France was a fundamental basis of peace caused deep anxiety. Britain, not unnaturally, if unwisely, adopted the view that her obligation disappeared at once when the assent of the United States was refused. It was a position legally unexceptionable and public opinion unquestionably supported it, but France had just reason to resent the position in which she thus was placed. She hastily, therefore, concluded an accord with Poland,² and supplemented

¹ Chap. I., § 3, above.

² Keith, *Int. Aff.*, 1918-37, i. 67f.

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it with understandings with the Little Entente,¹ Czechoslovakia, Rumania, and Yugoslavia, which fully recognized that if they were to make sure of their future they must resort to a regional understanding in order to strengthen the general obligation of mutual assistance which was contained in Article 10 of the League Covenant.

France, however, with justice persisted in the attempt to persuade Britain to renew the promise which had been nullified by the action of the United States. Unfortunately, it proved impossible for the two countries to achieve the necessary accord; there was at Cannes² reason to believe that Britain would give due recognition of the needs of France, but the recall of M. Briand terminated a situation which had seemed full of hope. Later efforts failed of fruition. The British view refused to consider any special promise regarding the case of German aggression on the eastern allies of France, and it was reluctant to give full assurance of automatic aid to France if Article 42 and 43 of the treaty of Versailles, dealing with the erection of fortifications and the introduction of troops into the demilitarized zone provided for, were violated. It is a pleasing example of the lack of human foresight that Lord Curzon opposed the French request on the score that it would amount to Britain and France taking upon themselves primarily the responsibility for the settlement of future disputes in Europe, leaving other Powers to delay action until the two states had determined what should be done. A military alliance of this character would result in rival, and it might be hostile, combinations between other Powers, and it would be inconsistent with the theory on which it

¹ *Ibid.*, i. 63ff.

² *Lord D'Aberton's Diary*, i. 243ff.

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had been assumed that the post-war policy of Europe was to be based. This doctrine clearly overlooks the essential fact that post-war policy was intended to be based, not on the Covenant alone, but on the pact by which Britain and the United States were to afford to France a guarantee against German aggression. France had been deprived by events which were not contemplated as possible of her essential motive for accepting the terms of peace, and the insensibility of British statesmen to her just rights is a condemnation of a serious kind of British foreign policy.

At the same time, as noted above,¹ Canada had taken the lead in an effort to destroy the effective character of Article 10, and the rules as to sanctions had been gravely impaired by the resolutions of the Second Assembly in 1921. It was natural that the Dominions, proud of their status as virtually independent states, should be anxious to retain in their new capacity the advantages of the old constitutional principle which freed them from any obligation to enter into war to aid Britain, and therefore should dislike the burden of sanctions. They forgot that rights imply duties, and that, since they had asked for complete status as independent states, they ought to be ready to accept the obligations implied in that status. In their constant pressure on Britain to secure support for this point of view, they forgot that they were overlooking the fundamental problems of a Europe which was still packed with inflammable material, and in which it was urgently necessary that all states should co-operate to make real the doctrine of collective security. It was at this period that there grew up the popular but absurd doctrine—often now

¹ Chap. I., § 3.

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revived—that the real function of the League was to afford occasion for international consultation, and the creation of international opinion. The doctrine was popular in the United States, where a wholly disproportionate importance has always been attached to words, and it encouraged the fatal delusion that the machinery against aggression contained in the Covenant was in itself undesirable. Nothing is more significant of the American standpoint than the demand of Canada¹ at the League Assembly of 1922 that no member should be under any obligation to engage in any act of war without the consent of its parliament. That such a rule would destroy the whole basis of the Covenant was ignored in the Dominion under the far-reaching influence of American opinion. It was forgotten that the United States could, if they pleased, wipe their hands of responsibility for peace in Europe, but that for Britain collective security was real and urgent.

But the insistence of France and of certain other states whose need for protection was patent brought about efforts which were of a far wiser type, in that they recognized that disarmament, which had been under leisurely and ineffective discussion, could only be attained by establishing effective security. In 1922 Lord Robert Cecil submitted to the Temporary Mixed Commission dealing with disarmament the views that reduction of armaments to be successful must be general; that such reduction depended on satisfactory guarantees of security; that such guarantees must be general; and that the provision of such guarantees should be conditioned on an undertaking to reduce armaments. This initiative led to the preparation

¹ Cf. Keith, *War Government of the British Dominions*, pp. 161ff.

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of a treaty of mutual assistance which was sent in draft, not merely to the League members, but also to non-members for any observations.

The draft treaty was a very elaborate one, and it was drawn up with a definite reference to the objections of Canada to fulfil her League obligations. Canada naturally was reluctant to act in another continent, when the one great Power in America was to remain aloof, and would certainly insist on neutrality. It was made clear that all states which signed the treaty were to be under a joint and several obligation to aid any other state which signed against a war of aggression, declared formally to constitute an international crime ; military, aerial, or naval action was to be required only from those states situated in the continent wherein arose the aggression. At the same time the Council of the League was entrusted with the duty of determining aggression, and of allocating to the states the part to be played by each in resisting it. But, in view of the slowness of this process, permission was given for the formation of voluntary local alliances with the right of immediate intervention, subject always to their incurring the penalties of aggression, if in due course the Council determined that the right had been misused. It was hoped thus to obviate the risk of a regional association forming a combination for aggressive rather than pacific ends, while on the other hand the effectiveness of resistance to an aggressor would be so increased by the existence of such regional associations that the chance of its occurrence would be greatly reduced.

There was a good deal to be said for the project, but it was plain from the first that it would meet with serious

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difficulties both in the United Kingdom and in the Dominions.¹ The latter were all most anxious to restrict to the minimum their obligations, and they could easily work up a very respectable case for refusal to accept the project. The agreement was intended to operate by continents, but the British Empire, which still was deemed by its units to form an indivisible whole for peace and war, was spread over all the continents, and the continental line of division ran counter to its essential nature. It followed, therefore, that, while the obligations of other states would be restricted to a single continent as a rule, Britain and the Dominions would necessarily be engaged in countering aggression all over the world, which would not be fair. It was, of course, easy to answer that, as the Empire did extend over several continents, it was natural that it should have wider obligations than countries less favourably situated as regards area and wealth, the gains of Empire could not be enjoyed without facing the difficulties thence inseparable. But naturally this contention had no effect on Dominion opinion, and the argument was accepted by many politicians in Britain. Another ingenious argument, while contemplating the possibility of continental limitation of obligation for the Dominions, stressed the obvious fact that the British navy, if called into action in respect of some aggression in Europe, might have to operate outside European waters, and then there would arise difficult questions regarding the inter-imperial relations of the units of the British Commonwealth. Yet another objection was based on the extent of the functions which were to be assigned to the League

¹ Cf. League Doc. A. 35, 1924, ix. ; *International Sanctions*, pp. 116ff, 169, 170.

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Council. The truth, of course, was that the Dominions and Britain had relapsed into the congenial mood of avoiding any concern with European affairs, and that they would under no circumstances accept any obligations which would restrict their unfettered power to refuse to act on any occasion except after full consideration of their own advantage, and with the consent of their parliaments. Other Powers, especially those which had been neutral in the war, were ready to criticize, which is always easy ; they had escaped war, and they were very anxious not to run any risk of having to take up arms to defend any states but themselves from aggression. The fate of the draft was thus sealed, not very wisely ; with some amendments it could no doubt have been developed into a useful instrument for the preservation of European peace.

(b) *The Geneva Protocol, 1924*

But the failure of the treaty was far from satisfactory to the Labour Government of Mr. Ramsay MacDonald, which took office in 1924 after the rejection by the electorate of Mr. Baldwin's appeal to it for a mandate for an early form of economic nationalism. The leading ideas, which he stressed at the Assembly of that year, were the definition of aggression so that there should be automatic certainty on the culprit in any actual dispute, and the removal of the gap in the Covenant which, while postponing war, still left open the possibility of a struggle if the machinery in Article 15, described above, were to fail to secure appeasement between the parties. The solution lay in the adoption of compulsory arbitration ; the aggressor could

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be automatically determined by posing the question, Are you willing to arbitrate? Further arbitration should serve to prevent any failure to solve any dispute between states. Hence arose the drafting of the Geneva Protocol by M. Beneš and M. Politis, which offered a definite system whereby war might be absolutely banned.¹

The Protocol laid down the procedure for determining the aggressor on the basis of the idea that refusal to accept arbitration was a safe criterion, and it insisted on the arbitration of every dispute save those where the subject matter fell solely within the domestic jurisdiction of a state. In these cases the Council or Assembly might still apply the procedure of Article 11 of the Covenant. The sanctions under the Protocol were taken over from the League Covenant.

The Protocol was recommended unanimously on 2nd October to the consideration of the states by the Assembly, and no fewer than seventeen states signed the instrument within the next few days, while Czechoslovakia ratified the Protocol by the end of the month. But unhappily, in the eyes of many Conservatives, the Protocol was associated with Mr. Ramsay MacDonald, who won deep unpopularity by his anxiety to patch up an accord with the Soviet Government in the teeth of very general dislike. It is idle to deny that Mr. MacDonald's diplomacy was deeply suspect, and the publication of the famous Zinoviev² letter breathing hostility to the British Empire

¹ Baker, *The Geneva Protocol* (1925); Miller, *The Geneva Protocol* (1925); Williams, *The League, the Protocol, and the Empire* (1925); *Survey Int. Aff.*, 1924, pp. 36ff; Parmoor, *A Retrospect*, pp. 213ff; *Cmd.* 2273.

² Keith, *Int. Aff.*, 1918-37, i. 104.

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on the eve of the general election secured not merely that the Labour party should suffer a resounding defeat, but that the Protocol should be smeared with the discredit of its supposed inspirer. It is said that continuity in foreign policy is characteristic of Conservatives, but that assertion forgets that prior to the rise of the Labour party to power all British governments were based on the fundamental principle of acceptance of a capitalist order of society. It was a very different thing when a ministry came into power, which repudiated that fundamental principle and showed a strange admiration for the U.S.S.R., and had even acted in what was deemed an underhand manner regarding the issue of granting that state a loan. It would have been very hard indeed to persuade Conservatives that a project dear to Mr. MacDonald as a lover of Russia could be safe for Britain, and there was in addition a strong contingent of Conservative opinion which was frankly in support of isolation from any European complications.

It was easy to find excuses for asking for further time for consideration, though the British attitude at Geneva should logically have been followed by swift approval and ratification. Relations with Russia had been severely strained by the Zinoviev letter incident, for the Russian Government repudiated with appropriate vigour the allegation that it was genuine, and in fact the truth of this point will perhaps never be finally decided by reliable testimony. Moreover, the assassination of Sir Lee Stack, Sirdar of the Egyptian army and Governor-General of the Sudan, confronted the ministry with the necessity of regulating relations with Egypt, and enforcing British authority by the removal from the Sudan of all Egyptian forces. The

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delay was most unfavourable to the Protocol, for it afforded to the Dominions the necessary time to consolidate their natural objections to the idea of definite obligations. They had not refused consideration at Geneva, but no one could expect that they would homologate in the long run the terms of the Convention proposed. M. Dandurand, speaking for Canada, while induced not to spoil unanimity at Geneva, had pointedly reminded the Assembly of the geographical situation of the Dominion, far from the inflammable material piled up in Europe, and with curious blindness all the Dominions were absolutely determined to avoid having to apply sanctions. It was true that they had already an obligation to act under Article 16 of the League, but they had determined already that they would somehow or other avoid actual imposition, and thus it was most painful to them to contemplate deliberately renewing obligations which they had earlier faced as inherent in their attainment in the League of international status.

There was, however, a special reason for anxiety about the terms in the case of Australia, New Zealand, and in less degree, Canada. Japan had raised once more the bogey of racial equality, and the Protocol, while retaining as we have seen the exclusion from compulsory arbitration of domestic issues, which included, in the general view, immigration problems, had opened a loophole under which the Council or Assembly could become seized of the question, and an opinion hostile to the policy of rigid exclusion might be reached, which would not indeed bind any Dominion, but would embarrass it considerably. The exclusion policy was naturally one which most states did not admire, as it might affect their nationals, and it was

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always an uncomfortable possibility that a League declaration against it would reveal in its nakedness the seamy side of the claim of a slowly increasing nation like the Australians to reserve for the occupation of themselves and favoured Europeans a great continent. At any rate, the refusal of acceptance was decisive,¹ and the British Government was in full sympathy.

(c) *The Locarno Pacts, 1925*

But Mr. A. Chamberlain was far too much in touch as Foreign Secretary with the dangerous position of Europe to be blind to the fact that Britain could not stand outside the affairs of Europe, whatever the Dominions might do. Selfish isolation, he very properly recognized, was incompatible with the essential needs of Britain, and accordingly he was willing to seek a substitute for the move that had failed, and that in a direction which would evade the difficulty of bringing the Dominions into agreement. He appreciated the fundamental fact that, owing to their isolation and the urgent character of their domestic problems, the Dominions had utterly failed to follow with intelligence the march of affairs in Europe. It must be remembered that in 1925 no Dominion had a diplomatic representative in any foreign country, with the sole exception of the Irish Free State, which in its desire to emphasize its independence had secured the consent of the United States, through the good offices of the British Government, to the appointment of a Minister Plenipotentiary at Washington. But his position in a state which adored isolation did not make for

¹ *Cmd. 2458 (1925).*

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opening up to the Free State any understanding of the necessity of the Dominions to interest themselves in affairs in Europe, despite its geographical proximity thereto. The State Government too, probably, bore some grudge to the European states, since not one of them had consented to recognize as independent or even as belligerents the republican forces when they were struggling to win freedom.

Mr. Chamberlain, therefore, after impressing his views on colleagues, who were hesitant and difficult, and forcing the Prime Minister to support him at the risk of losing his Foreign Secretary, determined to fall back on the device of a regional understanding to secure France that safety, which she had been promised at Versailles, but of which she had been deprived by events out of her control.¹ He faced, of course, the perpetual objection that grouping of Powers produces counter-groupings, and revives the old and presumably evil balance of power, and the plausible corollary that the result of such grouping may be aggression. But there was a way of obviating to a considerable extent this risk, the adoption of a system of mutual guarantees against aggression together with definite accords for the peaceful settlement of all possible disputes. The idea was not his invention; it had been suggested as far back as 1922 by Germany with regard to the Rhineland, but then rejected by the suspicious M. Poincaré, nor had the proposal better success in 1923. But Lord D'Abernon, as British Ambassador at Berlin, was anxious to see the idea carried into effect as a potent means to reconcile France and Germany by

¹ Petrie, *Sir A. Chamberlain*, ii. ; *Lord D'Abernon's Diary*, iii ; Stresemann, *Diaries*, ii., give the views of the chief actors.

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banishing the mutual distrust which so deeply separated them, and Mr. Chamberlain saw his way to securing from the Cabinet and Parliament accord for a definite engagement which would be limited to the frontiers of France and of Belgium. Though Mr. Baldwin¹ had not yet enunciated his doctrine which placed the air frontier of Britain on the Rhine, the feeling had long been in vogue that the Low Countries and the Channel must be kept even by recourse to war from falling under the power of any great rival, and the new plan was based on this fundamental doctrine of policy.

There was a good deal of trouble in attaining the objective, and, though Berlin on a hint from Britain renewed the suggestion in February 1925, it was not until M. Briand became Foreign Minister in France that essential progress could be made. M. Briand was naturally insistent on the logical step of the entry of Germany into the League, without conditions, but that was by no means a simple step for the German Government to take, since it had but a small and uncertain majority and required the support of the Nationalist Party. It was anxious, therefore, to make a striking bargain, by securing the evacuation of the first Rhineland zone and of the Ruhr, and to obtain modification in its favour of the full severity of the sanctions clause. The point here involved was mainly the issue of the right of French transit through Germany in order to aid Poland in the event of the attack of that country by Russia, a position which would obviously be difficult for a Germany which looked to Russia as a friendly Power. A further issue

¹ House of Commons, July 30, 1934 : " When you think of the defence of England, you no longer think of the chalk cliffs of Dover ; you think of the Rhine ; that is where our frontier lies."

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for Germany was the question of the eastern frontier ; she had never forgiven her losses to Poland or the boundary conceded to Czechoslovakia, and she was most anxious to reduce the settlement to the case of the Rhineland, thus reserving for later consideration the problem of the eastern lands. This accorded, of course, with the decision since enunciated so often by the Führer that Germany will not insist on re-opening the question of Alsace-Lorraine.

The result, however, covered as many points as possible in the most comprehensive way, and at Locarno on 5th October terms were finally adjusted. The pacts reached did not deal with the Rhineland evacuation, but it was agreed that the first zone would be soon vacated, and the conditions of occupation elsewhere would be varied in a manner acceptable to Germany. Germany yielded on the point of the inclusion of arrangements for the east, and was rewarded by the promise of a declaration which made it clear that, while the decision was one for the League Council in any concrete case, there would be no doubt that in deciding the issue of what action should be taken by any Power in respect of sanctions due regard would be had to both the geographical position of Germany, and to her limited armaments as factors. The crux of the problem of the position of the Dominions was duly faced. It was idle to expect them to share in the burden, nor could they be brought to the Conference. But they were formally exempted unless their governments decided to accept the obligations imposed on Britain by her guarantees. In the proposed Anglo-United States-France pact of 1919 the power to include them was vested in their parliaments, but, as India was now included, and it was not desirable

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to place the decision in the hands of its new legislature, the power was now given to the governments. It did not matter, for although the Dominions politely applauded the accords when laid before them at the Imperial Conference of 1926, and congratulated Sir A. Chamberlain on the feat which had brought about his K.G., they did not dream of accepting a burden, however problematical the necessity of having to make it good then seemed.¹

In Germany the agreements were not exempt from criticism from those who saw small gain and possibility of loss, but the President accepted them as justifiable, and his influence secured a vote of 291 to 174, and the treaties were all signed in London on 1st December, being hailed by Sir A. Chamberlain as "the real dividing line between the years of war and the years of peace." In fact, the complex of treaties was of substantial value. One treaty contained a mutual guarantee of the Franco-German and the Belgo-German frontiers, concluded between France, Belgium, Germany, Britain, and Italy. There were also arbitration conventions between Germany and France, and Germany and Belgium, providing for the settlement of any possible disputes. There were arbitration conventions between Germany and Poland, and Germany and Czechoslovakia, again framed to compel the peaceful settlement of any disputes, and thus excluding war, and, as Britain and Italy were not ready to give a guarantee of these frontiers, France entered into separate treaties with Poland and with Czechoslovakia under which there were mutual pledges for aid against German aggression.²

¹ Keith, *The Dominions as Sovereign States*, pp. 21f.

² Wheaton, *Int. Law* (ed. Keith), ii. 1237 ff.

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There is no doubt of the value of the treaties. They were genuinely intended by France and Britain to secure an accord between Germany and France based on the agreement of Germany to fulfil honourably her treaty engagements instead of seeking to evade them by one subterfuge after another. Herr Stresemann's efforts for Germany had been based on this new alignment of policy. To him as to Mr. Lloyd George and Sir A. Chamberlain the way seemed open for progressive liquidation in a friendly spirit of all difficulties. As we have already seen, the like policy of fulfilment had already been embodied in the Dawes scheme for the payment of reparations. As Mr. Lloyd George insisted,¹ the position achieved should have been made the basis for further advance; unhappily a variety of causes precluded the emergence of the progress which was so badly needed, and the death of Herr Stresemann² in October 1929 removed a statesman who, whatever his demerits, had done something real in the way of seeking peace.

The sequel to Locarno should have been the immediate admission of Germany to the League in the hope thus at once to establish the new-found cordiality. But a most unfortunate contretemps, which the participants in Locarno had not reckoned with, spoilt the process and delayed it. Germany had been assured that she would receive what was patently due to her, a permanent seat on the League Council, together with Britain, France, Italy, and Japan—the United States having failed to join—and it was expected that ad-

¹ Keith, *Speeches and Documents on the British Dominions, 1918-31*, p. 367.

² For doubts of his sincerity see p. 90 *ante*.

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mission to the League, and the fulfilment of this proposal, would be effected in March 1926 at a special Assembly meeting. Now the number of the Council, which, as regards temporary members had been fixed at four to begin with, had been increased by two by the Third Assembly, and, though a rotation of seats had been approved in principle, it was still awaiting the necessary number of ratifications of Article 4 to make it possible to establish it, and Belgium, Spain, and Brazil, which had been the states named in the Covenant, were still holding seats. The knowledge that it was desired to give Germany a permanent seat raised from Spain and Brazil claims for like treatment, and Poland also put in a claim, for she naturally had misgivings as to her future if Germany were always on the Council, and in a position thence to influence action for treaty revision, which Poland naturally had cause to fear ; China also had ambitions in view of the permanent seat of Japan. At the League meeting the claims of Spain and Brazil resulted in the failure to secure accord, since the Council could not be unanimous, and the question of the membership had to be sent to a committee for examination. That resulted in the acceptance of a compromise suggested by Lord Cecil. The number of non-permanent members was raised to nine, and of these, a third could be re-elected provided a two-thirds majority of the members could be obtained to approve this. This meant that there would be beside the permanent members a class of semi-permanent members. In June the ratification of the amendment to Article 4 resulted in the adoption by the necessary two-thirds majority of the project. Poland accepted the compromise with resignation, and received in consolation the

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necessary authority for re-election, Brazil withdrew from the League, and Spain at first thought of doing so. The new system was acted on at the next Assembly, Germany being admitted a member and given a permanent seat on the Council.¹

2. *The Paris Pact and M. Briand's Scheme of Federal Union*

The effect of Locarno was limited by the restriction of its ambit to the Powers whose relations with Germany were patently of first importance to their future. But a wider result was achieved by the initiative of M. Briand, who in April 1927 suggested that it would be appropriate to mark the tenth anniversary of the entry of the United States into the war by concluding an engagement renouncing war as an instrument of national policy as between these two states. From this modest beginning sprang up a proposal accepted with less enthusiasm by M. Briand, put forward by the United States Secretary of State, which contemplated the idea being made applicable to the whole of the nations, but primarily the four great Powers, Czechoslovakia, Poland, Belgium, India, and the British Dominions, Britain having very naturally insisted that no such pact could be accepted by her unless it were welcome also to the Dominions.²

The pact finally concluded merely asserted the renunciation by its signatories of the use of war for national ends, and it was not accompanied by any sanction whatever. It was, in fact, just the sort of magnificent gesture which

¹ Cf. Stresemann, *Diaries*, ii. 503ff.

² Keith, *Int. Aff.*, 1918-37, i. 174ff; *Cmd.* 3109, 3153 (1928).

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appeals in a marked degree to the American sentimentality and love of fine words, without interest in the reality behind them. The Secretary of State had obligingly made it clear in response to doubts of France that the right of self-defence was necessarily understood to be reserved, and, of course, this admission took the whole value of the declaration from it, for no nation exists which cannot prove that when it attacks its neighbour it is acting in self-defence. We are all familiar with the picture of Italy driven to save her people from Ethiopian aggression, and of the fears of Germany that Poland was bent on a war of conquest, which could be averted only by counter-attack. Even Britain made it clear that she regarded the right of self-defence as including the right to defend certain regions of the world, the welfare and integrity of which constituted a special and vital interest for her security; Egypt and Iraq were clearly indicated. France insisted on pointing out that the new pact must not be deemed to abrogate prior treaty obligations, and Mr. Kellogg assented. It is interesting to note that the U.S.S.R. suddenly displayed an unexpected enthusiasm for the pact, which it at first affected to regard as a capitalist device, and secured, pending ratification by the United States Senate, the agreement of Poland, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, and Rumania¹ to make the instrument operative among them, even if it did not receive the blessing of the Senate.

It should be noted that the pact went no further than the resolution of the League, on the motion of Poland, on September 24, 1927, which condemned all wars of aggression, and declared that pacific means must in all cases be

¹ Moscow Protocol, February 9, 1929.

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employed to end international disputes, while the Pan-American Conference of February 1928 adopted a like resolve. There is something pathetic in this faith in words, but popular opinion succeeded in securing acceptance by practically all the Powers which were eligible to sign. Argentina, Brazil, and Bolivia were the only states, which for various reasons, were unwilling to accept the pact.

The Assembly which denounced wars of aggression also resolved on September 26, 1927, to reaffirm the primary importance of adequate guarantees of security and of collective action to maintain peace, and suggested the formation of a Committee of the Disarmament Conference charged with this question. Much work was carried out by Dr. Beneš at Prague with a view to aid the deliberations of the Committee, and in September 1928 the League Assembly¹ opened for the general accession of states a General Act for the Pacific Settlement of International Disputes. Its intention was to complete the Kellogg Pact by filling up the gap left therein by the vagueness of its provision for the pacific settlement of the disputes which under the pact could not be determined by the arbitrament of war. Provision was now made for conciliation procedure, deemed suitable for some cases and held to have advantages over judicial decision, if the powers at loggerheads really desired a friendly settlement. In other cases reference to the Permanent Court of International Justice or an arbitral tribunal was laid down, while for disputes where action by the Permanent Court was not suitable arbitration might properly be arranged. It was made optional to states to accept part only of the Act,

¹ Keith, *Int. Aff.*, 1918-37, i. 178ff.

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without binding themselves to compulsory arbitration. Reservations might be made in accepting, and, if made, other parties might take advantage thereof, a fact which naturally caused states to defer action in order to see what exceptions were going to be made. The Act, therefore, became operative only on August 16, 1929, when Sweden and Belgium had accepted it in part. Other Powers were not at all eager to act. The Labour Government, however, which attained power in Britain in May 1929 had committed itself to further arbitration, which has always had a considerable appeal to the British mind, and it succeeded in September in inducing the Dominions to agree to acceptance of the Optional Clause of the Statute of the Permanent Court, reserving only domestic issues and inter-imperial issues, in addition to disputes arising out of past events, which covered the acute and difficult issues of the rights of neutrals in the Great War.¹ At the Imperial Conference of 1930 the forces of persuasion induced the Dominions to commit themselves to acceptance of the General Act, which took place in 1931.² The like reservations were duly made, and it may be added that in 1939 Britain intimated that any matters arising out of acts of war would not be deemed to fall under the jurisdiction of the Permanent Court under her acceptance of the Optional Clause or under the terms of the General Act. The ground for such action was overwhelming. It had been assumed that under the League Covenant honestly applied, the days of neutrals would be over, but by 1939 the Covenant had been destroyed, in

¹ Keith, *Speeches and Documents on the British Dominions, 1918-31*, pp. 414ff.

² *Ibid.*, pp. 435ff.

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large measure no doubt by British action, though naturally that was not a point which Britain was anxious to admit.

Nothing, it is clear, was effected of importance by the new Act, though as usual its importance was stressed by supporters of the League. But a new point of view was stressed in September 1929 by M. Briand, who took up seriously the idea of M. Herriot, when Prime Minister in 1924-25, that the devoting of trouble to the League was justified because it presented a rough draft of an United States of Europe.¹ M. Briand's motive certainly seems not to have been any idea of consolidating Europe against impact from great nations outside. As a man devoted to realities, he seems to have been impressed rather by the negligible contribution made to the improvement of the affairs of Europe by the members of the League overseas and the rather negative help, mingled with a good deal of rather imperious advice, tendered by American opinion. In his memorandum of May 17, 1930, he stressed the geographical solidarity of Europe and the necessity of applying the same idea to the problem of security. But his proposal was limited to members of the League, of which neither the U.S.S.R. nor Turkey were then members, and he still contemplated that states in the League should possess full sovereign independence. The project was no doubt open to the gloss at once put upon it by critics that it was no more than an ingenious device to place France and her satellite states in a dominating position in Europe. Thus Belgium which had always regarded the League as a means of preserving herself from too great subordination now criticized the plan, though Poland and the Little Entente wel-

¹ Keith, *Int. Aff.*, 1918-37, i. 198-203.

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came it cordially. Italy, and Germany with her friends in Hungary and Bulgaria, stressed the necessity of adding the U.S.S.R. and Turkey; Austria was of opinion that touch must be maintained with extra-European states; Hungary demanded that the principle of equality should be respected rigidly; Germany reminded M. Briand of the necessity of equality for all, security for all, and the peaceful adjustment of vital needs. Italy urged that disarmament must first be dealt with; Hungary raised the necessity of treaty revision as a preliminary step; and Italy and Bulgaria criticized the proposed elective committee under the scheme.

Other Powers, including Britain, were not enthusiastic regarding the scheme, most holding *inter alia* that it erred in subordinating the economic considerations to those which were political; but M. Briand had recognized the danger that the more powerfully organized industrial states might by reason of economic superiority establish a measure of domination politically over their weaker brethren. The whole project ended in vague declarations of the desire for closer co-operation, but the objections raised displayed how strong already was the resentment felt among the defeated states for the conditions under which they were required to live. The demand for territorial revision was already strongly voiced, and, as none of the Powers which had gained lands from the war were in the slightest degree minded to part with them, it was made obvious to any serious student that real co-operation in Europe was out of the question.

But the proceedings of the Commission of Inquiry for European Union, which had no result on this issue, saw the emergence of a singularly awkward problem. Advantage was taken of the suggestion for union by the

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Austrian representative to enter into secret negotiations with Dr. Curtius, Foreign Minister of Germany, with a view to the conclusion of a customs union between the two states. This was announced on March 21, 1931, and raised a vehement storm of indignation.¹ There were raised two main objections. Firstly, the union pointed to a political union which was not permissible under the treaty of peace, and secondly, by the first Protocol for Austrian Reconstruction of October, 1922, the Austrian Government bound itself to "abstain from any negotiations or from any economic or financial agreement, calculated directly or indirectly to compromise Austrian independence," and also not to "violate her economic independence by granting to any state a special régime or exclusive advantages calculated to threaten this independence."

It was natural that France, Czechoslovakia, and Italy should protest as signatories of the Protocol, and Britain asked that the matter might not be finalized without allowing examination by the League Council. Germany objected at first even to this, but under strong diplomatic pressure, Austria consented in April to hold up matters pending the next Council meeting. But the future of the issue was simplified by the failure of the Credit-Anstalt already alluded to, for in desperate need of financial aid, Austria became amenable to French pressure, and on 3rd September Dr. Schober notified that Austria did not intend to carry the issue further. Two days later appeared the ruling of the Permanent Court of International Justice, to which the League Council had referred the issue for an

¹ Keith, *Int. Aff.*, 1918-37, i. 212.

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advisory opinion.¹ The result was singularly unimpressive, because the division of votes was eight to seven. The arguments on either side were of weight, but it is just possible to hold clearly that, as a decision had to be given, the case against the validity of the treaty was the stronger. But the issue was not a fortunate one in any way.

With the idea of European union dead without mourners or honour, France made at the Disarmament Conference in 1932 a fresh effort to attain security. There were to be different degrees of responsibility; all the Powers represented at the Conference should undertake to consult together, if there should happen a breach or threat of a breach of the Kellogg Pact; to abstain from economic and financial relations with an aggressor; and to refuse to recognize any international situation brought about by a violation of an international undertaking. The inner circle of members of the League were bound to carry out the effective and loyal application of Article 16 of the Covenant. For a limited inmost circle there were proposed specific military and political engagements. The idea had no success, for security raised the insoluble problem of treaty revision.

In the British effort of 1933² to save the Conference from utter failure, the idea of security figures in the shape of the rule that a conference should take place in the event of a breach or threat of a breach of the pact; the great Powers were in this suggestion as in that of France accorded definite recognition, for any decision to be arrived at must receive the unanimous assent of all of them, while a simple majority of the other Powers participating in the discussion

¹ *Ibid.*, i. 216.

² *Survey Int. Aff.*, 1933, pp. 249ff.

would suffice. The whole project, however, fell with the termination, without achieving success, of the Conference.

3. *Regional and Bilateral Security Treaties*

The League Covenant had admitted the desirability of regional pacts to further its ends, and the wisdom of this advice was promptly recognized by the statesmen of Czechoslovakia, Yugoslavia, and Rumania, who all had gained largely as the result of treaties of peace. All three states had serious problems to meet arising out of their racial composition. Czechoslovakia had Czechs, Slovaks, Germans, Ruthenians, and some Magyars; Yugoslavia was the kingdom of the Serbs, Croats, and Slovenes. It represented a blending together of two different trends of opinion—that which sought to create a Greater Serbia, and that which aimed at creating with capital at Zagreb a state uniting the Croats, Slovenes, and Serbs formerly under the Habsburgs. Croats and Serbs shared a community of race, and their language was in essence one, but their western and eastern affinities were marked by the different sources of their alphabets, and the Croatians deemed themselves superior to the Serbian peasants long under Turkish domination, and as Roman Catholics were western in religious outlook as compared with Serbian Orthodoxy. Rumania secured by the Balkan war of 1913 the Dobrudja with its Bulgar population, thus creating Bulgaria a determined foe, and by the treaty of peace Transylvania with its numerous Magyars, whence a lasting feud with Hungary, added to by the Rumanian occupation after the régime of

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Communism under Bela Kun. The Rumanian action was accompanied by spoliation which discredited the state. Bessarabia was in dispute with Russia, and was only accepted by the Supreme Allied Council in March 1920, and Britain alone hastened to accept the treaty signed to accord recognition on 28th October, while the Soviet Government protested ; recognition indeed has never been given.

In these circumstances co-operation seemed urgent and possible to M. Beneš, who was destined to play a great part in European affairs, above all in diplomatic issues. He secured¹ first on August 14, 1920, a pact with Yugoslavia directed against Hungarian aggression, to which the attempt in March, 1921, of the ex-King Charles, to regain his Hungarian throne facilitated the addition of a like pact on 23rd April with Rumania. On 7th June Yugoslavia and Rumania reached accord, but also included Bulgaria² as a possible enemy, for a great majority of the Macedonians handed over to Yugoslavia were of Bulgar origin, and Britain had vainly endeavoured to secure for them autonomy under Yugoslav rule. The Little Entente was thus complete, and its unity enabled M. Beneš after the second coup of the ex-king in October to secure the enactment of legislation in Hungary banning the Habsburgs, while leaving the principle of monarchy intact. Rumania would gladly at this time have completed her security against Russia in special by bringing about an accord of the Little Entente with Greece and Poland, but neither

¹ Keith, *Int. Aff.*, 1918-37, i. 63ff ; Crabitès, *Beneš*, pp. 167ff.

² For the justice of Bulgaria's claim on Rumania see *Bull. Int. News*, xvii. 211ff.

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Yugoslavia nor Czechoslovakia had any racial feeling against Russia. Moreover, they were confident that Russia would revive, and thus were not ready to guarantee any frontier, whether Polish or Rumanian, against such a revival. The alliance formed between France¹ and Poland in 1921 did not alter their views. Poland and Rumania, however, signed a treaty on 3rd March.

Unluckily, the strength of the Little Entente rested rather in the motive of self-defence than in anything more positive. Hence, when the danger from Hungary was removed for the time by her acceptance in 1923-1924 of financial aid from the Entente Powers and League supervision of finance, as in the case of Austria in 1922, their union was diminished, and an attempt by France in January 1924 to complete her relations with Poland by an accord with the Entente brought about only a treaty of 24th January with Czechoslovakia. On the 27th Yugoslavia strengthened her position by securing a final settlement of the question of Fiume, so long under dispute with Italy. The accord gave Italy the city, but allowed facilities to Yugoslavia and gave it Port Baros, so that, while Croats were displeased, Serbs felt the settlement with Italy worth while. Czechoslovakia followed suit in July, M. Beneš being decidedly in favour of securing as close contact with the great Powers as possible. At Locarno, Czechoslovakia and Poland only secured accords with Germany excluding war, and promises of support from France.

In 1926, however, France secured a treaty with Rumania in January, recognizing at the same time Rumania's claim to Bessarabia, and in March arranged a treaty with

¹ Keith, *Int. Aff.*, 1918-37, i. 67.

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Yugoslavia, which was formally signed only on November 11, 1927, France having been anxious to include Italy. Yugoslavia acted then chiefly under the influence of her growing estrangement from Italy. This was primarily due to the obvious efforts of Italy to establish her influence in Greece, Hungary, and above all, Albania, with which she concluded on November 27, 1926, the treaty of Tirana which in Yugoslav opinion created a virtual protectorate of Italy over that country. Italy responded to the attitude of Yugoslavia by a military alliance of November 22, 1927, with Albania, which showed her determination to create in the eastern Mediterranean a counterweight to the ascendancy of France in the western area. Yugoslavia, herself, under pressure through Italy, which in 1928 secured accords with Greece and Turkey, and as a result of the internecine strife in Parliament between Serbs and Croats, whose leader was assassinated, agreed to accept arrangements as to Fiume, Zara, and Dalmatia which she had signed in 1925, but not ratified. From this time onward the issue of relations with Italy assumed a constantly increasing importance in the mind of Yugoslavia.

It was natural that the Little Entente should respond favourably to the initiative in 1930 by M. Briand in favour of closer European co-operation which would have greatly simplified their several problems. With France and Italy, Czechoslovakia protested in 1931 regarding the proposed customs union of Austria with Germany. On February 16, 1933, a formal pact of organization set up a permanent Council of Foreign Ministers.¹ But the subsequent acquisition by Italy of a wide control over Austria by the support

¹ *Survey Int. Aff.*, 1933, p. 204.

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of her against the Nazis of Austria and Germany rendered the Little Entente definitely hostile to the Italian project of 1933¹ for a pact between the four great Powers, which would enable them to take up treaty revision. Such composite states could only suffer from a procedure of this kind. But the development of German influence inevitably affected gravely their solidarity. Czechoslovakia was definitely anxious at the menace to Austria, but Yugoslavia had no ground to object to a menace to Italy, whom she disliked, by the possible appearance of Germany on the Brenner, while Rumania was glad to think that a strong Germany would dissuade Russia from claiming Bessarabia by force of arms. A further complication was due to the pact of January 24, 1934,² by which Poland and Germany agreed to renounce force as an instrument in their policy towards each other for ten years.

These complex considerations led to M. Barthou's effort to secure an eastern pact,³ to embrace in the first instance Soviet Russia, the Baltic States, Poland, Czechoslovakia, Germany, and France. The idea was to follow the Locarno model, and to complete that great accord by introducing Russia into it, while France would guarantee the Russian frontiers. A limited pact had been concluded on February 9, 1934,⁴ between Greece, Yugoslavia, Rumania, and Turkey which guarantees the Balkan frontiers of each, binds them to consultation on measures affecting their interests, including discussion prior to any political action towards a non-signatory Balkan State, and negatives

¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 209ff.

² *Ibid.*, 1934, pp. 327f, 341ff, 386f.

³ *Ibid.*, pp. 332, 350, 387, 392, 412, 415.

⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 508ff.

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the assumption, save with general consent, of obligations of political character to any such state. This pact was necessarily resented by Bulgaria against which it was primarily directed, so that it contradicted the ideal of forming a bloc to ensure peace in south-eastern Europe. But its merits were patent, and in 1938 it was to feel strong enough to accept treaties with Bulgaria and Hungary on 31st July and 23rd August which, while not securing any renunciation by these states of claims for rectification of boundaries, did rule out force, and released them from the restrictions on rearmament of the treaties of peace, which obviously could not by that time be deemed to possess justification in a world of steady rearmament.

The eastern pact of mutual guarantee was welcomed by Britain and Italy, but Poland rejected the idea, for her essential aim was to avoid serving as a battleground in a Russo-German conflict, and Herr Hitler declined any multilateral pact, which would involve his *bête noire*, the existence of any accord binding states attacked by him to act together. But there was opened up another way to peace, when Italy stood out to protect Austria from German control, and it seemed to M. Barthou that he could bring Italy into his system of security. This involved the winning over of Yugoslavia to accord with Italy, and it was on his arrival in France for discussions that King Alexander and M. Barthou perished at the hands of a Croatian assassin. The falling of Yugoslav policy into inexperienced hands determined any effort to develop the ideas of M. Barthou on broad lines. What was left was essentially a rapprochement with Russia.

The appearance of Russia in a new light was the climax

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to various considerations,¹ which modified the hostility to France which led Russia at the Disarmament Conference to oppose the French thesis of security before disarmament. The danger of Japanese hostility and the revelation of the danger of domination by Herr Hitler combined to produce a definite result. Russia secured pacts of neutrality and non-aggression in 1931-32 with France, Poland, Estonia, Latvia, and Finland. The French treaty was delayed by considerations of the objection of Paris to commit itself unless Poland and Rumania were given like treaties. Finally, on November 29, 1932, it was concluded after assurances had been obtained from Russia that there would be no resort to force by Russia in respect of Bessarabia.

A further step towards security initiated by Russia was her persistent efforts to secure a treaty defining aggression which would automatically mark out which side in any dispute was in violation of its obligations under the Covenant, or the Kellogg Pact, or any other treaty mentioning aggression. M. Litvinov secured in 1933 a report by a Security Committee of the Political Commission of the Disarmament Conference² which tried to set out overt acts which could be deemed to prove aggression. It was, however, not wholly adequate. It would not have covered the case of Ethiopia, where the Italian preparations would not have been included in the definition of aggression, while, if the Emperor had taken advice from his chiefs and seized important points in Italian territory, though his action

¹ From 1927 Russia was abandoning the rôle of seeking revolution in other states, and was developing her industries and seeking security. *Survey Int. Aff.*, 1934, pp. 354ff. She repudiated treaty revision in May 1933; *Survey*, 1933, p. 181.

² *International Sanctions*, pp. 179ff.

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would have been essentially in self-defence, it could have been stigmatized as aggression. The definition, therefore, never became of general acceptance; but in 1933 in connection with the Economic Conference M. Litvinov secured treaties with Poland, the Little Entente, Estonia, Latvia, Turkey, Iran, and Afghanistan.¹

In an amusing speech M. Herriot,² in approving ratification in May 1933, reminded the Chamber "how Francis I. allied himself with Turkey not only in the face of, but actually against the whole of, Christendom, because this was what the interests of France required." But Russia had ceased to be essentially alien. M. Stalin, on January 26, 1934, emphasized the principle that the U.S.S.R. could readily work with Powers interested in the preservation of peace. The Soviet rested for her position on her growing political and economic power; the moral support of proletarians in other lands desiring peace; the good sense of peace-loving countries who wanted a customer who paid promptly; and the glorious army. Most important was the decision of the U.S.S.R. to enter the League of Nations. The Little Entente supported the idea, and after various discussions a way was found for her entry without conditions, in September 1934.³

Contemporaneous movements in the Baltic States led in February to a close link between Estonia and Latvia, and on 12th September a tripartite accord was achieved between both and Lithuania,⁴ from whose operation was excepted the difficulties of that Power with Germany over the Memel-

¹ *Survey Int. Aff.*, 1933, pp. 181-83, 282n, 519, 528.

² *Ibid.*, p. 383.

³ *Survey Int. Aff.*, 1934, pp. 391ff.

⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 404ff.

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land, and with Poland over Vilna. Russia had desired to offer these states and Finland a guarantee along with Poland, but they showed no enthusiasm, and a suggestion on March 28, 1934, that Germany should join in a guarantee was refused by the latter Power.¹ There remained, therefore, an element of uneasiness, for, while Estonia and Latvia had relatively few Germans in their population, they had once with East and West Prussia been under the domination of the Teutonic Knights.

It might have been hoped that, confronted with the growing insecurity arising from Germany's menacing attitude, the Little Entente would have developed greater cohesion. But the effort to secure this end by France in 1937, when she offered a treaty of mutual guarantee to the three members of the Entente, failed of response.² Czechoslovakia was conscious of isolation, and of growing danger from Germany³ and Italy alike, for Italy was espousing the cause of Hungary with enthusiasm. Yugoslavia came in 1937 to an accord with Bulgaria, was in close relations with Italy, and came into something like cordial relations with Hungary; while Rumania, after the fall of M. Titulescu, who understood Czechoslovakia's need for close relations with Russia (expressed in a treaty of 16th May following upon and conditioned by the operation of the Franco-Russian treaty of May 2, 1935),⁴ tended to a close relation with Poland as a security against Russian attempts, and with Germany as a protection against Hungarian claims on Transylvania. The Entente was thus becoming reduced to its original limited purposes, and the high value it once

¹ *Ibid.*, p. 412.

² *Ibid.*, 1937, i. 405ff.

³ *Ibid.*, 444ff.

⁴ *Ibid.*, 1935, ii. 79ff.

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promised to have as a factor for peace had disappeared. In like manner German influence was lessening Greek interest in Yugoslavia and Rumania, and weakening the Balkan Entente as a factor for security.

4. *The Attempt at Disarmament*

It is to the credit of Mr. Lloyd George that he urged in vain that an agreement for limitation of armaments should be concluded among the great Powers before the Covenant was signed. His reasons were unanswerable ; the system of collective security would gain enormous weight if it were established after steps were taken to make it clear that the League would have strength to protect its members, and that there would be no risk of competition in armaments. The smaller Powers would thus have no excuse for developing their armed forces, and thus rendering boundary wars inevitable.¹

The British Premier had no doubt fully appreciated the fact, which has so effectively been stressed by Sir E. Grey from his experience as Foreign Secretary, that great armaments are a prime cause of war. Their possession creates a sense of power and induces those states which command them to seek to use them or the threat of their employment to achieve national ends. The result is that the world becomes more and more filled with nations all heavily armed, all seeking to pile up armaments so superior to those of their neighbours as to ensure them of victory. The result is to increase tension and suspicion, to create interests whose

¹ Lloyd George, *The Truth about the Peace Treaties*, i. 601 ; *Memo.*, March 25, 1919 ; *Cmd.* 1614.

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profit lies in securing that there shall be no relaxation of the race in armaments, to impose grave pecuniary burdens on the people, to hasten the waste of national resources in the production of weapons which become ever more costly, and which have no lasting value, and thus to precipitate war when international differences on any score reach a more acute stage than normal. No one can seriously doubt that the views of Mr. Lloyd George and Sir E. Grey are far truer than the comfortable maxim preached by private manufacturers of munitions, and by certain financial and military circles, that the essential preventive of war is the possession of immense forces fully prepared for a conflict. What is true is that, when other Powers are daily increasing their preparations for war, unilateral limitation of counter preparations is disastrous. If the well-meant efforts of Sir H. Campbell-Bannerman's government to induce a truce in naval construction by reducing the rate of British production merely stimulated Germany to a fresh effort to catch up in the race,¹ and brought war nearer, so also the prolonged period when Mr. Baldwin's government was induced from the fear of losing by-elections to postpone the necessary process of rearmament to confront the menace from the ever-growing strength of German preparations must be deemed not merely to have increased the risk of war, but to have been a prime cause for the defiance of the League by Italy, for the destruction of Czechoslovakian liberty, and for the present conflict.

Moreover, not only was disarmament enjoined by every consideration of prudence and policy, but it was morally incumbent on the victors of the Great War. The dis-

¹ Gooch, *Before the War*, ii. 42ff.

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armament of Germany imposed by the treaty of peace had been asserted in the treaty itself, Part V., and still more explicitly in the Allied reply of June 16, 1919,¹ as intended to aid in the initiation of a general limitation of armaments. It is perfectly true that neither the terms of the treaty of peace, nor the Allied reply created a contractual obligation ; it is an interesting example of the strength of German propaganda that by steadily asserting that the Allies failed to execute the agreement for disarmament on the strength of which the Germans accepted their own disarmament, Germany has created a very widespread impression in Europe and America that there was a definite treaty obligation on the Allies to disarm. This is unquestionably not correct.² All that the Allies did was to state the aim of the stipulation which figured in the treaty, they did not make the stipulation contingent for its validity on their success in achieving their aim. They would have been legally in the wrong only if they had failed to seek to effect the purpose which they announced, and of that there is no proof whatever, still less, of course, that they were under any obligation to impose on themselves any restriction of the same drastic character as that laid down for Germany. Neither Britain nor France had willed the Great War ; they believed that the prime cause of the war lay in the aggression of Germany, based on her consciousness of the possession of irresistible power, and they were rightly anxious to prevent any renascence from this cause of the German will to conquer.

The Allies, however, disappointed of security by the

¹ Lloyd George, *op. cit.*, i. 603, 724 ; ii. 1410.

² *Memo.*, September 18, 1932 ; *Doc. Int. Aff.*, 1932, p. 196.

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failure of the United States to ratify the treaty of peace, were not in a mood hastily to diminish the forces which were felt to be necessary to secure peace in a world wherein the minor Powers had varying claims on boundaries issues, and Germany was manifestly not in the least degree anxious to give full effect to her promises of disarmament. Hence, while the Permanent Advisory Commission, provided for by Article 9 of the Covenant, was duly set up in May 1920, and a Temporary Mixed Commission was created in 1921, little was done save compile accounts of existing armament; nor did the Assembly help matters much by advising at each of its first four meetings that as a preliminary step the Powers should refrain in any case from exceeding the figures of expenditure in the budget of the preceding year.

In the field of naval limitation, however, the United States was able to lend most welcome aid. Her invitation to a conference at Washington in 1921 was motivated by varied considerations, but it resulted in a most useful accord between herself, Britain, Japan, France, and Italy.¹ Under it limitation in capital ships was imposed, France and Italy being rationed to the greater naval Powers in the proportion of 3.5 to 5; a total tonnage limitation was applied to aircraft carriers, and a maximum size prescribed for capital ships, aircraft carriers, and cruisers, and for their guns. Moreover, advantage was taken to increase security by achieving a settlement of the many and just grievances of China against Japan; mutual consultation, co-operation and help were to be secured in the Pacific area by a pact between Britain, the United States, Japan, and France; and,

¹ Keith, *Int. Aff.*, 1918-37, i. 74ff.

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with the addition of the other Powers concerned in the Pacific, a Nine-Power Treaty¹ was attained in February 1922, which was intended to assure the sovereign independence and the territorial and administrative integrity of China, thus securing the maintenance of the open door.

It was only after Locarno had furthered security that disarmament could proceed successfully. The Locarno Powers declared in the final protocol, recording the achievement of their labours, that they would co-operate sincerely in the work of disarmament, and seek to achieve a general agreement. The League Council was thus able to appoint a Preparatory Commission in December 1925, in the hope that by 1927 there would be in session a Disarmament Conference. But these high hopes were defeated by a multitude of causes, some unconnected with disarmament. The U.S.S.R.'s presence was patently desirable, but that Power was at loggerheads with Switzerland over the murder of a Russian delegate to the Lausanne Conference of 1923, and efforts to settle the issue failed. Moreover, the question of security cropped up, as was inevitable. France, Poland, and Finland urged it, but without success, as deserving priority of consideration. Then the issues of control of any disarmament caused trouble. Italy, the United States, and, less ardently, Britain disliked the idea, preferring to rely on good faith. France raised the hopeless question of war potentialities, which merely pointed to fruitless wanderings among a mass of imponderables. But Britain for her part insisted that account should be taken of trained reserves, and Germany naturally supported this logical view, which France refused to concede for the very

¹ *Ibid.*, i. 71ff.

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human reason that, under the system laid down for Germany of a small professional long-service army, the omission to reckon reserves would tell against France. It proved impossible by the end of 1927 to achieve any general agreement on principles.

In regard to naval disarmament the United States secured the meeting of a conference at Geneva in 1927, from which, however, France and Italy were absent, as they could not associate themselves with the American standpoint, which was naturally determined by her needs *vis-à-vis* Japan. The Conference failed, for the United States simply desired to apply to other categories of ships the principles accepted at Washington regarding capital ships. But against this rule of thumb principle which suited the United States requirements Britain urged due regard for absolute needs, and pressed the point of view that she must have seventy cruisers as a minimum; there is scant doubt that her views were correct, and, after discussions in London between the British delegates and the government, they returned with instructions which led to the final failure of the conference.¹

Circumstances were thus inauspicious for advance. At the Preparatory Commission's meeting on November 30, 1927, the advent of M. Litvinov to represent Russia was marked by his appeal for the complete abolition of armies, air forces, and navies, and the destruction forthwith of all war material. This opinion received no serious consideration, but the delay in the procedure was marked by the German spokesman, whose contact with his Russian confrère before the meeting encouraged rumours of co-

¹ *Cmd. 2964* (1927).

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operation by Russia and Germany hostile to the Western Powers. The business moved imperceptibly, and an effort¹ to strengthen Powers financially weak against aggression, pressed by Finland as early as 1930, led only to a convention on the grant of financial assistance to threatened Powers, in 1930, which was deprived of all real value by being made subject to the conclusion of a disarmament convention at the forthcoming Disarmament Conference. But in any case the convention was rendered nugatory by the decision that it would apply where war was merely threatened, only if the Council had taken steps to safeguard peace, which one party had disregarded, and if the Council considered that peace could not be safeguarded otherwise. The worthlessness of the Convention is striking proof of the insincerity of the Powers, Britain included. The truth was that British official opinion as voiced by Lord Cushendun, who represented the Government at discussions in Geneva, was sceptical of the efficacy of disarmament as a preventive of war, a view which was essentially unsound. On the other hand, the Government was frankly and sincerely anxious for the reduction of expenditure on armaments, for it saved it the difficulty involved in increasing British budgets in order to secure adequate protection.

The Labour Government of 1929 was unquestionably far more anxious to promote disarmament. It succeeded in obtaining the sympathy of the United States, and a conference met in London in January 1930,² which the United States, France, Italy, and Japan attended, and which achieved a definite accord, but of limited character. The

¹ *Cmd.* 3906.

² Keith, *Int. Aff.*, 1918-37, i. 194ff.

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accord was rendered possible only by the decision of the Admiralty to lower its demand for seventy cruisers to one for fifty ; it is impossible not to believe that the decision was a political one, rather acquiesced in than approved by the Sea Lords. But M. Tardieu for France maintained the principle abandoned now by Britain of absolute requirements, and insisted that parity with Italy was unreasonable in view of the fact that France had a coastline on three seas and an overseas empire of great extent to safeguard. Italy refused anything but parity. Finally a complex agreement confined to certain points only was reached, definite maximum tonnages being adopted by the three greater Powers for 8-in. gun and 6-in. gun cruisers, destroyers, and submarines, for the efforts of Britain and the United States to eliminate the use of these unfair weapons was rejected, though a scheme of regulation of their use was duly accepted. Other provisions, accepted generally, embodied further restrictions regarding capital ships, limited the size and gun-calibre of submarines, and continued the provisions of the Washington Treaty regarding aircraft carriers. But an unfortunate clause, special to Britain, limited the replacement tonnage of cruisers in the period of the Treaty to 91,000 tons, and thus imposed a stupid disability on British construction. There can be scant doubt that Mr. MacDonald, in some issues an idealist without appreciation of essentials, sacrificed British interests recklessly.

The conclusion of the treaty accelerated the termination of the long drawn out work of the Preparatory Commission, and the Council fixed the meeting of the Disarmament Conference for February 1932. The Commission had arrived at a draft convention only with great difficulty,

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and the results were regarded with disfavour by Germany and the U.S.S.R., while Sweden and the United States were unenthusiastic. To secure a majority Britain had made sacrifices of principle ; she had dropped the rule of taking account of trained reserves in measuring strength, she rejected the direct limitation of war material, and was content with the less effective budgetary limitation. The convention, therefore, was based on limitation of personnel in the number of men actually serving in military formations, placed a budgetary limit on war material, restricted air material by number and horse-power, and applied to naval material the rules of the London Treaty. A total budgetary limit was prescribed for land, sea, and air forces. Chemical and bacteriological warfare was prohibited, information as to armaments was to be freely and frankly exchanged, and a Permanent Disarmament Commission was to be created. But rights and obligations under existing treaties were to continue, which meant in the eyes of France that the disarmament of Germany under the Versailles Treaty was to be stereotyped, and this Germany was determined to resist. She was rapidly emerging from the submission to necessity which had marked her earlier attitude, and it was a major blunder that France could not realize the essential fact. Herr Stresemann's death in 1929 had terminated the last sincere effort to work with France for appeasement. Moreover, relations between Italy and France had deteriorated steadily since their failure at the London Conference to agree on naval parity, and obscure negotiations in 1930-31 merely added to mutual ill-will.

The Disarmament Conference, therefore, met under difficult conditions. France, as ever, wished to link up

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disarmament with security, and announced a new proposal without success. Sir J. Simon advocated qualitative disarmament in the sense that offensive weapons should be banned, but he included submarines in that category, while minor Powers were sure that they were defensive. President Hoover advocated a simple mathematical solution of cutting down by nearly a third existing armaments, above the forces needed for police duties, a view which ignored, among many other things, the fact that at this time the British forces had been cut down so effectively that they no more than sufficed for the maintenance of a minimum of security for the Empire, and that there could be no sound system unless due allowance were made for the different geographical and other conditions of the several countries of the world. Germany raised the fundamental claim for equality which France deemed inconsistent with her security, in view *inter alia* of the very obvious discrepancy on this basis of their relative striking powers in Europe. Germany, however, was daily becoming more insistent on her rights, and Dr. Brüning's cabinet had in June 1932 to yield place to the more militant attitude of Herr von Papen's government. On 16th September a German threat of withdrawal elicited an attempt by a discussion among the five great Powers to achieve accord,¹ and on 11th December was recognized the German claim to equality of rights in a system which would provide security for all nations.²

It is not surprising that the Conference accomplished nothing whatever in its search for accord. Signor Mussolini showed his sincerity by publishing an article declaring the merits of war, and denying the possibility and the advantage

¹ *Survey Int. Aff.*, 1932, pp. 255f.

² *Ibid.*, 1932, pp. 288ff.

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of perpetual peace, and the United States shared the general feeling of waste of time and temper. Mr. MacDonald made an effort to save something on March 16, 1933,¹ when the notification of withdrawal from the League given by Japan on 20th February was marking the disintegration of the League, by bringing forward a scheme which actually laid down figures for the limitation of the effectives in the several states, the restriction of weight and calibre of armaments, the reduction of aircraft, and the complete abolition in due course of all military and naval aircraft, and the effective control of civil aviation as a necessary corollary. There was a peculiarly unfortunate reservation of the use of aircraft for police purposes in outlying regions, which was introduced in order to keep the right of bombing recalcitrant tribes on the north-west Indian frontier as a humanitarian way of keeping them in order. Unfortunately this proposal was open to the devastating objection that it showed Britain in its inevitable attitude of insisting on retaining anything that met her needs. Chemical and bacteriological warfare was to be banned, and useful powers of inspection and control were marked out for the Permanent Disarmament Commission.

Germany, however, raised fresh complications by insisting that the doctrine of the standardization of short-term conscript armies which the proposals adopted was unacceptable to her, and that she was in favour of retaining the long-term army forced on her at Versailles, the advantages of which she had come to prize. Baron von Neurath, on 11th May, had an article in the Press indicating the determination of Germany to rearm in spite of the

¹ *Ibid.*, 1933, pp. 249ff.

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treaty ; Lord Hailsham insisted on 11th May that Germany should remain bound by the terms of Versailles unless she received relief from the Conference, and that, if she remained without accord, sanctions would be justified. M. Paul-Boncour echoed this warning in France, to which the German reply, as given by Herr von Papen, was a eulogy of war and an exhortation to German mothers to bear sons for service in battle. But Herr Hitler was less intransigent, after President Roosevelt had addressed an appeal to the nations of Europe, and work was resumed, the draft proposals of Mr. MacDonald being adopted as a basis of discussion on 7th June when the Conference adjourned. It was vaguely understood also that the United States would contribute to collective security to the modest but useful extent that, if it approved of sanctions being imposed on a state by verdict of the Powers, it would not take measures to interfere with collective action.

Mr. Henderson, who had been appointed head of the Conference, now made earnest efforts to secure agreement by personal discussions with leading statesmen in the countries vitally affected. He found in France reluctance to disarm in any way until the system of control envisaged had been tried out and had proved to be effective, while Germany was insistent on being allowed to acquire the weapons denied to her by the Versailles Treaty.¹ On 14th October, however, a bombshell burst in the receipt of information from Germany of her resignation from the Conference and the League alike, while on 8th December the Fascist Grand Council resolved that "the continued collaboration of Italy with the League of Nations shall be

¹ *Survey Int. Aff.*, 1933, pp. 291ff.

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conditional upon the radical reform of the League in its constitution, organization, and objectives within the shortest possible time." In the meantime Herr Hitler had appealed to the people for a homologation of his decision, and this was, as natural, accorded by an overwhelming majority on 12th November. It could not, of course, be otherwise. Nothing was easier than to point to the continued refusal of the Conference to concede Germany the equality of treatment to which she was manifestly entitled, and no German could be expected to resist so reasonable an appeal for sympathy.

Herr Hitler's attitude, however, was not wholly negative. On 18th December he offered his own terms.¹ Germany was to have a conscript army of 300,000 men, armed with all the weapons forbidden under the treaty of peace, but reckoned as defensive by the Conference. The para-military formations—the S.A., S.S., and Stahlhelm—were not to be included as military, and were to be regarded as outside the scope of the Conference, and, while supervision of disarmament was in principle conceded, it was ruled out for civil aviation. To these terms were added two extraneous matters—the immediate return of the Saar territory without awaiting the plebiscite provided for in the treaty of peace, and negotiations on the subject of the ownership of the coal mines therein. These terms were not without merit, and might have been revised in such a manner as to make them reasonable; as they stood, obviously they could not be accepted. Moreover, the alternative, that of preventing rearmament in despite of the treaty, meant the taking of decisive steps by Britain and

¹ Keith, *Int. Aff.*, 1918-37, i. 285ff.

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France which neither Power was patently willing to do. The French refusal of consideration did not, accordingly, meet the opinions of Britain and Italy, and they issued at the end of January counter proposals which were favourable to Germany, though not to an equal extent. Britain was anxious to secure the abandonment of certain weapons deemed essentially offensive, while Italy was content to stabilize the existing standard of armaments. To meet the demand for French security they suggested that, in the event of a violation of the terms agreed upon being alleged the signatories must confer, and an inescapable duty of following up by action the results of such consultation was laid down. France was not mollified by these suggestions, which in fact probably had no value, and insisted on learning from Britain what guarantees could be offered. But before this issue could be clarified the German budget was published showing large increases in military expenditure, and it became the conviction of France that she must not accept any immediate increase of German armaments, whatever guarantees might be contemplated as possible by Britain. It may be admitted that there was no chance of the government thinking of such concessions in that regard as would have met French views on the issue of security.

Some measure of concession was obtained from Germany which has some interest as throwing light on the "blood-bath" of 30th June 1934.¹ Herr Hitler, no doubt on the advice of the army command, was willing to negative all military character of the S.A. and the S.S. They should not possess arms nor be trained in their use, nor concen-

¹ Heiden, *Hitler*, i. 409ff.

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trained in military camps, nor receive instruction from regular officers. This concession evoked from Captain Röhm on 18th April a strong protest in favour of the importance of the force of S.A. which he commanded, and a threat that men in high office who were ignoring the Socialist side of the revolution would ruthlessly be got rid of. In fact, of course, his threat was answered by the massacre of June.

The Conference itself obviously could do nothing more, and though its animation was suspended, not extinguished, there was no doubt that further hope of disarmament was gone, and the prospect of steady rearmament with all its implications was unavoidable. It is impossible to ignore that the attitude of France at the critical moment was patently unwise. She should frankly have faced the fact that the renaissance of a militant Germany meant that she must either intervene with armed force to compel that Power to respect the treaty of Versailles, in the full knowledge that Britain would not give her support and that Italy was far from friendly, or she must compromise and minimize the evil results of rearmament to the utmost degree. She, however, merely so acted as to cause Germany the maximum annoyance and material for propaganda, and to strain her relations gravely with Britain while adding to her estrangement from Italy. Britain, for her part, appears in a rather nebulous light—unwilling to exert sufficient pressure on France to secure satisfactory results, and rendering herself the object of dislike all round.¹

What verdict are we to pronounce on the attitude of Herr Hitler in this matter? We have seen already his

¹ *Survey Int. Aff.*, 1935, i. 1ff.

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doctrine of power, which aims at the recovery not merely of all Germanic lands, but the acquisition of further lands for the settlement of the noble German race which has an urge to expand at the expense of the lesser breeds. We know from *Mein Kampf* that he was absolutely convinced that there must not exist in Europe a rival Power to Germany; it was the duty of Germany to take up arms to check the rise of any such Power, obviously the renascent Poland is specially meant, or to smash up any such Power if it existed, as in the case of France. Can we suppose that his attitude at the Disarmament Conference was sincere, in view of the fact that patently if it were, he must be deemed to have renounced the fundamental doctrine of *Mein Kampf*, and it must be added, the principles laid down by the National Socialist party in its manifesto of 1920. He must also be assumed to have laid aside his repeated policy that the aims of Germany must be won by armed might,¹ while the function of foreign policy is to secure partners in arms.

It is possible to argue that *Mein Kampf* was the expression of a mind deeply affected by passing circumstances, and wholly irresponsible by reason of the fact that the acquisition of control over German government was then utterly chimerical. It may be supposed that, as he matured, Herr Hitler grew out of earlier obsessions, and was genuinely eager to bring about appeasement in Europe, subject only to the recognition of the right of his country to equality, a view with which British opinion had much sympathy. We must assume, then, that he was bitterly disappointed at the hostility displayed towards his efforts at a settlement by

¹ *Mein Kampf* (E.T.), pp. 512, 527, 555ff.

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M. Barthou, and even by British ministers, and turned therefore to the path of departure from the League and withdrawal from the Disarmament Conference.

It may be so, for no one with certainty can read the workings of a mind obviously unstable and clouded. But another theory is possible, and it may be feared, more probable. Herr Hitler, it is suggested, well knew that the mind of France was so suspicious of his suggestions that there was no chance of their being accepted, and pressed them forward on the supposition that they would be rejected, and he would be able to pose as the generous German whose honest desire for appeasement was shattered by the malignant hatred of France; or that, if his offers were accepted, he could proceed to rearm, assured that his fertile ingenuity would in the course of time afford him an opportunity to depart from his pledges, after he had disarmed his enemy's power of resistance.¹ It is fair to note one point which can most easily thus be interpreted, his insistence at first on the exclusion from the scope of the Conference of the position of his para-military forces. He must certainly have known that France could not consider a proposal which left them out of account, and must have counted on a refusal. When later he consented to reopen the issue, he certainly could rely on the irritated state of French opinion, already manifested in the refusal of the proposals at the beginning of January, to secure a further negation. He could thus count on a splendid plea for proceeding in secret with his preparations, secure in the knowledge that to those who criticized him he could retort that he had gone to the limit in offering fair and just terms,

¹ Gathorne-Hardy, *Short Hist. Int. Aff.*, 1920-38, pp. 360f.

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and that they had contumeliously been rejected, showing that France and Britain were determined to continue to fetter Germany and to keep its people in subjection. In point of fact his denunciations of the Allies for failure to meet his proposals were energetic and effective, and made good propaganda in Germany and in Britain alike. They added to the coolness between the countries whose close co-operation meant most for the future peace of Europe, and thus they promoted that tendency on the part of France to seek aid against German aggression from Italy, thus entering on the broad path which led to the destruction of collective security and the present war.

It may be feared that, in view of all that we know of Herr Hitler's conduct, the verdict of history will have to be that in his dealings with the Disarmament Conference Herr Hitler was displaying, not an honourable desire to assure European peace on a basis of equality, but profound knowledge of the strategy which would best weaken his enemies and render possible the further steps necessary to enable him to confront them with the *fait accompli* of rearmament, confident in their inability to offer any challenge.

CHAPTER IV

THE UNDERMINING OF COLLECTIVE SECURITY, THE LEAGUE COVENANT, AND INTERNATIONAL LAW

The Italian Action at Corfu

As it was Italy which was destined to administer the fatal blow at the League Covenant by the destruction of Ethiopian independence, it was appropriate that shortly after Signor Mussolini established his power she should have set an example of defiance of the Covenant and international law.

Albania had been declared in July 1913, by the Conference of Ambassadors engaged in the business of winding up the Balkan wars, to be an independent state; but Italy had large ambitions in respect thereof which were to reach fruition in 1939. In November 1914 she occupied the fine harbour of Valona, which she coveted, as, situated sixty miles from the Italian coast, it commands access to the Adriatic. In 1915¹ the secret treaty of London, containing the terms of her entry into the war on the Allied side, bribed her with part of Albania, including Valona, but the termination of the war gave rise to a fresh proposal—that of allocating to her Valona in sovereignty and giving her the rest of the country in mandate; the accord

¹ Lloyd George, *The Truth about the Peace Treaties*, ii. 766.

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of 1915 had contemplated shares for Montenegro, Serbia, and Greece. In August 1920, however, Italy concluded for excellent reasons an accord with the Albanian Government, under which Albanian independence was admitted and Italian forces withdrawn from an unsatisfactory position. Yugoslavia and Greece, however, put forward claims to boundary revision at the expense of the new state, and after discussion the Conference of Ambassadors, which was charged with dealing with issues left over from the Peace Conference, decided that the frontier of 1913 was to stand, but subject to the delimitation of certain portions. On the same date, November 9, 1921, the four governments signed a declaration at Paris, to the effect that Italy's interest in Albania was paramount, and that, in the event of an appeal from Albania regarding the preservation of her territorial integrity against raids, the duty of the restoration of her frontiers should be given to Italy. This declaration is certainly open to criticism, for the action of the League was ignored as the essential procedure under the Covenant, and it must be regarded as having been definitely irregular and objectionable.

In carrying out the delimitation of frontier thus ordered by the Conference, on August 27, 1923, an Italian general with three other Italians and an Albanian were murdered on Greek territory, near Janina. Italian action was based on that of Austria against Serbia. Moreover, despite the submissive attitude adopted by Greece, which for various reasons was anxious to conciliate Italy, the Italian Government sent a squadron to Corfu, which was occupied, but not until a number of Greek and Armenian refugees, housed in the obsolete fortress, had been killed in a pre-

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liminary bombardment. On 1st September the Greek Government reported to the League the Italian ultimatum, while the Conference of Ambassadors protested to Greece and demanded an inquiry into responsibility. The Greek Government in reply submitted in advance to such decision as might be taken by the Conference, which was clearly a stupid attitude to adopt in view of the obvious competence of the League Council and its duty to deal with so flagrant an attack on a League member. The Council, however, was faced by the Italian threat that Corfu would continue indefinitely to be occupied if the League intervened, and by the refusal of the Italian representative at Geneva to consent to League action. This refusal was absurdly insolent, as the Covenant Articles 10, 12, and 15 were obviously in point, and an informal meeting of the Council drew up a scheme of settlement, which was sent to, and with slight alteration, accepted by the Conference of Ambassadors. Both parties to the dispute also accepted it, and a fairly satisfactory settlement appeared to have been reached. The issue was to be decided by the Permanent Court of International Justice, Greece to deposit a sum of fifty million lire to await its findings. A few days later a discreditable surrender was made by the Conference, which on the strength of a preliminary report from the Commission of Inquiry, insisted that the sum should be paid by Greece, thus evading the opinion of the Court, which would doubtless have been far from favourable to Italy. In fact, therefore, instead of being punished for the slaughter of helpless refugees and of violation of every principle of moral obligation, Italy received a very excessive sum for the possible responsibility of Greece in omitting sufficient precautions to secure the

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- safety of the murdered men. No more deplorable incident could well be recorded ; it was shown that where a small Power was concerned there was no real justice to be had against a member of the League Council. It may be admitted that Greece for various reasons, which can be conjectured but not proved, showed a certain failure of strength in pressing her rights. She was anxious to have Italian friendship, and therefore gave way too easily. But on the representatives of Britain and France and their governments rests a serious charge of having yielded to blackmail, and as having shown to aggressors that the much vaunted Covenant was a mere cloak for the pursuance of a purely national policy. It was from this time that opinion generally, which had regarded the League as indicating a new orientation in public morality, began to stress the view that the League had been adapted by the great Powers as a means of furthering purely selfish ends by clothing their decision in their private interests in the guise of international justice.¹

2. *The Manchurian Dispute*

China had gained considerably from the Washington Conference of 1921-22,² and, though she passed through many vicissitudes, there was a certain growth of unity which expressed itself in the meeting of a National Con-

¹ *Survey Int. Aff.*, 1920-23, pp. 348ff; Wheaton, *Int. Law* (ed. Keith), i. 199f; Boveri, *Mediterranean Crosscurrents*, pp. 154f.

² C. R. Shepherd, *The Case against Japan*, pp. 66ff. See W. H. Chamberlain, *Japan over Asia* (1937); A. W. Griswold, *The Far Eastern Policy of the United States* (1938).

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vention in May 1931, at which a constitution was duly arranged. But the particularism which is the curse of China brought about the setting up of a new government at Canton, while the Communists continued to stand out and a rebellion in the north as well as famine and flood added to the trials of the government. Unity of a sort was, however, to be restored by the happening of an event which in itself had grave results for China.

Japan had, from the point of view of population, strong reasons for expansion. Her narrow limits were faced with the problem of supporting a population which increased at the abnormal rate of nearly 900,000 a year, and emigration, in any case not very popular, was precluded in the case of those lands where it would have been most welcomed by the restrictions imposed on the entry of Orientals. It was in vain that Japan had tried at the Peace Conference in 1919 to secure a pronouncement in negation of racial discrimination ; the President of the United States was no more willing to contemplate such a result than the spokesmen of the British Dominions. To difficulties due to the fertility of the people and their refusal to contemplate birth control were added, after the collapse in the United States in 1929, economic problems raised by the difficulty of exporting raw silk to the United States, and this made the position of trade with China peculiarly vexatious. By reason of the anarchic conditions of that great natural Japanese market, and because of frequent boycotts of Japanese products induced by resentment of actions of Japan, the trade between the countries was severely affected. Japan did her best to secure further oversea markets by the device of the yen, but the result was that further

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restrictions on her exports were imposed in the British oversea territories and elsewhere, and it became increasingly to her interest to secure power in China.

In 1901 Russia, which had acquired control of Port Arthur in 1898, secured possession of Manchuria, with authority to build a railway from Port Arthur to Harbin to connect with its Trans-Siberian line. The defeat of Russia by Japan in 1904-5 led to the acquisition by the latter of the Russian rights as to the Liaotung Peninsula and the South Manchurian railway, with the right to maintain an army of some 15,000 men to act as guards. In 1915 Japan confronted China with a formidable list of demands, the result of which was that ultimately Japan's lease of the territory and railway rights was extended to ninety-nine years, and Japanese subjects were authorized to lease land in South Manchuria, to travel, reside, and carry on business there. China naturally resented these enforced concessions to superior power, but, while a partial settlement of relations was achieved at the Washington Conference, Japan never agreed to depart from these special privileges.

To Japan Manchuria presented special interest,¹ because in her hands it would serve to separate the Communist doctrines of Russia from the anti-Japanese propaganda of the Kuomintang or National Party in the south. Moreover, the country could supply large amounts of the soya bean, coal, and iron, and oil-shale was present in large quantities. Settlement had not proved a success so far as Japanese were concerned, but there were a good many Koreans, and, if the stream of immigration from Korea to Manchuria could be stimulated, it was obvious that there might be room in

¹ Shepherd, *op. cit.*, pp. 174ff; K. K. Kakawami, *Manchukuo*, pp. 40f.

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Korea for Japanese. But, unluckily for Japan, the Koreans were suspect in Manchuria as forerunners of the hated Japanese, and the rights which Japan claimed for them as subjects of Japan under the treaty provisions were contested hotly by the local authorities. Moreover, an informal Chinese agreement in 1905 not to build railway lines to compete with the South Manchurian railway was ill observed. Further, Japan recognized with growing disquiet the growth of Chinese authority in Manchuria, and the concessions which were being made by Britain and other Powers to the Chinese demands for the surrender of extra-territorial and other rights. It was clear that, while this attitude might suit well enough those Powers whose interests were chiefly of trade and which had no territorial ambitions, it could not be adopted by Japan, which was not in the least inclined to surrender any of her rights in Manchuria, while China denied the validity of such claims and maintained energetically that she was acting strictly within her rights. Japanese susceptibilities were also aroused by the boycotts¹ in China, and the danger of the situation was aggravated by the fact that the army and navy authorities rapidly gained control over the civil side of the administration, and the party political system was placed in practice in abeyance.

Hence, on September 18, 1931, on a more or less flimsy pretext the Japanese forces took control of the whole area of the South Manchurian railway from Changchun to Port Arthur. There followed a rapid advance, carried out by the military authorities, and delayed only for a time by representations from the League of Nations and the United

¹ G. A. Walz, *National Boykott und Völkerrecht* (1939).

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States Government. On January 4, 1932, the whole of Southern Manchuria was in Japanese hands. Chinese resentment was widespread, and largely justified; a boycott was organized, especially in Shanghai. Japan intervened with armed force, the Chinese resisted rather strongly, and only on 5th May was an armistice finally secured, and by the end of the month the Japanese forces were withdrawn. But in Manchuria Japan proceeded to set up a puppet state under the presidency of Pu Yi, the ex-Emperor of China, according it official recognition on 15th September. The *modus operandi* was obviously sound; it enabled Japan to assert that the independence of Manchuria, renamed Manchukuo, was an act of self-determination of the people, and it relieved her of the necessity of trying to find sufficient experienced officials to administer the territory.¹

Japan's action was a clear challenge to the League. She violated by it the Covenant, the Nine-Power Treaty of 1922 for the territorial integrity of China, and the Kellogg Pact, and the United States was also brought into the picture by the fact that the last two instruments were in considerable degree of her making. Russia was also concerned by Japanese aggression, and by Japan's refusal to accept her offer at the end of 1931 to enter into a non-aggression pact. The decision, on the other hand, of Russia to recognize and to enter into diplomatic relations with China, with which she had been formerly on strained terms, on December 12, 1932, caused uneasiness in Japan.

On September 21, 1931, the dispute was duly brought before the League on the motion of China, and on the

¹ Shepherd, *op. cit.*, pp. 91f; *Third Report on Progress in Manchuria* (1932).

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decision of the Council a representative of the United States was allowed to sit with the Council, with instructions to share the discussions so far as they concerned the Kellogg Pact, but otherwise to confine himself to the work of an observer. An effort was made by the Council to induce the termination of the Japanese advance in Manchuria, but in vain, and on 10th December, on the motion of the Japanese representative, a Commission of Inquiry, under Lord Lytton, was sent to China. The Chinese representations had first been made under Article 11 of the Covenant, but on January 29, 1932, she invoked also the obligations of League members under Article 10 to maintain her territorial integrity, and Article 15, which secures the remission to the Council or Assembly of a disputed issue for report, in which case it is forbidden to any member to resort to war in any case earlier than three months after the report has been issued, while, in the event of this prohibition being disregarded, the sanctions of Article 16 become imperative.¹

The situation was an acid test of the sincerity of the League members in regard to their obligations, and most unfortunately the prime duty fell on Britain. The United States, which had enormous business interests in China, and which had inspired the Treaty of 1922 as well as the Kellogg Pact, was not a member of the League and was not bound by the obligation to impose sanctions; and, while Russia was vitally concerned in the long run in the prevention of Japan obtaining domination over China, the danger was not imminent, and Russia had had serious difficulties with China, whose forces had in 1929 seized from Russia the Chinese Eastern Railway, only to suffer a crushing reverse

¹ Chap. I., § 3, above; Shepherd, *op. cit.*, pp. 117ff.

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at Russia's hands. Britain, on the other hand, had a fleet and vital commercial interests in the Far East, and it was obvious that both her interests and her obligations suggested that she should act, while, on the other hand, a nation which was more and more hostile to war and armaments shrank from action. The United States¹ indeed made a contribution to the situation in the form of the doctrine, issued on January 7, 1932, of the non-recognition of territorial changes achieved in violation of international agreements, and, while the doctrine sounded well and was therefore acclaimed widely by the Powers, it did not promise to have any permanent result. It served, however, the essential aims of Japan by disposing the members of the League to avoid making good their obligations. The question, however, arises whether the United States would have been prepared to back up Britain in more effective means of coercion had Britain been willing to act. Mr. Stimson seems to have been willing to consider economic pressure, if Britain were anxious thus to proceed, and to have found no assurance of British readiness to move. It is certainly in accordance with the whole outlook of Sir John Simon that he should not have been in the least ready to work in this direction; all his utterances indicate that he was most anxious to minimize the duty of Britain in the premises, and, unquestionably, this was the point of view which had much support in the United States. The argument ran that Japan had real grievances in Manchuria—that she was not really waging a war of aggression, but was merely operating an act of intervention in order to bring about orderly govern-

¹ H. L. Stimson, *The Far Eastern Crisis; Survey Int. Aff.*, 1932, pp. 540ff; 1934, pp. 656ff.

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ment in a land vexed with internal disorders, brought about in part by Chinese intervention in matters which should have been left to local decision. This line of argument was, of course, essentially that attractive to American tradition, for the United States had developed and practised at that time a pleasing habit of intervening to set straight matters in Central American and even South American republics in a manner which, if these states had not been so weak, would have meant many wars.¹ It is always invidious to set up a standard of morality for other states which you habitually fail to observe, and it is very likely that Sir J. Simon was influenced in his view of the probable attitude of the United States by consciousness that, whatever Mr. Stimson or the President might contemplate, they would find it hard to carry out if it came to a decision. This point of view may be regarded as strengthened by the actual inaction of the United States in 1935 in the affair of Ethiopia.² Of course, this argument is not decisive, and in any case the plain business of Britain and of the other members of the League was to deal with the matter without regard to the action of the United States, secure that in any event the United States would not intervene to hamper decisions which the League might take.

In fact, the League postponed a decision of any kind pending the receipt of the Lytton Report, which was published at Geneva on October 2, 1932.³ It condemned Japan's action, rejecting her pleas of fact, but it deprecated

¹ Wheaton, *Int. Law* (ed. Keith), i. 166ff.

² *Survey Int. Aff.*, 1935, ii. 92ff, 164, 236ff.

³ China's views were argued on December 6 and 8, 1932. See also League Publication, 1932, vii. 16; for Japan, vii. 15; *Survey Int. Aff.*, 1933, pp. 483ff.

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any idea of solving the real difficulties of the position by merely seeking to restore the *status quo*. Thus, while it held that Chinese sovereignty over Manchuria must be recognized, it suggested a wide measure of autonomy for that country, and that all reasonable interests of Japan should receive full recognition. A local gendarmerie was to preserve order, thus obviating the ill-treatment of Japanese subjects, and all other armed forces should be withdrawn, including those of China as well as those of Japan. Economic co-operation between China and Japan was urged, and international co-operation to aid the internal reconstruction of China. The result was just, and the League quite properly pressed for its acceptance by the two parties to the dispute. Japan, however, was obdurate; she showed her defiance by seizing in January 1933 Shanhaikwan, the gateway of the Great Wall. There was nothing that the League could do except have a formal report prepared by the Committee of Nineteen to whom the issue had been remitted for consideration. The report appeared on 17th February, and on 24th February the Assembly passed judgment, approving it by forty-two votes to that of Japan, which, under the Covenant, was not counted as that of an interested party. Siam, for reasons easily understood, refrained from voting. The report in its practical recommendations followed the views of the Lytton Commission; it definitely asserted the sovereignty of China over Manchuria, denied the spontaneity of the independence movement, and condemned the military measures of Japan. Japan's reply was to announce resignation from the League.¹

Meanwhile Japan, determined to ignore the League's

¹ Keith, *Int. Aff.*, 1918-37, i. 256ff; *Survey Int. Aff.*, 1933, pp. 495ff.

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views, whatever they might be, had proceeded to assert her claim on behalf of Manchukuo to Jehol, the mountainous area dividing Manchuria from the Great Wall of China. On January 12, 1933, it was formally claimed as an integral part of Manchukuo ; an advance began in February, orders to Marshal Chang Hsueh-liang to resist were not obeyed, Japanese forces soon threatened Peiping, as Peking was now named. An armistice at Tangku on 31st May compelled China to demilitarize an area of 5,000 square miles on the Chinese side of the Great Wall. As the remaining Chinese forces in the north of Manchuria had in December 1932 been driven across the Russian border, where they were duly disarmed, the control of Japan over Manchukuo was now complete. The Chinese Government at Nanking had now no alternative but to adopt a policy of conciliation, stopping all anti-Japanese demonstrations, and for a time it seemed as if, deserted by the League, China might come to terms with Japan in maintaining a doctrine of the Far East for the Chinese and Japanese nations to the exclusion of western or American interference.

China, however, had other views, though she felt that she must conciliate for the time being, pending her ability to reorganize her power of resistance. It was possible to argue that time was on her side. Japan had much to do in reducing Manchukuo to order, for guerrilla bands long harassed her forces, and she was compelled to spend money freely on the maintenance of her forces of occupation. China sought therefore to secure funds for reconstruction abroad, and employed for the reform of her administration League of Nation advisers, whose aid was as much resented by Japan as the attempts made to secure financial backing.

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Hence in April 1934 the Japanese Foreign Office tested the reactions of the Powers to further claims on her part by announcing her objections to any joint operations undertaken by foreign Powers, even in the name of technical or financial assistance, which must, it was asserted, give rise to complications. Japan must, therefore, object to such undertakings as a matter of principle. Supplying China with war aircraft, building aerodromes for her, detailing military instructors or military advisers, or contracting a loan to provide funds for political uses, would obviously tend to disturb friendly relations between Japan, China, and other countries, and would disturb peace and order in Eastern Asia ; Japan would oppose such projects. This intolerable assumption of a control over China was met by communications from the United States and France as well as from Britain,¹ and Tokio receded in some degree ; the attempt had been made to intimidate China and had failed. British determination not to yield a matter of plain right was seen in the dispatch of Sir F. Leith-Ross next year to advise on economic conditions. Japanese dislike of the mission did not take any concrete form.

It is impossible to regard the episode without complete dissatisfaction. It is no doubt easy to see that Japan had grievances against China. Britain herself had been on far from cordial terms with that Power, and the State Council had transgressed both international law and morality by an attempt in 1929 to abrogate extra-territorial rights of British and other European subjects unilaterally, with effect from January 1, 1930. Though the attempt was not followed up

¹ Keith, *Int. Aff.*, 1918-37, ii. 10 ; *Survey Int. Aff.*, 1934, pp. 646ff. (Monroe doctrine for East Asia).

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by effective action at the moment, China kept pressing the point, which involved *inter alia* the vital question of the future of the administration of the port of Shanghai, where business had developed enormously under the ægis of the International Settlement exempt from Chinese jurisdiction, whose affairs were administered by a Municipal Council. There were obvious difficulties in rendition without a period of transition, and Mr. Feetham, a judge of the Union of South Africa, asked by the Council to advise, held that a prolonged period of a transitional régime extending to decades would be necessary. No doubt he put the matter too high, and the Chinese Government, on 4th May 1931, resumed unilateral denunciation of extra-territorial rights, to be carried out on January 1, 1932, and but for the episode of Manchuria it is possible that the threat might have been carried out. The violation of these rights by the murder of Mr. Thorburn, who had been illegally arrested by Chinese soldiers in June, indicated how dangerous it would be to allow Chinese officials to assert jurisdiction. Japan could certainly not expect fair treatment for her subjects if Britain could not. Moreover, whatever the defects of Japanese administration of the territory, it was better than that hitherto prevailing. Japan could also claim that her economic needs had been accentuated by the selfish policy of European Powers such as Britain, which had prevented the development of her trade after the depreciation of the yen by imposing quota limitations on her imports. Her people must live, and expansion in Manchukuo was essential, because the peaceful extension of her legitimate trade with her natural market in China was severely hampered by the deliberate opposition of the Chinese Government, which

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was not merely guilty of tolerating boycotts of Japanese goods and subjects, but was alleged to have instigated them. Such action, Japan asserted, was a violation of international law,¹ a proposition which was at least arguable. Again, Japan could claim that the possession of Manchukuo was of great importance as a means of securing her against attack from Russia or from China ; *salus populi suprema lex*.

These arguments have value, but they ignore the fact that the League Covenant was constructed expressly to prevent Powers following the time-honoured practices of nations and making themselves both judges in their own cases and the executants of their judgments. Japan could have claimed arbitration of her disputes with China, and have had a fair decision in this matter. The Lytton Report shows what she could have gained in Manchuria consistently with justice, and that report was, it must be remembered, rendered after she had alienated general public opinion by her aggression on China. The Japanese view, no doubt, was that what she could have fairly was insufficient for her needs. Complete control of Manchuria was demanded, partly because it would serve as the basis for the acquisition of power over China herself, or at least the northern provinces. It must, therefore, be held that Japanese action was unpardonable.

The violation by Japan of the Nine-Power Treaty, the Kellogg Pact, and the Covenant was patent. The members of the League were under a clear obligation, in view of the appeal of China to Article 15 of the Covenant, to determine to apply sanctions, if in the long run Japan defied the League. Yet nothing whatever was done by any Power—

¹ Wheaton, *Int. Law* (ed. Keith), ii. 623.

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save that Britain¹ made a feeble movement to induce members to refrain from allowing armaments to be sent to aid Japan in her defiance of the League. The British effort hit at munition profits, and was hastily abandoned on the plea that it could be persisted in, to their detriment, only if other Powers would take like action. The utmost care was taken by Sir J. Simon to evade the plain necessity of operating Article 16 of the Covenant, and of admitting that Japan's action amounted to a resort to war such as demanded the application of sanctions.

The whole foundation of League security was thus directly attacked and defied, and the Power on which fell the obvious duty of leadership in action remained determined to refrain from its obvious duty. Can it be said that British inaction was justifiable? The answer is plainly in the negative. There is nothing whatever to show that, if Britain had taken the initiative incumbent on her and had urged the adoption of economic sanctions in the first place, she would not have been able to secure the acceptance of her proposal; still less can it be proved that the execution of sanctions would not have availed to persuade Japan to accept the Lytton Report, with perhaps some modifications. It is easy to assert that other Powers would not have acted, but it is idle to ignore the fact that the Power, whose relations with China and Japan made her activity a prime duty, refrained from asking them to act and indicated in the plainest manner that she herself would not act. It is impossible to prove that the United States would

¹ From February 28 to March 14, 1933, she placed an embargo on arms export to both China and Japan—a futile gesture; *Survey Int. Aff.*, 1933, pp. 511ff.

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have also applied sanctions, but there is a definite possibility that it might have done so, and practical certainty that nothing in any case would have been done by it to render sanctions ineffective. It has been argued that, while sanctions were practicable, the risk of bringing about war was too great to be run. Yet it was perfectly obvious that the risk of breeding future wars was quite as serious as that of facing the risk of war then. It was patently the height of folly to secure a moral condemnation of the action of Japan, if nothing were to be done to follow up that condemnation. The action of Britain and of the other members of the League only served to consolidate the opinion of the Japanese people behind their military authorities, to continue the power which they had acquired over the civil government, and to give the widest and clearest intimation to Powers in Europe itself which were seeking to destroy the peace settlement that, if they showed courage like Japan, they would find that the whole imposing structure of collective security would crumble to pieces. Signor Mussolini learned the vital lesson from the episode of Manchukuo, and Sir John Simon must therefore share in the burden of responsibility for the war. It is true that his policy was approved by the Cabinet, with which therefore deep censure must be associated, but he could by resignation of office have impressed on the world the essential fact that to trust to the League for security was to commit suicide. Fortunately for the ministry the temper of the people was well adapted to homologate inaction. The Great War had been fought to end wars, and a profound distaste for hostilities had settled on the popular mind. The suspicion that the government would propose rearmament was

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sufficient to cost the ministry the loss of by-elections in the latter part of 1934, and in shrinking from the carrying out of a plain obligation the ministry felt that it had the sympathy of the majority of the electors. It is, of course, the inevitable result of overwhelming strength in a ministry that, whatever plan it adopts, it is exempt from any serious resistance in the Commons, and the Labour remnant therein was negligible alike in numbers and weight of authority on foreign affairs.

3. *The Failure of the League to save Ethiopia*

The testing time of the League was to come in 1935-1936, since then a case of aggression occurred, not merely clear but under circumstances ruling out inaction. All sorts of excuses had been found by public opinion in Britain for inaction regarding China. Perhaps the most persuasive was the view that it would be absurd to move unless the United States acted, and the assertion that the United States was willing to encourage Britain to burn her fingers but would not back her efforts. Nor could Britain expect any useful help from any Power except perhaps France. Above all was the widespread dislike of anything so disturbing as war to a people who were devoted to disarmament. It is, of course, common now to rebuke the Labour party for its intemperate pacifism which, it is alleged, tied Britain's hands and forbade her to hold aggression in check. As the Labour party had only fifty-two members in the Commons, the argument is absurdly dishonest. Conservative opinion, had it existed in any strength in favour of

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armaments, could have secured its aim, and there was incumbent on the government a plain duty to warn the country that in reducing armaments it was running a grave risk. But despite its majority the government was deeply sensitive to any loss of popular favour, and any idea of telling the truth to the electorate was dispelled by the unfortunate accident that one or two by-elections revealed in certain quarters a strong hostility to armament.¹ This was due in part to simple ignorance, and a deep burden of responsibility for the Ethiopian fiasco lies in ministerial reticence. Popularity should not be bought by pandering to popular feeling, above all when that feeling is essentially based on ignorance, and the ministry alone had the knowledge and duty to fight against it. On the contrary, men like Mr. Churchill and Lord Rothermere who worked for rearmament were regarded with dislike. Ministers who hoped to step into the first office in the state in due course were reluctant to see back in the Cabinet a man with enormous powers for work and a popular eloquence.

We know now from unimpeachable sources, the evidence of Marshal de Bono,² who gives us his instructions from the Duce, that not later than the autumn of 1933 the Duce had made up his mind to seize Ethiopia. Italy was under the most categorical obligations not to employ force against that territory. At the Peace Conference her representatives had insisted on the doctrine of leaving that country her full independence; in 1923, against the wishes of Britain, she sponsored and secured Ethiopia's admission

¹ Keith, *Const. of England from Victoria to George VI.*, i. 251.

² *Anno XIII.*, pp. 4ff, shows the deliberation of the whole plot.

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into the League¹; in 1925 the discussions with Britain regarding the development of the country did not revoke the agreement of these Powers and France in 1906 to preserve her integrity, and an appeal by Ethiopia to the League made it clear that her rights could not be invaded without her sanction.² Further discussions led, on September 2, 1928, to a compact between Ethiopia and Italy that neither should take action detrimental to the independence of the other, and that all disputes should be submitted to conciliation and arbitration without a resort to armed force. Moreover, Ras Tafari, who succeeded as Emperor Haile Selassie I. in November 1930, was a man of high intelligence and noble character, who, painfully aware of the many reforms necessary in his realm, strove steadily to carry them into effect by prudent measures.

It was against this sovereign that the Duce concocted a vile plot, to be carried out through Marshal de Bono by 1936. The scheme was ingenious; internal rebellion might be created and intervention then justified, or the Ethiopians provoked to an attack, and then subjected to an overwhelming counter-offensive. But neither plan worked out; though a campaign of mean intrigue and bribery weakened the loyalty of the tribes, and in the war later cost the Emperor the aid of at least 200,000 men,³ no actual revolt could be organized, and every provocation was foiled by the refusal of the Emperor to attack, so that Marshal de Bono admits⁴: "From the plan of a manœuvred defensive followed by a counter-offensive we

¹ *Survey Int. Aff.*, 1920-23, pp. 393ff; 1929, p. 218.

² *Ibid.*, 1929, pp. 220f; *Cmd.* 2680. ³ *Op. cit.*, p. 54.

⁴ *Op. cit.*, pp. 118f.

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were obliged to change over to the plan of an offensive action." It is an interesting example of the cynical immorality of the Italian people that admission of such action should be made by its perpetrator with the assent of its instigator. If we are to find some excuse for such baseness, it may be in the rankling consciousness of the overthrow of Italy by the Emperor Menelik at Adowa in 1896, after he had denounced in 1893 the Treaty of Ucciali of 1889, whereby Italy had obtained by unsatisfactory means what she claimed to be a protectorate over Ethiopia. It may also have been felt that some military glory was necessary to blot out the memory of Caporetto, when the routed forces of Italy were saved from destruction only by British and French bravery.

The first overt sign of the plan of campaign took place on 5th December 1934, when an affray of moderate dimensions took place between Ethiopian and Italian forces at Walwal. It is clear that the place was some sixty miles within the Ethiopian boundary, though it had not been definitely defined; but Italy had been in occupation since 1928, but without official sanction. Who fired first is uncertain, but Italy tried to make use of the incident to put Ethiopia in the wrong. That Power at once asked for arbitration as laid down by the treaty of 1928, and, when Italy illegally refused, appealed to the League on 3rd January. The appeal embarrassed France especially, because at this time M. Laval was engaged in seeking to frame an accord with Italy which would unite the two Powers against the renascence of German strength, and for the moment Italy agreed to arbitrate so that the item could stand out from the Council agenda.

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M. Laval's mission to Rome was of grave import.¹ It was intended to meet the long disputed claims of Italy for the carrying out of Article 13 of the treaty of London, 1915, which promised Italy certain benefits from the war. Britain in 1924 had arranged to transfer Jubaland, which gave Italy control of three hundred miles of the Juba river, and the port of Kisimaio, desired by Italy since 1885. But France even now refused to allow Italy to extend her Libyan territory to Lake Chad, and all that she ceded was some 114,000 square kilometres of very light soil with a few hundred people and some palm plantations. Connection between western and equatorial Africa remained intact for France over 300 kilometres, and Italy's hope of penetration into the heart of Africa was negated. Moreover, France ceded some 800 square kilometres in Somaliland. But Italy made substantial sacrifices of her strongly held national rights in Tunis. She sacrificed her right to keep Italian nationality for the children of Italians born therein indefinitely; all born up to 1965 might retain it with an option to choose French nationality at majority for those born between 1945 and 1965, Italian schools were safeguarded only until 1955, and from 1945 there was to be a gradual application of French common law. These provisions were of real importance, because they meant the abandonment by Italy of a fixed determination to preserve the nationality of Italians in Tunis. In this way, by immigration and by the much higher natural increase of her settlers, she might hope in due course to secure Tunis by logic of facts.

¹ *Survey Int. Aff.*, 1935, ii. 29, 32f, 138, 189, 259; i. 104ff; *Documents*, 1935, i. 15ff.

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If France continued as in 1919 to deny Somaliland, she ceded 2,500 shares in the French-owned Jibuti-Addis Ababa railway, which carried a substantial body of Ethiopian trade, and M. Laval, by his own admission, encouraged Italy to seek concessions in all parts of Ethiopia without reservation of a special sphere for French interests.¹ He insisted on 28th December that he was entitled to think that Italy would use this freedom of action solely in a peaceful manner. There was nothing in the agreements or conversations before or after them to encourage Italy to have recourse to war. That he spoke the truth in a technical sense may be admitted. A man of the experience of M. Laval is unlikely to have put on record anything which will give him away. But there is no good reason to doubt the Italian belief that he led the Duce to believe that France would not obstruct him, if he did go to war, and that was all he wanted. The intense dislike displayed to France later was assigned in great measure to the feeling that in imposing sanctions France was breaking her word; and in 1939, when the violence of Italian demands on France provoked her politicians to indiscretions, there were free denunciations of Italy for her ingratitude for French action in nullifying any real sanctions, as she assuredly did. The plain truth is that France, refusing to give Italy any reasonable territorial gains under her obligation, and anxious to make friends with Italy against Germany, with a complete disregard for law and morality, let Italy know that, if she helped herself to Ethiopia as she evidently intended to do, France would show benevolence. It may be hoped that this country appreciates the final results of this treachery.

¹ For a French apologia see *Survey Int. Aff.*, 1935, ii. 72ff.

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The efforts to settle the issue of Walwal by arbitration having failed, Ethiopia again appealed to the League on 16th March, the day of Herr Hitler's unilateral repudiation of the restrictions on German armaments imposed by the treaty of peace. The League perhaps was too perturbed by this event and too reluctant to criticize Italy to take proper action, though it was pointed out conclusively for Ethiopia that the delay was merely playing into Italy's hands, for from February there was patent rapid increase of Italian war preparations, and Marshal de Bono has explained how by order of the Duce he was deeply immersed in rapid movements to make ready to strike the moment the cessation of the rains rendered action possible. Only on 25th May did it go so far as to decide to take up the matter itself if the parties did not agree on an arbitrator by 25th July, though agreement was obviously impossible; when it met on 31st July it did succeed in setting the Commission to work, and the report of 3rd September found no fault on either side, thus depriving Italy of any ground for attack.

The weakness of Britain throughout this period was deplorable. Apart from her international obligations, she had the essential motive of safeguarding her own position in Africa, which Italy had so often tried to injure; Lord Salisbury had rescued in 1888 Zanzibar from the "cynical and arrogant injustice" of Signor Crispi's policy, and in 1890 foiled her plan of attacking Tripoli in a period of deep peace.¹ At the Peace Conference, when she desired British Somaliland as her compensation for her war services, Lord

¹ Keith, *The King, the Constitution, the Empire, and Foreign Affairs, 1936-37*, p. 173.

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Milner took strong exception, foreseeing clearly the danger of Italian control of Ethiopia, where she could raise large forces and menace the Sudan and British East Africa, and Mr. Lloyd George refused to plant a dangerous enemy in a key position.¹ Yet this precedent seems to have been forgotten by the Committee under Sir John Maffey, which was set up to investigate the question of British interests in Ethiopia after the Italian Ambassador, who had first broached the subject on 29th January, returned to the suggestion that Britain should agree to accommodate her views to further Italian aims. By official misconduct or ministerial carelessness—both deplorably negligent—the report of 18th June reached Italy, and in part was published in the *Giornale d'Italia* on February 20, 1936. Lake Tana, the waters of the Blue Nile, and certain grazing rights were all that this incompetent body could find to interest Britain, though its members should have remembered that one chief reason for keeping Germany out of Africa was the success she had shown in raising African troops, and the certainty that a hostile Italy in control of Ethiopia would do likewise.

There was, however, a serious barrier to mere yielding to Italian greed and French complicity. On 27th June were announced the results of a Peace Ballot² conducted under the auspices of the League of Nations Union, which secured the views of no fewer than 11,559,165 people, a total rendered much more impressive by the consideration that a determined stand was made against it by the Chairman of the Executive Committee of the National Union of Conservative and Unionist Associations and other Conserva-

¹ *The Truth about the Peace Treaties*, ii. 897ff.

² *Survey Int. Aff.*, 1935, ii. 48ff.

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tives, who urged voters to refrain from answering the questions. Over eleven millions were in favour of Britain remaining in the League, over ten for the imposition by other nations of economic and non-military measures to stop an aggressor, and 6,784,368 for the use, if necessary, of military measures. No government could ignore this clear proof that the country was in favour of a policy of sanctions by the members of the League.

There was, thus, pressing need for the Prime Minister at the Stresa meeting of 10th-14th April with the Premiers of Italy and France to concert the collective maintenance of peace within the League framework to discuss fully the Ethiopian question, and Signor Mussolini has asserted his complete readiness to take up the issue. The failure of Mr. Ramsay MacDonald and Sir S. Hoare to take up the issues cannot be defended¹; the Premier, however, since his retention of office at the cost of his principles and his colleagues, had lost moral authority, and doubtless feared to challenge in person the fiery earnestness of the Duce. Mr. Eden, indeed, on October 23, 1935, excused the inaction by the argument that it was hardly to be supposed that a Power which had just affirmed its loyalty to the principle of collective security for Europe would take any action in another continent which would jeopardize that doctrine. But the obvious reply is that, after the Duce had accepted that principle for Europe only, he should immediately have been pressed to adopt it for Africa, which he patently wished to exclude from it. Nor is there the slightest force in the argument that Italy had already been sufficiently

¹ *Ibid.*, ii. 148f; a "criminal blunder," C. Attlee, Commons, May 6, 1936.

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warned; when the Prime Ministers were face to face was the essential time for the most authoritative presentation of British views.

An effort was made by Mr. Eden himself on a visit to Rome on 24th–26th June to buy off the Duce. Britain was ready to give Ethiopia an outlet to the sea through Somaliland with a port at Zeila in full sovereignty if Italy would accept a part of the Ogaden from Ethiopia, together with commercial concessions. Constitutionally, the proposal was open to the objection that it assumed the right of the Crown to transfer territory under British protection without the assent of the people,¹ and internationally to the criticism that the project was put forward without Ethiopian consent. But the Duce made it absolutely plain that he would not be bought off. A further attempt by wish of the League Council was made at Paris on 15th–18th August, when Mr. Eden and M. Laval made proposals which would have left Ethiopia nominally her independence and territorial integrity, but have placed Italy in a position in the economic sphere of marked privilege which could easily be developed into political control. But the Duce rejected the idea on 18th August, telegraphing to Marshal de Bono² the decisive message: "Conference settled nothing; Geneva will settle the same; settle it." When the Council resumed consideration of the question on 4th September, with knowledge both of the Duce's attitude and of the exoneration of both parties in respect of the Walwal incident, it was clear to all that Italy was an

¹ Keith, *Current Imperial and International Problems, 1935–36*, pp. 131, 139ff.

² *Op. cit.*, p. 190.

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aggressor without a shadow of right. She had bound herself not merely by the treaty of 1906; by the League Covenant; by the treaty with Ethiopia of 1928; by the Kellogg Pact; and by her accession in 1934 to the treaty of Rio de Janeiro¹ to refrain from aggression, but had earlier given definite assurances of her intention to arrange the incident peacefully.

On 11th September, therefore, Sir S. Hoare deliberately committed Britain to "the collective maintenance of the Covenant in its entirety," and the "steady and collective resistance to all acts of unprovoked aggression," adding, with plain reference to the Peace Ballot: "The attitude of the British nation in the last few weeks has clearly demonstrated that this is no variable and unreliable sentiment, but a principle of international conduct to which they and their government hold with firm, enduring, and universal persistence." Italy submitted at long last a detailed memorandum making many charges against Ethiopia, and declaring that she must defend her rights, security, and dignity, none of which were patently in question. The League appointed a Committee of Five—Britain, France, Spain, Poland, and Turkey—which, with the assent of Ethiopia, presented as a basis of settlement an excellent scheme which would have secured far reaching reforms for Ethiopia, with important economic privileges for Italy and territorial cessions, to be purchased by British and French surrenders in Somaliland. To those who defend Italian aggression by diatribes against the backwardness of Ethiopia, the answer is that Italy secured her entry to the League in full knowledge of her condition, and that the scheme

¹ October 10, 1933; *Doc. Int. Aff.*, 1933, pp. 475ff.

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presented offered far better prospects for the attainment of progress in Ethiopia than the seizure by force of the territory, apart from the destruction of international security. The Italian reply of 22nd September demanded Italian control of Ethiopia and the dismemberment of the country, and the Council could not consider such a violation of Ethiopian rights under the Covenant. On 26th September, therefore, the Council proceeded to act under Article 15, which Ethiopia had already invoked. All the Members, save Italy, formed a Committee of Thirteen to report, and did so on 5th October, two days after the long prepared Italian attack was launched on a country which had not been able to obtain any serious supplies of armaments and was wholly unequal to the enormous forces accumulated against her. On 7th October, a Committee of Six reported the existence of a state of war, and the violation by Italy of Article 12 of the Covenant. The Council approved both reports, Italy being formally named as an aggressor and so subject to Article 16 of the Covenant. On 11th October the Assembly assented, Italy of course voting against the finding. Fifty states agreed, Austria, Hungary, and Albania dissented, two of them destined to be destroyed by like violence to that directed against Ethiopia. Five were not represented, all American save Germany, whose membership of the League was about to expire.

Italy complained that she had been treated with harsh differentiation from Japan, from the disputants in the Chaco dispute,¹ and from Germany. There were, however, definite distinctions between these cases and her own.

¹ Summarized by Gathorne-Hardy, *Short Hist. Int. Aff.*, 1920-38, pp. 199ff.

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China had never actually invoked the sanctions clause ; diplomatic relations were continued, nor could Europe act when neither the United States nor the U.S.S.R. were members of the League or ready to co-operate. In the Chaco dispute both parties were found to have violated the Covenant after due investigation. Germany had violated the disarmament clauses of the treaty of peace, but the illegality of her action was mitigated by the general admission that revision of this part of treaty was overdue, especially as other Powers remained fully armed.

On 2nd October ¹ the Duce declared the determination of Italy to proceed, even if sanctions were ordered. "To sanctions of an economic character we will reply with our discipline, with our sobriety, and with our spirit of sacrifice. To sanctions of a military character we will reply with acts of war." He had thus directed the League how far it could go. But M. Laval had already arranged these limits with Sir S. Hoare on 10th September,² when, as he explained to the Chamber, "we found ourselves instantaneously in agreement upon ruling out military sanctions, not adopting any measure of naval blockade, never contemplating the closure of the Suez Canal—in a word, ruling out everything that might lead to war." When it is remembered that under Article 16 of the Covenant Italy had by aggression placed herself in the position of having committed an act of war against every member of the League, and that that Article, which was still absolutely binding, demanded the immediate severance of all trade or financial relations and the prohibition of intercourse between League state nationals and

¹ *Survey Int. Aff.*, 1935, ii. 200. See *International Sanctions (1938)*, pp. 204ff, 233ff. ² *Survey Int. Aff.*, 1935, ii. 183ff.

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those of the offending state, with ultimately recourse to war, the agreement thus announced was gravely improper and supremely foolish. To embark on sanctions without the intention of making them effective was a suicidal course. It was quite possible to argue that European security demanded the sacrifice of Ethiopia to Italy, just as Mr. Chamberlain in 1938 was to buy off Germany at the cost of Czechoslovakia; but to set about irritating Italy, while determined to avoid defeating her, was utterly inexcusable. M. Laval had shown himself so incompetent and so untrustworthy a politician that it is quite possible that he thought maimed sanctions would suffice to induce the Duce to accept a compromise greatly in his favour, but still one showing that the League had teeth, and so warning Germany to be good. Britain may have been misled by the assurance of her experts that the conquest of Ethiopia would severely strain all Italy's resources. That this view, absurd to the layman, was actually held may be supported by the fantastic doctrine prevalent in 1939, that, despite her being engaged in a mortal struggle in Poland with her air force as vital weapon, Germany would be able to rain bombs on all the great cities of Britain, so that an evacuation scheme, monstrously expensive and doomed to complete failure, was insisted upon. The delusion at any rate helped to dictate the actual sanctions advocated by a Committee of Eighteen members of the League for imposition on Italy; an arms embargo was approved at once, as well as prohibition of financial transactions; there followed a ban on importation of goods from Italy, and from 18th November only an embargo on a restricted list of raw materials necessary for war. Mutual support in respect to the financial

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and economic sanctions was enjoined. Italy violently protested on 11th November, menacing counter-measures, and holding all states which imposed sanctions individually responsible. She had already tried to terrorize Britain during September and October by preparations in the Mediterranean which induced British counter-measures, a large number of ships being concentrated in the eastern Mediterranean, and troops sent to Egypt, Malta, and Aden. In addition, to counter constant threats in the Italian Press, Britain concluded pacts with France, Greece, Turkey, and Yugoslavia, approved by Czechoslovakia and Rumania, to ensure support if Italy attacked—a measure of clear obligation under the Covenant, which evoked on January 24, 1936, fresh abuse mainly of Britain, which was treated falsely as carrying on a private war for selfish reasons, not as acting in defence of the League, which embodied for Britain an ideal substitute for her old adherence to the balance of power.

Britain, of course, had an obvious means of action—the closing of the Suez Canal, thus isolating Italy from her Ethiopian forces. Moreover the obligation on her thus to act was overwhelming, for it was demanded under Article 16 as the obvious and essential means of bringing Italy to her senses. Even if it were insisted that under the convention of 1888 as renewed in 1919 the passage of Italian war vessels through the Canal was free, Britain and France were under the Covenant absolutely free to blockade the Mediterranean exit.¹ But above all it was plainly monstrous to allow poison gas² to be conveyed to the Italian

¹ Keith, *Current Imperial and International Problems, 1935-36*, pp. 154, 156, 163, 184; *Survey Int. Aff.*, 1935, ii. 208n, 249, 459, 480f.

² *Survey*, ii. 346, 413.

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forces to be used with complete violation of the Convention of 1925 against the wholly unprotected Ethiopians. That, at least, might have been stopped. For her failure Britain has no doubt to pay in the present necessity of having to war for her own liberty ; but the explanation seems to lie in French opposition, thus doubling French responsibility for the position to-day. It was, however, widely excused in British Conservative circles by the argument that Italy would attack, and that the British warships would be overwhelmed by the much vaunted " suicide club " of Italian airmen ; it is very improbable that our navy shirked the contest, but even earnest supporters of the League like the Duchess of Atholl were won over by the picture of a British débâcle. Moreover a pestilential deluge of defeatist propaganda was poured forth from renegade British, mostly females resident in Italy, for which the only charitable explanation is fear of Fascist reprisals on their worthless selves. Unhappily also the Vatican, which now so eloquently denounces the massacres of Poles, acting in accordance with its essentially Italian character, approved the misdeeds of the Duce, doubtless forgetting that dark skins and a different form of Christianity do not justify murder from the air.¹ Not only did the Pope encourage Italy, but Roman Catholic influences in the United Kingdom were mustered in full force against Ethiopia, and at great cost a steady propaganda by leaflets, pamphlets, and books was carried on to depict the Ethiopians as miserable sinners and the Duce, of all men, as a Christian warrior. *Tantum religio potuit suadere malorum !*

There was one sanction above others obvious and

¹ The facts in *Survey Int. Aff.*, 1935, ii. 99-106, are conclusive.

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effective, as the wild threats of the Italian Press and Government showed. Cut off oil supplies¹ and the Italians would be in real difficulties in a land of the physical conditions of Ethiopia. Moreover, the Americans had come to believe that Britain after all was acting disinterestedly, and pressure was being exercised by public opinion to induce the administration to cut off from Italy the aid she was deriving from the United States. Sir S. Hoare knew the probability in such an event of an Italian defeat, and at the instigation of M. Laval the two prepared an ingenious plan to oppose it.² Italy was to have more than she had yet won by her arms; 60,000 square miles of Ethiopia with, in addition, an immense colonization zone in southern Ethiopia, which would ensure that she would shortly possess a body of settlers trained in arms, ready to take over the fragment of Ethiopia which remained. To accept these terms was to lend the influence of the League to the arms of the Duce in the destruction of Ethiopia, and we may well believe that the Fascist Grand Council would gladly have accepted this delivery of the spoils *sine sudore et sanguine*. But the plot miscarried. The Cabinet had been presented with the Hoare-Laval plan at short notice, and had allowed itself to accord it approval on 9th December rather than disown its Foreign Secretary, so the Premier stated, but it had realized on closer consideration that the idea would not do. It was, in fact, a case where public opinion becomes effectively vocal and forces the hands of a ministry. Mr. Baldwin

¹ Keith, *op. cit.*, pp. 149, 154, 156f, 162, 164f. See Sir T. H. Holland, *The Mineral Sanction as an Aid to National Security* (1935) for a general theory of the effectiveness of a vital sanction as opposed to many ineffective ones; *Int. Sanctions*, pp. 114ff.

² *Survey*, ii. 290ff.

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with his instinct for electioneering had seized in November the comparative lull in affairs to dissolve and to win a majority, less overwhelming no doubt than that of 1931, but very large. In his election speeches he had affirmed firmly his adherence to the League Covenant and sanctions, and Sir S. Hoare, Mr. N. Chamberlain, Mr. Eden, and others had upheld the same faith. Critics ¹ had, on the other hand, warned the electors that, if they let the Conservative Party acquire power, it would do a deal with Signor Mussolini, and launch into a new foreign policy of alliances and power politics, based on a demand for the elimination of collective security and sanctions from the Covenant. Many Conservative candidates had been confronted with queries and had assured the electorate that they were loyal supporters of the League and of sanctions as set out in the Peace Ballot. Now to hand over Ethiopia to the Duce would be too disgraceful, and they resented the *volte-face* so deeply that Mr. Baldwin ² discarded in a friendly spirit his Foreign Secretary, replacing him with Mr. Eden. But the departure of Sir S. Hoare did not mean that he had failed in his aim. He had, in fact, not secured immediate victory for Italy, but he had destroyed the chance of an effective oil sanction, and he had undermined sanctions as a whole. The people of the United States felt frank disgust at the obvious sympathy of the British Government with the Duce, and any idea of co-operating with so untrustworthy a Power was dropped by the government. If at the end of February 1940 77 per cent. of those questioned

¹ "Vigilantes," *Inquest on Peace*, p. 281; Gathorne-Hardy, *op. cit.* p. 413.

² A severe attack on his good faith is made by Toynbee, *Survey*, ii. 316ff.

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by the American Institute of Public Opinion were against aiding Britain and France in event of defeat by Germany, it was not by any means due wholly to the repudiation of American debts, but many Americans, who did not like the stress laid by their country on the debt issue, were determined that American lives should not be employed to aid a country which could not be trusted to act honourably.

Sir S. Hoare¹ did not excuse his desertion of the path of honour by fear of Italy ; if he had done so, his advocacy of sanctions would have clearly been wrong, but at least he would have had some excuse for his change ; palpably it was his desire to placate the Duce that led him astray, and made him an easy prey to the arguments of M. Laval, to whom France owes ultimately her implication in the present war. He thought, quite wrongly, that the war would be slow, and that compromise would be inevitable. But Ethiopia was miserably armed, no aid having been given to her by any Power, any action under the Convention for Financial Assistance being not compulsory. Her resistance was fatally weakened by the employment against men without any protection from it of mustard gas,² which worked with remarkable success in the climate of the country. The indignant warriors demanded attacks on the enemy which the Emperor would have avoided if possible ; and the strategic and tactical superiority of the Italian forces, plentifully supplied with motor transport and aircraft, undermined resistance, so that on 2nd May the Emperor had to leave the country and on 5th May Addis Ababa was occupied. On the 9th the Duce announced the law which

¹ House of Commons, December 19, 1935 ; he resigned on the 18th.

² *Survey*, ii. 107, 111, 327, 341, 350f, 413f, 494.

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placed the territories and people of Ethiopia under the full sovereignty of the Kingdom of Italy and the assumption of the imperial style by the King.

It was obviously difficult for the League forthwith to drop sanctions, and the Council on 12th May decided that they should remain pending the clarification of the situation. The Argentine to gratify Italy asked for the convening of the Assembly for 30th June, and for Britain Mr. N. Chamberlain gave the final blow to sanctions by announcing on 10th June, at a gathering whence his view was certain to be broadcast, that their continuance would be "the very mid-summer of madness." His view¹ was very natural in a plain business man, vexed to see money being spent uselessly, and an excellent customer, a land where his brother had many friends, alienated for the sake of a number of black people, accused of being slave holders and traders, who would be better off under the Duce. We know now that Mr. Chamberlain really values liberty for some European Powers, but Orientals, as can be deduced from the attitude of his government to Indian aspirations, are in a different sphere. It is probable that he had assured himself in advance that Mr. Baldwin shared his views, and that his declaration, which seemed to offend deeply against the constitutional rule that policy in vital matters should not be announced by a subordinate minister but by the Premier, was a *ballon d'essai* to see which way the wind was blowing. Satisfied from the Press response that, disillusioned with the results of sanctions, assured of the danger from Italian hostility, and deluged with Italian propaganda, the people would not react unfavourably, the ministry decided on the advocacy

¹ *Survey*, ii. 463ff.

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of the withdrawal of sanctions at Geneva.¹ Mr. Eden shared in the débâcle; a young minister, he lacked the courage to resign, and remained in the ministry in an ambiguous and undignified position, after Mr. Chamberlain succeeded Mr. Baldwin and took into his hands control of foreign affairs, until he was discarded in 1938. His reputation suffered an irreparable blow, he ceased to rank as a possible Premier, and, when the War Cabinet was formed, he was refused admission, save in the anomalous position of a message-bearer to and from the Dominions.

At Geneva the Emperor delivered a noble address,² which made Mr. Eden's apologia deplorably feeble. South Africa, to her credit, declared her readiness to maintain sanctions, and M. Litvinov exposed the shabby conduct of the League. But the Assembly on 4th July approved the withdrawal of sanctions, which became effective from 15th July. Several Powers had already abandoned them.

There remained the issue of recognition of the conquest, which Mr. Eden deprecated, as in common decency he was bound to do. On March 11, 1932, in connection with the Sino-Japanese conflict, the Assembly had resolved: "The Assembly declares that it is incumbent upon the members of the League of Nations not to recognize any situation, treaty or agreement, which may be brought about by means contrary to the Covenant of the League of Nations or of the Paris Pact." The Covenant itself by Article 20 covered the matter, for the members "solemnly undertake that they will not hereafter enter into any engagements inconsistent with the terms thereof." But solemn undertakings do not mean much in the mind of a business Premier, and a High

¹ Keith, *op. cit.*, pp. 191f.

² Keith, *Int. Aff.*, 1928-37, ii. 84ff.

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Anglican conscience is capable of strange feats. Hence what Mr. Eden felt unable to do was done by Lord Halifax. The Anglo-Italian accord of April 16, 1938,¹ elsewhere described, while mainly concerned with Spain, involved a promise to break the League Covenant's prohibition, despite the embarrassment that what George V. had solemnly undertaken was to be repudiated by George VI., whom the country had welcomed as one to walk in the ways of his good and highly honoured father. On 12th May the issue was debated in the Council, the Emperor himself being present. The discussion showed once more M. Litvinov maintaining that recognition of an admitted wrong was improper, and New Zealand was critical.

Lord Halifax was blandly insistent, France favoured freedom, which several Powers, including Belgium, had already exercised, and Poland urged that the matter fell entirely within her sovereignty. It is declarations such as these which lessen regret for the sufferings of Poland; a nation which condones brutal force applied to others must not expect unlimited sympathy when her own turn to feel the weight of aggression falls upon her. The Emperor as usual was dignified and convincing.

There was delay in performing the final repudiation of Article 20 of the Covenant. Britain found that Italy was slow to honour any of her engagements despite the dangerous concessions made in the agreement of April 1938, and only on 16th November² was recognition *de jure* accorded. To add to the completeness of British humilia-

¹ *Cmd.* 5726 (1938).

² *Cmd.* 5923 (1939); Lord Halifax, House of Lords, November 3, 1938.

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tion, Mr. Chamberlain and Lord Halifax went on the bidding of the Duce to Rome on January 11, 1939,¹ to toast the new Emperor of Ethiopia. It was perhaps a fitting reward of an act of repudiation without parallel in modern British history that the Duce imparted nothing to his guests of his fixed intention to seize Albania, counting justly that after a futile protest Mr. Chamberlain would find it easy to recognize the King of Albania, even if war preoccupations prevented him for the moment repeating the historic toast.

The episode of Ethiopia destroyed collective security, and took all reality from the political part of the Covenant. The failure of the League members to keep their obligations demonstrated that public faith could no longer be trusted, and that international obligations were all facultative. No Power which violated an obligation under the Covenant could be expected to maintain faith in other things, nor was any other Power bound to keep faith with it. Britain, which had since 1919 founded her policy on collective security, had thrown it away and ruined her reputation in and outside Europe for honourable dealings. There was no answer to the reproach that she had manipulated the League for her own ends, and had repudiated it when the shoe pinched. France had shown the bankruptcy of her statesmen in honour and intelligence; she had kept faith neither with Britain nor Italy; her failure to mobilize her fleet to support Britain was acidly commented on even by Sir S. Hoare; while Italy felt for her bitter dislike, and cries of Corsica, Nice, Tunis,² Jibuti became vocal in

¹ A. Werth, *France and Munich*, pp. 413f.

² On November 30, 1938, the deputies in the Chamber demanded Tunis, Corsica, Nice. See Werth, *op. cit.*, pp. 398ff.

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Rome. Italy has indeed strong grounds for claiming Tunis and Somaliland, and it may be that they will prove the price of her continued neutrality. But disastrous above all was the fact that, while France had sought to win Italian support against Germany, she turned Italy into an ally of that Power, and enormously strengthened her enemies.

The reluctance of the minor Powers ¹ to play the game has been made the excuse for the inaction of Britain and France. But the patent fact is that it was on them, as the two Powers, neighbours of Italy in Africa and possessing naval power superior to that of Italy, that the duty to act fell. We have no excuse for thinking that, if they had held together and acted honourably, other Powers would have held back, but patently weak Powers must shrink back when those great Powers with a higher duty fail. *Noblesse oblige*, and unhappily of the two vital states one had capitulated to the aggressor, and had virtually promised him immunity. This war rewards their dishonour.

To add to the Emperor's misfortunes, British firms who were indebted to him for considerable sums delayed payment, and protracted proceedings when claims were made in the courts. One judge ² invented a new doctrine of law against his interests, by ruling that his jurisdiction was excluded by the fact that the Italian Government also claimed the sum in dispute. When the Court of Appeal ³ reversed this absurd doctrine there was further delay,⁴ and

¹ A Swedish Red Cross ambulance was deliberately bombed, and a doctor killed on December 30, 1935, in violation of the Red Cross Convention of 1929; *Survey Int. Aff.*, 1939, ii. 411f.

² *Haile Selassie v. Cable and Wireless Co.*, [1938] Ch. 545.

³ *Ibid.*, [1938] Ch. 839.

⁴ *Ibid.* (No. 2.), 55 T. L. R. 209; [1939] Ch. 192.

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eventually recognition of Italy came to prevent recovery and to condemn the Sovereign in costs. It must be added with regret that neither Edward VIII. nor George VI. did anything to suggest that they took seriously the obligation imposed on them by their royal father's pledges under the League of Nations Covenant. Nothing in fact seems to have been omitted to show that Britain disliked the policy on which the general election of 1935 had been won.¹

4. *The Civil War in Spain*

Italy and Germany, brought nearer by their common wrongdoing and their dislike of the League of Nations, were destined to have an opportunity to further their joint interests, and to exhibit the worthlessness of League protection as the result of a civil war which broke out in Spain on July 17, 1936—not without their imprimatur.²

Civil war has been normal in Spain simply because of the absence of any principle of effective unity. The country has never been successfully freed from regional aspirations; Catalans and Basques are essentially devoted to their own land, and only in a vague degree to Spain. Moreover, historical reasons have given the Roman Catholic Church a measure of wealth and power elsewhere obsolete, while the army has preserved a tradition of authority quite in-

¹ In September 1936 Mr. Eden already endeavoured to invalidate the credentials of the Emperor's representatives at Geneva; Keith, *Current Imperial and International Problems, 1935-36*, pp. 221ff. With much meanness no grant to aid the refugee supporters of the Emperor was made.

² *Survey Int. Aff.*, 1937, ii. 1ff; F. Borkenau, *The Spanish Cockpit* (1937); C. de la Mora, *In Place of Splendour* (1940).

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consistent with the supremacy of the civil power. The efforts to establish a lasting republic have never been crowned with success, and it was due to the intervention of the military authorities that the royal line was restored in 1874, and also, it must be admitted, to their military incapacity and their incompetence in diplomacy, that Spain suffered a humiliating defeat in 1898 in the war with the United States, in which British support prevented any effort by European Powers to succour a sister state.

The political system suffered from the prime defect of unreality, as was natural in a land where almost half the people were illiterate. Elections were not serious tests of political opinion; they were made in the most simple manner so as to allow of a rotation of office, which had the clear merit of allowing the contending parties a fair spell of the profits of power; the duties thereof did not cause trouble, for no minister thought seriously of facing the burden of performing them. In 1923 a change seemed just possible, for General Primo de Rivera, in seizing power by force, announced that civil servants were to attend regularly and do the work which in the past they had pleasingly neglected. Fortunately he did not seriously attempt to carry out reforms of importance. For a time he maintained order, but the king and the people alike grew tired of him, and the withdrawal of royal confidence in 1930 ended a régime which had changed nothing in essentials. But the king, who at no time in his career showed the slightest sign of more than a very modest political competence, felt compelled by the results of the municipal elections in 1931, treated by him as marking the royal family as unpopular, to abandon Spain hastily. The

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circumstances of his flight have never been fully explained. What is certain is that, at a time when he was urging his subjects to spend all their capital on Spanish undertakings, he was amassing a handsome fortune invested in Britain and elsewhere in the confident expectation, borne out by facts, that efforts to confiscate his gains would not be effective under British legal principles. He could count also on a friendly reception in Britain through his marriage—perhaps unluckily for her—with Princess Ena of Battenberg.

The republican régime¹ which followed the departure of the king lacked a secure foundation in party unity; there was indeed no party capable of providing a ministry with a majority. The extremists on both sides were wholly indifferent to recourse to parliamentary principles—royalists revolted in August 1932, Anarcho-Syndicalists in January 1933—and, when the Right secured control after the elections of December in that year, a serious rising in the Asturias in October 1934 was crushed with singular but congenial brutality. In the elections of February 1936 moderate men went to the wall, and the Right with 4,570,000 votes was confronted with the Left with 4,356,000 but with a majority of 57 seats. This was only achieved by the forming of a Frente Popular, like the Popular Front in France, containing the moderate Liberals as well as Communists and Anarchists. This union of forces was in accordance with the recommendations of the Communist International Congress in August 1935, and it was thus

¹ G. Rust, *Aufbau und Verfall des Spanischen Staates* (1939); N. J. Padel-ford, *International Law and Diplomacy in the Spanish Civil Strife* (1939); *Foreign Intervention in Spain* (1938).

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from the first contended by the disappointed Right parties that they were fighting a government controlled by Moscow. The result of the victory was a period of intense disorder, in which supporters of the Right committed many outrages, while Communist and Anarchist elements also were widely active in destruction. There is no doubt that many churches were burnt, that newspaper offices, political clubs, and private houses were attacked and often destroyed, and about three hundred and forty persons were killed before the rebellion of General Franco broke out. It would be idle to attempt to divide the honours of this ghastly situation, which was brought to a head by the assassination on 13th July of Señor Calvo Sotelo, one of the ablest of the leaders of the Right. His death was claimed to have compelled insurrection in self-defence, but in fact it was merely coincident with an outbreak which had been carefully planned in advance, and of which rumours had been long in circulation. We know now from the boasts of Herr Hitler and Signor Mussolini that both were cognizant of, and eager to further,¹ a revolt which would establish another dictatorship in Europe. That this was so was suspected at the time, but the British Government throughout the whole struggle turned deliberately blind eyes to the essential facts.

But the initiative in proposing the rapid adoption and immediate observance of an agreed arrangement for non-intervention in Spain came from M. Blum, who had so many troubles at home that he was very anxious to be free from the complications which would arise from demands

¹ Italy sent—from December 15, 1936, to April 15, 1937—100,000 men, 750 guns, 40,000 tons materials; Pritt, *Must the War Spread?* p. 234.

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for French intervention. The proposal was welcome to the British Government, which was, by its Conservative character, intensely perturbed by the anarchic conditions in Spain, and influenced by the vehement propaganda of the Roman Catholic Church,¹ which insisted that General Franco, who had broken his oath of fidelity to the State, was a Paladin come to destroy infidelity and to rescue monks and nuns from appalling brutality. The project also met with acceptance in Belgium, Poland, the U.S.S.R., and Portugal, while Germany and Italy—after raising points against the sending of subscriptions, the departure of volunteers, and the supervision of the execution of the agreement—finally adhered. Other states also agreed, and France, Britain, Belgium, and Portugal, as well as Germany, prohibited the export of certain war material, including aircraft.

There was, however, no sincerity in the attitude of Russia, Italy, or Germany, which were all interested in supporting one side or other in the war. Germany and Italy had every reason to expect that their protégé, who had been assured of support, would rapidly win the war, as he had most of the regular forces on his side. But, when this proved not to be the case, they hastened to send aid, just as Russia was collecting by levies on workers large voluntary donations. It is reasonably clear that the revolt could not have started with any success except for the aid of Germany and Italy, and equally clear that without the aid of Soviet aircraft and funds the republican government would soon have suffered disaster. But German and Italian aid were given at once, and substantial military aid by the U.S.S.R. only from mid-October.

¹ *Survey*, ii. 268ff.

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The motive of Herr Hitler was possibly, in part, his dislike of Bolshevism in any form—which may have been genuine, for his conversion in 1939 from a bitter enemy of M. Stalin to a warm admirer may be set down to the hard necessities of the case. Signor Mussolini had once been a convinced and noisy Socialist; he had worked with Russia, recognizing her government in 1924 and securing a useful treaty; he had co-operated in some measure, as we have seen, in the Disarmament Conference; and in September 1933 he had entered into a firm agreement for amity and non-aggression, disclaiming any intention to enter into any agreement or combination of hostile character. But, on the other hand, it was essentially to the advantage of both Powers to embarrass France by creating a hostile Power on her frontier. Italy had already large ideas regarding the restoration of the power of the Roman Empire in the Mediterranean,¹ which meant that she would have to combat France and Britain; for their surrender of Ethiopia, which was not their property, did not necessarily mean that they would give Italy what she wanted in the Mediterranean. But Spain under a protégé would mean that, if France were so unwise as to negate Italy's ambitions she would find her opponent assured of bases in Spanish territory, above all Majorca, in Spanish Morocco, and the Canaries, and confronted at her frontier by a devoted ally of Italy. Britain would also find that her hold on Gibraltar would be undermined, and General Franco would be encouraged to recover that fortress, whose presence on Spanish soil was a constant source of bitterness to any true Spaniard. The venture, too, was not

¹ E. Monroe, *The Mediterranean in Politics*, chap. iv.

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half so risky as it looked. Effective propaganda could be carried on through the same channels as had served to discredit Ethiopia.¹ The Church would impress on true believers that in Spain the republicans were spending all their time burning churches, and murdering with every refinement of cruelty monks and nuns ; if it were pointed out that the great majority of Spanish men of letters, scientists, and professors were on the republican side, it was easy to insist that the intelligentsia was atheistic and disliked the champions of Christianity. Others, less accessible to clerical considerations, could be recruited by their standing hatred of Communism, and it could be pointed out that, though the Spanish Government might be said not to be Communist because its leaders for the most part never had been Communists, it was clear that either they were dominated by Communists or at heart were Communists. Skilled propaganda was very effective in this regard.

Even so, British statesmen could not wholly ignore the essential interests of their country simply because it was pleasant to see Communists being defeated, and in September knowledge that Italy was in effective control of Majorca resulted in an intimation to Rome that Britain deprecated any change in the *status quo* in the western Mediterranean. Nothing daunted by the intimation, Italy and Germany proceeded to strengthen their protégé by official recognition on November 18, 1936, and by Christmas Germany had sent at least 20,000 men to Spain, while Italy continued to add to her forces. It was quite useless

¹ British official news from Spain was often biassed ; A. Werth, *France and Munich*, pp. 64f.

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for France and Britain to appeal to the Powers to stop this sending of forces ; Germany, Italy, and Russia were in sympathy, but went on sending, for they had taken the measure of Mr. Chamberlain and M. Blum, and knew that the appeals were really made to satisfy public opinion at home, and that no action could be expected to follow. But an ingenious method of satisfying Britain was devised. On January 2, 1937,¹ Britain and Italy concluded at Rome an accord asserting their desire not to modify the *status quo* with regard to national sovereignty in the Mediterranean area, and agreed to discourage any activities which might impair their good relations. The utter insincerity of Italy was shown by the immediate landing of four thousand men at Cadiz, and further additions were made up to the end of February, bringing the Italian forces up to forty thousand men, in four divisions, each under a general of the Italian army.² To this was added the declaration of the Duce that the establishment of a Bolshevist Government in Spain would be a modification of the *status quo* under the agreement of 2nd January, and could not be tolerated. The British Government acquiesced in all these proceedings, the Foreign Office always having no information to confirm the reports of the troop movements reported in the Press. It is unfortunately true that, throughout this period and later, either the British information service, despite the large secret service appropriations, was incompetent, or the British Government deliberately shut its eyes to its

¹ Keith, *Int. Aff.*, 1918-37, ii. 195ff.

² These figures then accepted were much too low. On June 12, 1939, in the House of Commons the official declarations of Hitler and Mussolini of their aiding Franco from the very first were adduced to show their perfidy and ministerial connivance.

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reports. There is, of course, nothing easier than to deny official knowledge, but the evidence now available to the public leaves a singularly unsatisfactory impression. A curious episode occurred on January 8, 1937, when a rumour of the intention to send large German forces to Spanish Morocco so agitated French opinion with memories of the days of Agadir that in all probability the project was abandoned, with profuse assurances that it had never existed.

The Italian Government, by April, seems to have thought that her forces should, along with those of Germany, assure victory, and the Non-Intervention Committee set up under the agreement of 1936 agreed to set up a naval patrol and a system of frontier inspection. But the bombing of the German ship *Deutschland*¹ in the roadstead of Iviza on 29th May by Spanish airmen was revenged by the bombing of the town of Almeria, and on 19th June an allegation—probably untrue—that the *Leipzig*² had been attacked by a submarine led to a demand that Britain and France should join in a demonstration against the republicans, a proposal too unjust for either country to accept. This led to Germany and Italy withdrawing from the patrol, and so Portugal, whose conduct throughout was bitterly hostile to Spain and hardly loyal to Britain, withdrew her facilities for frontier observation. On 14th July Britain made new proposals: the naval patrol should be dropped, but observers should be stationed in Spanish ports, and land frontier supervision should be maintained; commissions should be set up to see to the withdrawal of foreign nationals from the armies on both sides; and when

¹ *Survey*, ii. 312ff.

² *Ibid.*, ii. 317ff, 322, 381.

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substantial progress had been made with withdrawal, both governments should be recognized as belligerents with rights under international law.

More important than this scheme, which was opposed more or less by every Power, not least by Russia, was the determination of Mr. Chamberlain to secure appeasement with Italy. He believed that Italy, in her anti-British propaganda and in her intervention in Spain, was actuated by failure to understand that Britain was really friendly, and that her aid to Ethiopia, which he himself had destroyed, had been instigated by loyalty to the League, and not to any wish to oppose Italian progress. His overture to Spain¹ on July 27, 1937, was welcomed by Signor Mussolini, not unmindful how he had killed sanctions; but further progress was prevented for the time by events which no devotion to appeasement could obscure. Submarine attacks on shipping *en route* for Spain were becoming frequent in the eastern Mediterranean, and, as General Franco was deficient in these vessels, Italy was suspect in the eyes even of Mr. Chamberlain. The Admiralty insisted on authorizing counter-attack on submarines attacking British shipping, and the order was obeyed, so that a French proposal for a Conference of Powers to meet this revival of piracy was accepted. It met at Nyon in September,² and it soon arranged to patrol the areas of danger. Italy had refused to participate, but, when she realized that the plan would be carried out, she agreed to undertake a share of the patrol, and the evil abruptly stopped. But her annoyance at this

¹ From November 1937 Britain had curious unofficial relations with Franco; Briggs, *A.J.I.L.*, 1940, pp. 47ff.

² *Survey*. ii. 228, 341, 346ff.

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check to her plans was manifested in the dispatch of large forces to Libya to threaten Egypt, and to Spain—the total of forty thousand being admitted in October ; and on the 29th of the month Signor Mussolini gave public proof of what was notorious, that the soldiers were fighting in Spain with his consent. In the same month he testified to his affection for Herr Hitler, whom he had visited in the previous month, by making a speech in support of German colonial claims ; and on 11th December he completed his adherence to the Axis, which he had joined on 6th November by accepting the Anti-Comintern Pact, by declaring that Italy would withdraw from the League of Nations. It seemed difficult to regard this line of action as showing much appreciation of Mr. Chamberlain's anxiety to place matters between the countries on a sound basis.

Mr. Chamberlain, however, had set his heart on appeasement, little knowing that by this policy he had rendered certain that he would plunge his people into a dangerous war. Signor Mussolini had grasped the situation accurately, and he resolved to lead the Premier further along the fatal path of surrender. He himself had seen the determination of his partner in the axis to establish his control in Austria, and he appreciated the advantage of countering the growth of his power by securing close relations with Britain, while weakening the position of Britain in the Mediterranean. On February 10, 1938, he made overtures to Britain, and the Premier fell into the trap. It was in vain that Mr. Eden ¹ stressed the advisability of making use of the need of the Duce for British co-opera-

¹ Speech on resignation, February 21, 1938 ; cf. A. Werth, *France and Munich*, pp. 37ff.

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tion to secure a proper settlement of the Spanish situation. It was not sufficient to agree on the policy of withdrawal and the conditions thereof, but they must go further and show the world achievement. Withdrawal must have begun in earnest before the proposed negotiations in Rome could be held on a really solid basis of goodwill, which was essential to success. But his pleas were countered by the Duce, by whose instructions the Italian Ambassador, Count Grandi, held a long conference with the Premier and Mr. Eden on 18th February. Count Grandi, a man of powerful character, overpowered the resistance, if any, of Mr. Chamberlain by insisting that it was "now or never" for the start of conversations. Mr. Chamberlain, indeed, has repudiated this interpretation, but the untenability of his view is proved by his own action. He hastily summoned a Cabinet for the 19th, and on the 20th the Cabinet decided to yield to the Italian ultimatum, without even waiting for the formal reply to the question asked by the Premier—whether Italy would accept the British formula for withdrawal of troops. Mr. Eden resigned at once, and his Under Secretary, Lord Cranborne, followed him into exile. The way for this result had been paved by the growing divergence of view in the Cabinet: Mr. Eden was standing out for the principle that in any agreement there must be no sacrifice of principles and no shirking of responsibilities merely to obtain quick results. Peace must be made, not to buy temporary goodwill, but on a basis of frank reciprocity with mutual respect. The alternative view was that taken at Geneva on 12th May by Lord Halifax, who filled the vacant office: a practical victory for peace was much more important than devotion, unflinching

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but unpractical, to some high purpose. The truth was, of course, that, as in the case of Ethiopia, principles of vital importance were being surrendered in order to buy off for a time the barbarian. It is significant of the blindness to British interests of the majority of the Cabinet that in ejecting Mr. Eden they were obeying the scarcely veiled demands of the Führer¹ and the Duce for his removal from office, as representing the essential obstacle to their plans of weakening Britain by driving her from one surrender to another, until at last, if she came to make a stand, she would have no ally but France. Once again it is clear how far superior in conception and understanding of the situation were the dictators to the Premier. The excuse that a refusal might drive Italy to war should have been faced with courage; without that quality no British Premier can be equal to the needs of an Empire. Small souls and great destinies are ill combined, and the virtues of business life are inadequate for high politics.

Mr. Chamberlain, by sacrificing his Foreign Secretary, had placed himself in the hands of Italy; he must secure a treaty and hold it as a success whatever the facts might be. The terms secured might have been worse, but for the fact that the Duce had reasons for seeking an accord. The annexation of Austria had brought Germany to the Brenner, and Italian opinion was uneasy that the defence of Austria affected in 1934, and asserted to be essential to Italian safety, had been abandoned. The agreement signed at Rome, on April 16, 1938,² was decidedly favourable to

¹ Speech of February 20, 1938.

² *Cmd.* 5726; Mr. Chamberlain, House of Commons, May 2, 1938.

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Italy. The agreement of January 2, 1937, was reaffirmed; there was to be exchange of information as to movements of armed forces in the overseas Mediterranean territories, the Red Sea, the Gulf of Aden, Egypt, and African territories, including northern Tanganyika, but excluding western and central Libya, an omission well adapted to enable Italy to mass there forces to threaten Egypt. No new naval or air bases were to be constructed east of longitude 19° E. in the Mediterranean or Red Sea without notice. The terms, of course, were to the advantage of Italy, and were so worded as to place difficulties in the way of making Cyprus an air base, to which Italy was quite naturally opposed. A very substantial British surrender was made with regard to Arabia and certain islands adjacent thereto. Complete equality of rights was affirmed, subject to the *status quo*, and Britain precluded herself from any extension of her influence over Saudi Arabia or the Yemen; she renounced in effect her old claim to regard these areas as within her sole sphere of political influence. The concessions of Italy were negligible: she repeated her already existing obligation not to interfere with the supply of water to the Sudan from Lake Tana, and promised that she would not compel natives of East African territories to undertake military service except for local policing and defence of the territory—a promise which could obviously be evaded without the slightest difficulty: the line between volunteers fighting in Spain and compulsory service, though once solemnly asserted, was evanescent. No concession could be obtained of equality of treatment of British or Indian commerce in East Africa, and restrictions on British missions therein were not waived.

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Moreover, the free use of the Suez Canal in peace and war was reaffirmed.¹

Some stress was laid by apologists for the treaty on the fact that a ban on injurious propaganda was assured, but no one supposed that there was any prospect of it being kept. The immediate reduction of the Italian forces in Libya was announced, but no pledge given that they would not be replaced whenever it was desired to put pressure on the Premier, who was naturally very sensitive to the menace to Egypt from their presence.² On the other hand, as already mentioned, Britain promised to secure from the League the right to recognize the Italian conquest of Ethiopia, thus making a vital concession.

On the subject of Spain, Britain asserted that the question must be settled before the new agreements could take effect. Italy agreed to accept the British rule for the evacuation of her forces from Spain and asserted that she had no intention of seeking a privileged position—territorially, politically, or economically—on the Spanish mainland or oversea possessions. She promised also, on the conclusion of the Spanish war, to withdraw forthwith all Italian troops and war material.

Italy, of course, made the agreement in the confident belief that General Franco was on the eve of victory, for on 15th April he severed land connection between the republicans' chief strongholds, Barcelona and Valencia. In any case she had materially altered the position since she had forced Mr. Eden's removal, although the Prime Minister

¹ See C. 5623; cf. Keith, the *Scotsman*, March 19, 1940.

² The number was soon increased to 60,000 from 30,000, and not reduced; 345 H.C. Deb. 5 s. 893.

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had assured the Commons on 21st February, when defending his action, that it was essential that no such alterations had taken place by the dispatch of fresh troops to Spain. This resulted in the Premier or the Under Secretary of State in the Commons having to meet embarrassing questions, which they did with a painful economy of truth, while the Fascist party revealed in loud boastings the achievements of the Italians in Spain.

If Signor Mussolini assumed, as he probably did, that he need not expect Britain to insist on a Spanish settlement first of all, he was disappointed for the time being; Britain had presumably hoped that a *rapprochement* with Italy would weaken the bonds between her and Germany, but the triumphal reception of Herr Hitler in Rome in May undeceived the optimists, and induced the government to seek to achieve a Spanish settlement. Italy, for her part, made things very uncomfortable for the ministry by fresh ingenuity in assailing British shipping. The *Endymion* was torpedoed without warning on 31st January off Cartagena, and, while this feat was met by authorizing attack by the navy on any submarine found submerged in the western Mediterranean, in May and June Italian airmen bombed and machine-gunned from the air, with considerable success, British ships in Spanish ports.¹ The action taken was illegal, but the obvious step of defence involved entry into Spanish waters, and Britain would not take that step. But she could exert very strong pressure on France to help General Franco to victory by closing, on 13th June, the

¹ On the sinkings see the long list in A. Werth, *France and Munich*, pp. 164ff. He stresses the anxiety of Mr. Chamberlain to destroy the Republic, and his pressure on M. Daladier to close the frontier.

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French frontier to the passage of supplies for the republican forces, thus contributing materially to their decline in strength. Further progress was then made by the Non-Intervention Committee¹ with the British plan of July 14, 1937. The idea was that the volunteers on both sides should be counted by commissions, that evacuation should start and be completed within a hundred days of the final acceptance of the proposals by the two sides, and belligerent rights were to be awarded after the evacuation from the side with fewer volunteers of 10,000 men and of a proportionate number from the other side. The plan was accepted by the republicans in July, but refused by General Franco on 21st August. No doubt with Italian approval, General Franco demanded that full belligerent rights should be accorded at once, and that equal withdrawals should take place. On 1st September British observers reported that air raids in some cases were deliberately directed against civilians, and had no military justification. On the 21st it was announced by the Spanish Premier that the government had determined to evacuate all non-Spanish combatants, and asked for an international commission to supervise—a gesture which had one result only, the departure from Spain of the most effective of the units of the army, the International Brigade, whose loss was poorly compensated by the withdrawal in October of 10,000 Italian legionaries, wounded or sick.

On 16th November the British Government decided to consider that the Spanish question could be deemed to be settled. It is very difficult to justify the exchange of ratifications then made, and the accompanying recognition of

¹ Resolution, July 5, 1938 ; *Cmd.* 5793.

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the King as Emperor of Ethiopia. On 2nd November in the Commons Mr. Chamberlain explained that in his view the removal of any menace to peace from Spain constituted such a settlement as justified the bringing the agreement into force. The Duce had shown his appreciation of the agreement by accepting Mr. Chamberlain's plea for aid in staying Herr Hitler's hand against Czechoslovakia. The Commonwealth and the Union of South Africa supported his proposal. The Duce had promised not to send airmen to replace the legionaries withdrawn, not to send further forces to Spain, and to withdraw all his forces when the Non-Intervention agreement came into force. Mr. Greenwood had no difficulty in exposing the worthless character of the arguments; every one had understood that the agreement would not be made effective until the Spanish war was over; large bodies of Italians were still in Spain. The new policy was promoting the encirclement of France, was encouraging the Italian ambition of hegemony in the Mediterranean, and endangering the fabric of the British Empire. Mr. Eden pointed out that the deterioration of European relations could be traced to the failure in the early part of the year to stand up against Italian aggression. It was wrong to conclude an agreement with another Power while its forces were engaged in a civil conflict in a friendly state contrary to its express agreement in the Non-Intervention compact. The retention of Italian air-power in Spain meant her continued and effective intervention. He was driven reluctantly to think that "if the policy of appeasement continues to be interpreted in different ways by different countries, many international problems will, it is true, have been eliminated in a sense satisfactory

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to others, but our position and interests may become gravely imperilled." Mr. Noel-Baker pointed out that the difficulties in Palestine were clearly partly due to Italy; even Lord Wolmer doubted the wisdom of constant surrender, and in the Lords a like view was expressed by Lords Crewe and Cecil.

The surrender of Britain¹ did not long precede the destruction of the Spanish Government,² whose effective resistance suddenly collapsed after the failure of its attack on the Ebro. Aided by Italian and German aircraft, General Franco succeeded, doubtless in part owing to internal dissensions, in securing control of Catalonia by February 10, 1939, and British and French recognition was accorded on 27th February, thus encouraging the surrender of Madrid on 28th March. Nothing could be done by Britain or France to secure the slightest amnesty for the republicans, who were forthwith proceeded against as criminals, although the vast majority of them had merely defended, as was their duty, the legitimate government of the country against a military rebellion, supported by the troops of two foreign countries, and tribesmen from Morocco.

The Spanish débâcle had been aided by the submission of the Prime Minister to the demand of the Duce that he should manifest his solidarity by a visit to Rome to hail the King as Emperor of Ethiopia. He there learned that he could do nothing to break the Berlin-Rome Axis, but he insisted that he could not abandon Franco-British co-opera-

¹ On Mr. Chamberlain's desire to see the republicans defeated see A. Werth, *France and Munich*, pp. 164ff.

² Werth, *op. cit.*, pp. 414ff; on the refugees in France, pp. 428ff. See S. Casado, *The Last Days of Madrid* (1939); H. Buckley, *The Life and Death of the Spanish Republic* (1940).

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tion. The Duce, it is clear, was anxious to win over Mr. Chamberlain to side with him in demands on France for Tunis, French Somaliland, and a share in the control of the Suez Canal, if not for Corsica and Savoy and Nice. But on 26th January M. Bonnet had assured the Chamber of Deputies that in the case of war all the forces of Britain would be at the disposal of France, just as those of France would be at the disposal of Britain, and on 6th February Mr. Chamberlain reaffirmed the assertion, saying that "the solidarity of interest by which France and this country are united is such that any threat to the vital interests of France from whatever quarter it came must evoke the immediate co-operation of this country." Lord Halifax, on 23rd February, made clear that there was no reservation in the Premier's words, his declaration meant "Halt: major road ahead." It was thus impossible at the Rome meetings for the Duce to secure any breach in Anglo-French friendship, but it is clear that the breaking up of Spanish resistance was furthered by this plain desertion of the republican cause.

The decision to recognize General Franco was taken in an irregular form, for it was not submitted to the Commons before it was notified on 27th February. Mr. Attlee next day denounced the action as a gross breach of international traditions, and a further stage in a policy which was steadily destroying in all democratic countries confidence in British good faith. Sir A. Sinclair stressed the contradiction that, while Britain had refused to recognize General Franco's belligerency, so long as Italian forces were in Spain, she was now recognizing him *de jure* while the forces still were there, and held that there should have been laid down conditions

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against reprisals, and as to compensation for British ships which had suffered at General Franco's hands.¹ Approval was accorded by the usual majority, 344 to 147, but General Franco's attitude both to France and Britain remained hostile until his subservience to Herr Hitler was weakened by the Russo-German Pact of 1939 and the Russian attack on Finland in November 1939.

One painful episode was to follow. It soon proved that Italy, though withdrawing after long delay, and not forthwith as promised, was handing over to Spain large quantities of war material, which obviously could only be needed in order to strengthen General Franco if Italy were to war on France and called on his aid to menace the French frontier. The Premier had to admit on 7th and 12th June² that this action was not inconsistent with the Italian undertaking, showing clearly that he had misled the Commons when securing its imprimatur for bringing the agreement of 1938 into operation. It was clearly a most deplorable incident, for the Commons were wholly misled, and it has necessarily created doubt as to the accuracy and fullness of any statements of the Premier. From that high office candour is essential if respect is to be paid, and on foreign opinion such a confession has even more serious effects than in Britain.

The essential warning of the Spanish affair was the danger of acquiescing in breach of treaties and of inter-

¹ E.g. the *Stancroft*, sunk December 27, 1938, by bomb; the *Stangrove*, February 5, 1939; 345 H.C. Deb. 5 s. 1011ff; 346 *ib.*, 760f. No trouble was taken to secure British rights; for the mounting of guns to menace Gibraltar, see 348 H.C. Deb. 5 s. 396f.

² See Lord Halifax, House of Lords, June 8, 12. Cf. 348 H.C. Deb. 5 s. 12f., 391f., 877ff, 1270ff.

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national law. Britain was long aware that Italy and Germany were absolutely defying the Non-Intervention agreement, but she did nothing to prevent such violation, and Mr. Chamberlain ended by a complete condonation thereof. Action of this sort had an immediate bearing on the attitude of Herr Hitler to Austria, Czechoslovakia, and Poland; he manifestly did not believe, and it was eminently reasonable that he should not believe, that Britain would resent to the point of going to war his breach of treaty obligations, which certainly were no more vital than those which were violated in the case of Spain. He failed to understand that Britain had one standard for the Duce and another for the Führer, based ultimately on the fact that she feared the former less, and was anxious, if possible, to use him against the latter.

Nothing has been said hitherto as to the attitude of the League of Nations, for the simple reason that it played a completely negative part.¹ In December 1936 the Council duly met as a result of an appeal by Spain under Article 11 of the Covenant to consider the issue of intervention, but passed no effective resolution. On May 28, 1937,² an energetic effort was made by Spain to galvanize the Council into real activity by producing evidence of the full official intervention of Italy and the destructive character of their aid, while the fate of Guernica³ at German hands was adduced. The Council passed a resolution of pious platitudes, urging the removal of non-Spanish combatants, and condemning the use in the Spanish struggle of methods

¹ *Survey*, ii. 220, 260ff, 355ff.

² *Ibid.*, ii. 302ff.

³ April 26, 1937; *Survey*, ii. 68ff.

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contrary to international law, and the bombing of open towns. Other attempts to induce action were equally devoid of effect. In January 1939¹ the Council noted with satisfaction the report from the Committee appointed to supervise the withdrawal of non-Spanish combatants that the republicans had fully carried out their undertaking. Only 12,673 were enumerated, showing how slight was the foreign aid to Spain in contrast with that sent by Italy and Germany,² in their case fully disciplined forces, as was established immediately after the downfall of the Spanish Government by the loud boasts of the Duce and the Führer, both of whom seemed rather discourteously to be determined to show for his own country that it was its work that had achieved victory ; we may admit that General Franco's victory was essentially one of foreigners over Spaniards. The Council also deprecated once more, as had the Assembly in 1938, the bombing of the civil population, but had no remedy to suggest. Nothing more was even attempted, and the new government hastily removed itself by notice (8th May) from the League with whose principles it patently had no possible sympathy.

It was, of course, clear that there was definite aggression on Spain, but the claim that Germany and Italy were merely aiding a government regarded by them as the real government cut at the provisions of Article 10 by suggesting that it was impossible to declare that aid in a civil war was within its terms. It was, of course, impossible for the members of the League to undertake to maintain any

¹ *Monthly Summary*, 1939, pp. 7ff.

² House of Commons, June 12, 1939. Apparently there must have been some 40,000 foreign troops in Spain after the departure of the republican auxiliaries.

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government in a country from internal aggression, but the substance of the Article in its relation to facts showed clearly that a duty lay on members to act. That they did not do so proved, as in the case of Ethiopia, that no Power is prepared to honour onerous promises unless national gain thence can be derived.

One of the least satisfactory features of the Spanish episode was the surrender of many undoubted British rights on the sea. Belligerent rights¹ were accorded to neither party by other states, but Britain not merely acquiesced in rebel cruisers dealing with British ships in territorial waters, but permitted rebel vessels to shell from the high seas British vessels in territorial waters, and thus to capture them; permitting also transit of such ships in custody of rebel vessels outside territorial waters, though there were available war vessels which might have rescued them.² Moreover, British vessels of war were forbidden to enter territorial waters—for instance, at Gijon, when refugees were seeking to escape, and the naval traditions of humanity would have dictated the giving of succour to drowning women and children. Mr. Duff Cooper's harsh attitude³ in this regard stands in curious contrast with Mr. Churchill's insistence, during the present war, that the German seamen who scuttle their ships on being ordered to stop should be duly rescued; twitted on the contrast of the two cases, he pointed out that he was not then the First Lord of the Admiralty.

Another most unsatisfactory development was the

¹ Keith, *The King, the Constitution, the Empire, and Foreign Affairs*, 1936-37, pp. 155, 168ff, 175f.

² *Ibid.*, pp. 142, 159f, 168ff, 175ff.

³ Pritt, *Must the War Spread?* pp. 236ff.

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decision of the Courts ¹ that, though the Crown recognized the Republican Government as *de jure* the government of the whole of Spain, nonetheless a *de facto* government of part of Spain could contemporaneously be recognized as entitled to full immunity from British jurisdiction, though not accorded even belligerent status. The decision rested on a very confused letter from the Foreign Office, and is open to very grave criticism as illogical and founded on confusion of thought. Another ruling ² denied the power of a decree of the Republican Government to affect property in a Spanish ship outside territorial limits, a view which is by no means easy to justify.

5. *The Sino-Japanese War from 1937*

After 1933 Chinese relations with Japan remained for a time in a state of comparative calm. Japan had difficulties with Russia on a variety of heads—border violations, Sakhalin, and, above all, the Chinese Eastern railway, control of which had since 1924 been shared with the Chinese authorities in Manchuria. The replacement of the latter by Japanese or Manchukuo officials led to much friction; offers to sell her rights by Russia were rejected, and arrests of Soviet officials were carried out in a manner suggesting the deliberate elimination in this way of Russian rights. But in March 1935 the sale of the railway to Manchukuo

¹ *The Arantzazu Mendi*, [1939] A.C. 256, affirming the Court of Appeal [1939], p. 37. See H. W. Briggs, *A.J.I.L.*, 1939, pp. 689ff. A more logical Norwegian decision is given; *ibid.*, 609.

² *The El Condado*, 63 Lloyd's List, L. R. 83, 330 (Scottish Court of Session). Contrast the American decision in *The Navemar*, 102 F. 2d. 444; *A.J.I.L.*, 1939, pp. 532ff.

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ended for a time the strain in relations. But China had a severe economic set-back through the Silver Purchase Act of 1934 of the United States. That ill-conceived measure was part of the complex plan to restore American economy resorted to by the President, and it acted most unhappily on China. There was a severe drain on her silver resources, the value of her currency appreciated and spoilt her power to sell, and in November 1935 she was forced to abandon the silver standard. It is remarkable that the President does not appear to have realized how unwise it was thus to weaken a Power which it was plainly in the interests of the United States to strengthen against Japanese aggression.¹ At the same time China was compelled to face the problem of throwing back the Communist forces in Kiangsi. In this enterprise General Chiang Kai-shek was remarkably successful; the Communist forces were forced to retire some six hundred miles, and to re-establish themselves in the western province of Shensi. But the strain on Chinese resources was grave.

Japan took advantage of the reluctance of China to resist by securing in 1935 control of the northern provinces of Chahar and Hopei, but in November the Nanking Government ordered the cessation of local accords, and thus threatened to present a more effective resistance to impudent demands. Japan was anxious to accomplish her ends without undue use of force, but the moderate elements in the government were menaced by the growth of a demand in the army for drastic action, and, though a general election in 1936 strengthened their hands by showing that the country approved, a military rising on 26th February led

¹ *Survey Int. Aff.*, 1935, i. 308ff, 402ff.

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to the murder of some and the intimidation of other politicians.¹ But, though some of the guilty were punished, they managed to excite a good deal of sympathy with their alleged patriotism in the face of a supine government.

In January 1936 Mr. Hirota² announced the Japanese plan for China. She must recognize Manchukuo; agree to collaborate against Communism; and must stop all anti-Japanese activities on the part of her people. These demands were obviously intended to facilitate the acquisition by Japan of as much of the north of China as possible, and Chinese opinion was further exasperated by the damage caused by Japanese and Korean smugglers. The situation was rendered peculiarly difficult because of the Government of Eastern Hopei—which had been set up in November 1935 by the administrator appointed to control the eastern section of the demilitarized area under the Tangku truce of 1933, who had Japanese affinities. This administration collected a small duty on imports for itself, and then passed them on without exacting the normal Chinese duties. Moreover, the Political Council for Hopei and Chahar, appointed towards the end of 1935 by Nanking in order to forestall Japanese projects of establishing an autonomous régime in the five northern provinces, in the spring of 1936 accepted Japanese economic and diplomatic advisers, encouraged to do so by the increase in the Japanese garrison in North China.

On the other hand China was gradually consolidating

¹ *Ibid.*, 1936, pp. 492ff; 1937, i. 145, 161f, 167ff; cf. T. A. Bisson, *Japan in China* (1938); *American Policy in the Far East, 1931-1940*.

² *Survey*, 1937, i. 154, 162, 169; C. K. Young, *The Sino-Japanese Conflict* (1937); K. K. Kawakami, *Japan in China* (1938); Madam Chiang Kai-shek, *China in Peace and War* (1940).

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the forces of resistance to further losses. After a curious episode in which Chiang Kai-shek was for a brief period in the hands of the Communist forces he emerged with increased prestige, and the five northern provinces seemed ready to support him ; the Governor of Suiyuan beat off a Manchu-Mongol force which had Japanese aid. Japan was thus in a position of increasing difficulty ; if she were to secure her ends she must take definitely hostile action, and encouragement to this course might be derived from the Anti-Comintern Pact of November 26, 1936, with Germany. The military influences were eager to force a decision, and a pretext was found on July 7, 1937, to seize Lukouchiao, the place where the railway lines linking Peiping with Hankow and Nanking join. Strong measures were then taken to extend the success, and Tientsin and Peiping were swiftly occupied. The war, never declared, was soon extended on flimsy pretexts to Shanghai, and Nanking soon fell into the hands of the Japanese.

China appealed forthwith to the League, and in September 1937 the issue was referred to a Far Eastern Advisory Committee. China had invoked Articles 10, 11, and 17 of the Covenant, and the Committee reported that the action of Japan could not be justified on the incidents alleged, and that it was a violation of the Nine-Power Treaty of 1922, and of the Kellogg Pact. It recommended, therefore, consultation between the signatories of the treaty of 1922, thus bringing the United States into the picture. The Assembly on 6th October accepted the report, and recorded that " members of the League should refrain from taking any action which might have the effect of weakening China's power of resistance, and should also

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consider how far they can individually extend aid to China." ¹ It is obvious that this pronouncement fell far short of what China had a right to expect, but, after the attitude of the League in the affair of Manchukuo, it was hopeless to think that it would take any real steps.

Nor did the meeting of the signatories of the Nine-Power Treaty yield any real result. Japan declined to attend, thus clearly committing a fresh violation of the treaty, but the U.S.S.R., which was not a signatory, was ready to be present, and the Conference was held at Brussels in November.² Nothing resulted from its meeting, but the fact that it did nothing was a striking indication of the fundamental fact that no treaty stipulations would be held to be binding by any Power unless its own individual interests were concerned.

The retort of Japan and her partner in the Anti-Comintern Pact was effective. The sitting of the Conference furnished the occasion for a demonstration in the shape of the adhesion of Italy to the Pact, and on 9th November the true nature of that instrument was avowed by Herr Hitler as constituting a great world political triangle consisting, not of three powerless images, but of three states prepared and determined to protect decisively their rights and vital interests.³ Germany, Italy, and Japan thus stood out as living powers, ready to dare and suffer in the pursuit of vital purposes, in contrast to the effete states which, gorged with plunder of the past, were no longer even able to maintain what they had inherited, and were vainly seeking by admonitions and resolutions to stay the relentless

¹ *Survey*, 1937, i. 183f, 281ff.

² *Ibid.*, 276ff, 287ff.

³ *Ibid.*, 44, 302ff.

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march of bold and determined men. To tell the truth, the attitude of the Conference was singularly unimpressive, and must have left the conviction on Japan that she need fear nothing from them.

Japan has, therefore, proceeded on her way to master China unrestrained by any fear of opposition from any of the Powers signatories of the treaty of 1922. Her great efforts have been crowned with a certain degree of success, for the Chinese forces have proved on the whole unable to meet those of Japan successfully in large-scale operations, and Hankow could not be saved in October 1938 from the invaders, while Canton also yielded under circumstances that remain obscure, since it ought to have made a far more effective stand against the Japanese forces. Unfortunately for Japan, it has proved possible for China to secure supplies of munitions from Russia, and from other sources by the route via French Indo-China, and that via Burma. Nor have threats to France and Britain diminished the insistence of these Powers on their right to supply munitions to China. The most curious feature of all is probably the fact that neither side had thought fit formally to declare war,¹ with the result that the neutrality legislation² of the United States has no application. The absurdity of the position which deems an undeclared war not a war can hardly be exaggerated.

It is remarkable to what lengths it has been possible

¹ Only on January 18, 1938, were diplomatic relations severed, Japan having decided not to deal with the existing régime. Cf. *A.J.I.L.*, 1938, pp. 314ff; 1939, pp. 539ff. In March 1940 a modified attitude appeared. Cf. E. Wiskemann, *Undeclared War* (1939).

² For the 1939 Act see *A.J.I.L.*, 1940, Suppl. 44ff. For comments, 1939, pp. 119, 333, 541, 549, 726, 728. For the defects of the Acts of 1935-37 see E. Staley, *War Losses to a Neutral* (1937).

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for Japan to go without exciting any action. The deliberate sinking of the United States gunboat *Panay*, on December 12, 1937, was treated by the United States with a degree of equanimity which must have reminded the world of the historic view of President Wilson that his country was too proud to fight. Japan was ready to pay compensation, and her prompt action in this regard served to assuage the resentment which a good many Americans felt at the loss of American lives, for the sailors were machine-gunned while struggling in the water after the aerial bombardment of the ship. Later instances of neglect of American rights multiplied, but were treated by Japan with cool disregard in the main. The steady encroachment of Japan on American economic interests was taken more seriously. The President realized that, while he must not threaten action in respect of the taking of American lives, since no substantial section of opinion would back him on this score, the damage done to American trade would assure him of support from the very important money interests if he stood firm in this regard. He was then able to create a distinct sensation by giving six months notice of the expiration of the trade agreement with Japan, which had worked decidedly in the interests of Japanese trade; and what was even more useful, he made it quite clear that he would not conclude another treaty unless and until Japan set about giving serious attention to the demands of the United States for the full recognition of her commercial rights; the half promise to reopen the Yangtse to foreign trade indicated that Japan was anxious to avoid a complete breach. The reason is simple. It is in the hands of the President to strike hard at the trade of

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any foreign country which has not the protection of a treaty.

The United States, of course, has also the interest of her colonial territories to consider, but her enormous resources and her ability easily to outbuild Japan in regard to a fleet render it possible for her to regard herself as immune from danger. It is significant of popular feeling on this head that little is said of the peril of Japanese hostility, and Congress has displayed no anxiety to accept grandiose plans for naval construction suggested by the Navy Departments. For Britain the matter is really more serious, and the repeated efforts of Japan to coerce her into adding her efforts to subjugate China show how little respect or liking she enjoys in Japan, whose aim it is to establish her hegemony in the Far East to the exclusion of the former British power. The treatment of the British settlement at Tientsin has been marked by continuous hostility, and by effective attempts by personal maltreatment of British subjects to destroy British prestige in the east. These efforts have been carried on in the confidence that, though Mr. Chamberlain's blood had boiled at the wrongs of his countrymen, considerations of a vital character affecting the danger from Germany in Europe have prevented any action in vindication of the British name and prestige. Indeed, so difficult has been the position of Britain that she did not deem it prudent to follow the example of the United States in denouncing the trade convention, lest Japanese annoyance might result in the infliction of such further outrages on British subjects that acquiescence could not continue. The whole history of the episode shows the grave disadvantages of the position at Shanghai and Tientsin, where the British residents are

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exposed to constant difficulties, and the British Government is precluded, by the necessity of considering their interests, from exerting her power of pressure by sea force. It is significant that in order to placate Japan, Britain has had, despite the fact that no war has been declared, to allow stopping of her ships by Japan on the high seas. Yet the exercise by Britain during the present war of the indubitable right to remove Germans from a Japanese steamer provoked the most unmeasured protests, and had to be met by the surrender by Britain of nine out of twenty-one men taken as prisoners.¹

The conclusion of the treaty between Germany and the U.S.S.R. on August 23, 1939, has had some slight effect in opening the eyes of Japan to the fact that her German ally is not to be trusted, should at any time it become advantageous to him to betray her. Hence her desire to secure an accord with some Chinese Government which would accord her a sure control over China, without so limiting Chinese autonomy as to prevent acceptance. But it is to be doubted if all her negotiations can effect anything against the new national spirit of resistance in China, unless indeed M. Stalin should be induced to stab China in the back. Neither the United States nor Britain has recognized the puppet government of Mr. Wang Ching-wei at Nanking (March 30, 1940).

It must be noted that if Britain and the United States had been able to concert economic action they could have done much to compel Japan to give just terms to China. President Roosevelt, on October 5, 1937,² gave his country-

¹ *Cmd.* 6166 (1940).

² *Survey Int. Aff.*, 1937, i. 274.

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men one of his periodic warnings of the folly of the belief in isolation, and advocated concerted action by peace-loving nations to oppose the violations of treaties and ignoring of humane instincts, which were creating the international anarchy and instability from which neither isolation nor neutrality offered an escape. But, though a most cordial response was given on 1st November by Mr. Eden, speaking of course with full appreciation of the importance of the issue to Australasia, no trace of result could be seen in the colourless and infructuous proceedings of the Brussels Conference. The President, it is clear, shares the pathetic delusion of his countrymen that noble sentiments have power to control events.

One feature in the contest was depressing, the subjection of British subjects to much hardship and ill-treatment by Japanese authorities. Colonel Spear, the British Military Attaché in China, was arrested on 30th May in Inner Mongolia and held prisoner for months. In June, in efforts to compel Britain to hand over certain Chinese who were accused of complicity in the murder of an officer, the British and the French concessions at Tientsin were subjected to a blockade of considerable rigour, and the stripping of several British subjects as a calculated insult elicited indignation even from the Prime Minister.¹ On 13th July Japan asked for British abandonment of its policy of benevolence to China, and on the 14th Mr. Chamberlain admitted that, while in military occupation of Chinese territory, Japan had certain rights to safeguard her forces. Ultimately the four suspects were handed over, after the

¹ Mr. Chamberlain, House of Commons, June 28, 1939 ; Lord Halifax, House of Lords, June 20, 1939.

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failure of efforts by sympathisers, locally and in London,¹ to secure their protection by Habeas Corpus proceedings. On the other hand Britain and the United States on 2nd August urged Japan to control anti-foreign activities in China, and on the 4th Mr. Chamberlain indicated that, if Japan did not show more respect for British rights, Britain might have to send a fleet of superior strength; while Britain declined to discuss with Japan the question of currency, and continued more or less effectively to aid Chinese solvency. At the end of October Japan showed signs of moderating the anti-British movement in China, and the possibility of reopening the Yangtse river to trade began to be held out as an inducement to Britain and the United States to adopt an attitude of greater readiness to accept Japanese plans for the future of China.

A renewed effort to galvanize the League into life was made by China in May 1939, when she pressed for real action to counter the ever increasing toll of civilians murdered by bombing; could not all League members be asked to stop sending aeroplanes and petroleum to Japan? Cold comfort came from Britain or France. Britain took pride in having maintained open communication with China and having arranged a further route, while it had done something to aid in financial matters. The U.S.S.R. thought, very reasonably, that so negative an attitude as that decided on was improper. On 14th December China again raised the issue, but without asking for action, in view of the general accord that Finland alone should be dealt with at the meeting. Mr. W. Koo pointed out with much

¹ *Ning Yi-Ching and Others, In re*, 56 T.L.R. 3; Mr. Butler, House of Commons, September 7, 1939.

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force that, as the United States had terminated the commercial treaty with Japan, it would be appropriate if she forbade the further export to Japan of the materials which enabled that Power to wage war. On April 4, 1940, the Chinese Ambassador in London pointed out that 90 per cent. of Japan's scrap metal and 65 per cent. of her aviation oil and petroleum came from the United States, and urged Washington to end the traffic.

6. *The Abrogation of Sanctions and the Revival of Neutrality in Derogation from the Covenant by Members of the League*

The failure of sanctions against Italy, the refusal even to attempt them against Japan, and the extinction of Austria without the slightest regard to the League Covenant brought plainly before the League of Nations the failure of all that was vital as regards security in the Covenant. There was, therefore, a retreat *en masse* from sanctions at the Assembly of 1938. The spectre of the war of Japan against China was raised as the outcome of an appeal from China, which asked that the provisions of Article 17 should be applied to the contest. Mr. Wellington Koo reminded the Assembly of the million Chinese dead as the result of Japanese aggression, of the bombing from the air with the deaths of ten thousand civilians, of the futile resolutions, and urged that all members should at least stop the sale of armaments, aeroplanes, and petrol to help the aggressor. The Council admitted that it should act under Article 17, and invited Japan to be represented at the discussion, which she refused to accept. The Council then proceeded to admit

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that the sanctions of Article 16 might properly be applied by any Power which cared so to act, but pointed out that there was no possibility of co-ordinated action, and the Chinese representative reserved the right to renew his suggestions.

The idea of having to act rendered the Assembly,¹ which had also the unpleasing experience of hearing some plain truths from Spain's envoy, determined to show that sanctions had ceased to be more than a bogey. The United Kingdom played a distinguished part in this theoretical disclaimer of the binding force of Article 16, just as it had led the way in the practical repudiation of its obligations. Having declared that in principle the text, the structure, and the juridical effects of the Covenant remained unaltered, it announced that in view of the special circumstances existing it would interpret its obligations in each emergent case on the understanding that "while the right of any member of the League to take any measures of the kind contemplated by Article 16 remained intact, no unconditional obligation exists to take such measures." There remained a general obligation to consider in consultation with other members whether it was possible to apply Article 16 in any special case, each member having the sole right to decide if it would act, in deciding which it would no doubt be influenced by the attitude of other members. A resort to war, however, remained a matter affecting the whole League to which no member could adopt an attitude of indifference. This declaration, despite its patent illegality, was virtually adopted as representing their views by the representatives of Denmark, Finland,

¹ *L. of N. Monthly Summary*, 1938, 221ff.

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Norway, Sweden, the Netherlands, Belgium, and Luxemburg, Poland, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, and Egypt. For France, M. Paul-Boncour was less expansive; regard must no doubt be had for a state's geographical position, economic circumstances, and the attitude of other states, but in general, loyal and effective co-operation was the duty of states under Article 16. Not merely China and Spain disagreed, but to its credit the U.S.S.R. protested, and Mexico and New Zealand also objected. But Canada, Eire, South Africa, and Iraq stood out for optional action; Greece insisted on her freedom, and the right especially to consider the attitude of neighbouring and friendly states. Iran and Afghanistan reserved freedom, as some governments denied compulsion. Turkey emphasized her determination to observe Article 16 on a basis of reciprocity. Bulgaria held that, while freedom existed, regional application might be useful—a view shared by Uruguay. Colombia pointed out that expressions of opinion could not affect the rights and obligations under Article 10. Bolivia and Ecuador deemed the moment unsuitable for consideration of the reform of the Covenant.

Thus, contemporaneously with preparation for its abandonment of Czechoslovakia at Munich, Britain secured the formal declarations of a maximum number of Powers in favour of regarding sanctions as optional. The declarations, of course, could not affect the law, and the final view adopted on 30th September admitted that no proposal to amend the Covenant had been made, and that its principles remained unaltered. But it added that there was general agreement that the military measures contemplated in Article 16 were not compulsory, while many

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members had equally repudiated obligation as to economic and financial sanctions.

The British Government was soon to appreciate the full effect of its initiative in destroying the League's value. It had been the vital value of the League Covenant to abolish neutrality, but the new policy obviously destroyed that objective, and drove Britain to consider once more the controversies of the Great War on the issues of belligerent rights. They had not been dealt with at the making of peace, as they would have been if the League Covenant had not been adopted as solving the problem. Hence the Government hastened in renewing for five years its acceptance of the General Act for the Pacific Settlement of International Disputes of 1928, to which it acceded in 1931, to except from those disputes which might be dealt with by conciliation or other proceedings, disputes arising out of any future war.¹ Its motives were fully expounded on September 7, 1939, when a like exclusion was made in respect of the adherence of Britain to the Optional Clause of the Statute of the Permanent Court of International Justice.² The League Covenant and the Pact of Paris had effected a fundamental change as regards belligerent and neutral rights. In the only circumstances in which it was contemplated that Britain would be involved in war, the other members of the League would, instead of being free to trade with the enemy, be required by Article 16 to sever all relations with him, in which case no dispute with Britain could arise. If they failed to act thus, they could not legally denounce British action. But the obligation

¹ *Cmd.* 5947 (February 13, 1939).

² *Cmd.* 6108. In both cases the Dominions and India followed suit.

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to act against an aggressor had been disowned by many Powers, and even the general understanding left by the Assembly resolution of September 1938, that members should consult in the case of aggression, had never been made operative; no action had ever been taken under Articles 16 or 17, or even Article 11; and, even before hostilities, a number of members had announced their intention of observing strict neutrality. Without complaining of this—which it must be admitted would have been sheer effrontery—the British Government would not regard their acceptance of the Optional Clause as covering disputes arising out of events occurring during the present hostilities.

Natural as is the British attitude, it must be added that in strict law it lies with the Permanent Court to rule if its assertion is valid, and if its jurisdiction can thus be excluded, should, for example, Norway demand the reference to that Court of the *Altmark* dispute. But it may be admitted that the authority of the Permanent Court¹ can hardly retain its validity in the débâcle of the League.

The uselessness of the Covenant received fresh attestation in another point at the Assembly of 1938. It was widely felt that Article 11 should have been available before Italy made open war on Ethiopia, but action thereunder was paralysed by the unanimity rule which precluded any decision objected to by a member of the Council, even if that member were an interested party. It was therefore proposed by Britain that a resolution should be passed that

¹ No new election of judges was made in December 1939, those in office remaining; *A.J.I.L.*, 1940, pp. 18ff.

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the Council might, in any case of a reference under Article II, with the consent of all its members other than the parties to the dispute, express an opinion on or adopt a report concerning the facts of the dispute, and make recommendations as to the measures to be taken by League members, other than the parties to the dispute, to safeguard peace. But Hungary and Poland objected to the new rule on the usual wretched ground that the sovereign right of objecting to anything without reason would be impaired. It was more legitimate to argue that the rule should have been brought forward as an amendment to the Covenant ; there were strong reasons to dislike a procedure under which the terms of an Article could be, as had been those of Article 16, reduced to worthlessness by informal action. The resolution in the Assembly received twenty-nine votes, but the opposition of these two states prevented its adoption, and it must be added eleven delegations adopted the very unsatisfactory position of refusing to vote.¹

On the other hand the Council, on May 14, 1938,² recognized the right of Switzerland to retain neutrality, and her exemption, accordingly, from any possibility of the application of Article 16 of the Covenant. The position of Switzerland is thus completely anomalous, in even a higher degree than when she was first admitted to the League, and the obvious objections to a neutral state being the headquarters of a League aiming at collective security were emphasized in December 1939,³ when Switzerland

¹ *L. of N. Monthly Summary, 1938, p. 224.*

² *Ibid.*, 108 ff. Cf. B. d'Astorg, *La Neutralité et son Réveil* (1938).

³ *Ibid.*, *Special Supplement*, December 1939, p. 63.

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was embarrassed at the resolution which offered to Finland the aid of the technical machinery of the League in the organization of aid against aggression.¹

¹ The evacuation in case of war by the League of Swiss territory is not yet demanded, somewhat illogically; 346 H.C. Deb. 5 s., 966. In addition to Austria and Czechoslovakia, Albania, Chile, Hungary, Peru, Salvador, Venezuela, and Italy were under notice to leave the League in April 1939, Japan and Germany had already gone, as also Honduras, Nicaragua, and Paraguay.

CHAPTER V

GERMAN RENASCENCE AND SUCCESS IN AGGRESSION, 1935-1939

I. *German Rearmament and the Remilitarization of the Rhineland*

THE failure of the Disarmament Conference meant that Germany would rearm, and it was certain that neither Britain nor France would resist by force this action. These Powers, therefore, held conversations in London in February 1935, which resulted in recognition of the propriety of abrogating the treaty provisions for disarmament, if Germany would contribute to security by considering adherence to the system of mutual guarantees suggested by M. Barthou, and by accepting an air pact under which each of the Western Powers would give its immediate assistance to any victim of unprovoked aerial aggression. Germany was willing to consider an air pact, which implied her right to have an air arm, but was quite unwilling to commit herself to multilateral treaties in eastern Europe. Still a visit to Berlin by Sir J. Simon was projected for 7th March, but Germany postponed it—as a result, in part, of the formal statement in a British White Paper on Defence¹ that Germany was rearming on a large scale

¹ *Cmd. 4827.*

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despite the treaty; in part, of the French Cabinet's decision on 12th March to double the period of service of conscripts, and to lower the age in order to maintain the normal figure of 350,000 menaced by the fall in the birth-rate. On 10th March publication was made of the existence of an air force; on the 16th a law was passed restoring compulsory service and fixing the forces at twelve corps and thirty-six divisions, say 550,000 men.

A good deal of anxiety was caused by this cutting of the Gordian knot, and Britain, France, and Italy met at Stresa on 11th April, after a visit of British ministers to Berlin on 25th March had shown Herr Hitler to be unyielding. This meeting produced assertions of disapproval of unilateral repudiation of treaties, and reaffirmed the policy declared on February 17 and September 27, 1934, of maintaining the integrity and independence of Austria.¹ The Council of the League accepted the condemnation of treaty repudiation and asked a committee to suggest economic and financial sanctions to be applied to any state endangering European peace by the unilateral repudiation of its international obligations. On 2nd May France concluded with Russia a treaty of mutual assistance,² followed on 16th May by a like accord between Russia and Czechoslovakia, conditioned to operate only if France were involved in a case of aggression.

On 21st May³ Herr Hitler defended German action by insisting on the Allied failure to disarm, and insisted that any international engagement voluntarily assumed would

¹ *Survey Int. Aff.*, 1935, i. 132ff; *Cmd.* 4848, 4880.

² Keith, *Int. Aff.*, 1918-37, ii. 29ff.

³ Keith, *Int. Aff.*, 1918-37, ii. 33ff.

be faithfully observed, especially the Locarno Pact, even if the demilitarized zone represented a contribution of unheard-of hardness for a sovereign state. He declared that Germany neither intended nor wished to interfere in the internal affairs of Austria, to annex Austria, or to conclude an *Anschluss*. He was willing to keep German forces to a figure accepted by other Powers, to confine his air force to parity with the western nations, and to limit his navy to 35 per cent. of the British. Whether he was then sincere cannot be said ; if he were playing a game, his attitude is quite natural, and he must have known that he could select no better way of dividing Britain and France than by his naval offer. He had already defied the treaty of Versailles (Article 191) by commencing to build submarines, and he had a programme, including two 26,000 ton battleships, in readiness to be announced on 8th July, in anticipation of accord with Britain on 18th June.¹ Britain obtained the ratio of 35 : 100, but within that total Germany might build up to parity in submarines, whose object was so patent that British acquiescence can be explained only by the existence of the belief that anti-submarine measures would deprive that weapon of serious danger.

There is no excuse for British action in making this agreement. It contradicted the policy of February and of Stresa, and it was a flat violation of obligation to France and Italy, in that it annulled part of the treaty of peace deliberately behind the backs of their former allies and friends. Both protested, but British opinion was complacent, ignoring the fact that for a Power, which insisted on honourable maintenance of international obligations,

¹ *Ibid.*, ii. 51ff.

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deliberately to violate a clear duty was a moral no less than a tactical wrong.

The failure of British loyalty was repeated in the affair of Ethiopia elsewhere discussed,¹ and in this instance the guilt of France was even greater, and on both came soon Nemesis. The obvious lack of moral courage of both Powers revealed to Herr Hitler that the time had come for the removal of the vital obstacle to eastern conquests—the demilitarization of the Rhineland—which left France able to fling troops across the frontier if Germany moved against her eastern allies. The permanence of demilitarization was naturally dubious, and France and Britain were not unwilling to discuss it in conjunction with the projected air pact, to which, as it stood, Herr Hitler, on December 13, 1935,² had declared the military alliance of France and the U.S.S.R., in the pact of 2nd May, an insuperable obstacle. But Herr Hitler decided to confront the world with a brilliant coup, and on March 7, 1936, Britain, France, Italy, and Belgium were informed that German troops were already reoccupying the Rhineland, as a reply to the Franco-Soviet Pact, which the Chamber of Deputies had approved on 27th February.³ The action of the Führer created an immediate cause for armed action under Article 2 of the Locarno Pact affirming Articles 42 and 43 of the treaty of Versailles, and German military circles expected that France at least would realize her danger, and repel in arms the invaders. But Herr Hitler had taken the measure of his opponents, and British opinion—as represented by the *Times*, which for years blindly supported appeasement at

¹ Chap. IV., § 3, above. ² *Cmd.* 5143, pp. 61f.

³ Keith, *Int. Aff.*, 1918-37, ii. 115ff.

any cost in honour or national interests—styled the coup “A chance to rebuild.” Its approval was no doubt secured by the Führer’s ingenious offer of a non-aggression western pact for twenty-five years, the acceptance of the air pact, bilateral pacts with the eastern Powers, and a possible return to the League.

Mr. Eden pointed out on 9th March that one of the main foundations of the peace of western Europe had been cut away, but nothing serious followed. The Council of the League met in London on 14th March, and handed over the issue to the Locarno Powers, who, on 19th March,¹ made an appeal to Germany to refer the issue of the compatibility of the Franco-Soviet Pact with the Locarno Pact to the Permanent Court, and, pending further discussion, to limit the forces introduced and not to construct fortifications. Germany replied on 31st March² with elaborate proposals, but with no yielding on the essential points, and a British questionnaire on 7th May the Führer left unanswered, finishing instead the work of fortification as rapidly as he could. The weakness of France at this juncture was increased by the fall of the Ministry on 2nd May.

France thus lost the essential condition on which she had renounced her desire in 1919 for a protectorate over the Rhineland. Moreover, the Locarno Pact in its guarantee of the demilitarization was actually suggested by,³ not imposed, on Germany, and the Führer was pledged to respect a treaty voluntarily contracted. The excuse of the Franco-Soviet Pact was invalidated by the offer to allow the Permanent Court to decide. It is not worth while discussing the question, as the pact never did anything but

¹ *Ibid.*, ii. 120ff.

² *Ibid.*, ii. 136ff.

³ *Cmd.* 2435 (1925).

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harm to France and to Europe, but the general consensus of jurists favours the view that it did not contradict the Locarno Pact. But that is not to say that it was wise to conclude, with a Power which no good reason existed to trust implicitly, an arrangement which was soon criticized in Germany, and which in any case depended for its efficacy on the existence of complete solidarity between France and the U.S.S.R. But France had lost the moral right to gird at treaty breaking; her conduct towards Ethiopia had exposed the untrustworthy character of her statesmen, and that she was now to lose her hold over Germany, and to march forward into the present war, to be deserted by the Power whose alliance had cost her the demilitarization of the Rhineland, was no more than justice.

But Belgium had more right to complain. She had in no way offended, and now lost her chief security. On October 14, 1936, the King created a stir by preaching, as he has always since done, the doctrine of the duty of considering Belgian interests alone, and on April 24, 1937,¹ Britain and France, with as much good grace as they could, recorded their acceptance of the cesser of Belgian obligation to carry out her part under the Locarno Pact, while they remained bound to succour her in case of need, an obligation reaffirmed in the present war. Belgium gave some return, for in addition to acknowledging whatever duties she had under the League Covenant she undertook to improve her far from formidable defences, a step since taken to good purpose.

On 17th July² Britain and Germany succeeded in

¹ Keith, *Int. Aff.*, 1918-37, ii. 240ff.

² *Cmd.* 5637, modified June 30, 1938; *Cmd.* 5834.

reaching an accord on the qualitative limitation of naval armaments and exchange of information as to programmes. The matter had been largely debated at the London Naval Conference of 1935-36, which resulted only on 25th March in a Three-Power Pact between Britain, France, and the United States.¹ Japan refused to consider qualitative limitation without quantitative limits being also defined, and preferred complete freedom from the restrictions of the Washington Treaty of 1922, which was due to expire at the close of 1936 together with the London Treaty of 1930 supplementing it. Italy also did not desire to accept. But in 1937 Britain, by contemporaneous negotiations with Germany and the U.S.S.R.,² managed to secure their acceptance with certain reserves of the more important principles of the treaty of 1936, which inevitably is now suspended as a result of the war. Of more importance in theory was the acceptance on November 6, 1936,³ of a protocol by Britain, the Dominions, India, France, Japan, Italy, Germany, and the United States, which adopted the regulations of Part IV. of the London Treaty of 1930 restricting the use of submarines in warfare, which had not been hitherto ratified by France and Japan. The acceptance of these rules was thus specifically binding on Germany in the war of 1939, apart from Germany's acknowledgment of it at the outset of hostilities when Britain and France asserted in the most formal way their intention to conform strictly to the rules of war, both at sea and in the air.⁴ Both sets of rules were to be disregarded utterly by Germany.

¹ *Cmd.* 5136, modified June 30, 1938; *Cmd.* 5781; *Survey Int. Aff.*, 1936, pp. 49ff.

² *Cmd.* 5679, 5794. ³ *Cmd.* 5302 (1936); *Survey*, pp. 88n, 96f.

⁴ *French Yellow Book*, pp. 414f.

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2. *The Annexation of Austria*

In 1931, as we have seen,¹ France succeeded in destroying the quite natural desire of Austria to unite in a customs union with Germany. But the idea was one which had deep forces behind it. Austria was German by blood, and it proved easy enough for Germans to propagate Nazi ideals among people who realized that as a distinct country Austria could play no substantial part in Europe, a position strange and uncomfortable. This movement was greatly strengthened by the advent of Herr Hitler to power and by the work of German agents, and after their expulsion in June 1933, by broadcasting he aimed at destroying the government of Dr. Dollfuss. Britain, France, and Italy saw the danger, and on February 17, 1934,² affirmed their determination to maintain Austrian independence and territorial integrity, and Italy a month later favoured both Austria and Hungary by forming, under the Rome protocols, close economic and protective ties.³

The position of the Chancellor, unhappily, was difficult and led him into a false step, to which it seems he was in some degree instigated by Italy. He was determined to oppose the Nazis, but his most essential supporters were men who were more bitter against Socialists than Nazis; their military organization, the Heimwehr, was originally formed to combat Socialism, and though Major Fey, one of its leaders, was anti-Nazi, the other, Prince Starhemberg, was far from hostile to Nazi principles, but had feuds with the

¹ p. 216, above. ² *Survey, Int. Aff.*, 1934, pp. 416ff.

³ Keith, *Int. Aff.*, 1918-37, ii. 1ff.

German Nazi elements. The Chancellor should have consolidated his position, if at all possible, by coming to terms with the Socialists. Instead, he allowed them to be provoked into armed resistance, which was met by artillery fire and the taking of hundreds of prisoners. The Nazis were the real gainers by this indiscretion, and on 25th July a revolt took place. The Chancellor was murdered, and German complicity was suggested by the German Minister using his influence to have the conspirators, who failed to spread the revolt, allowed to leave under a safe conduct. This, however, was not carried through, as it was found that the Chancellor had died of neglected wounds,¹ and the ring-leaders were executed—they are now sacred martyrs—and the German Minister recalled in disgrace. The Duce moved troops to the frontier, and assured Prince Starhemberg that he would defend even more strenuously Austrian independence.

The complicity of official Germany in the attempted coup is probable, for a statement was issued on the day of the coup by the official *Deutsches Nachrichtenbüro* representing the rising as a revolt of the whole people against their gaolers, torturers, and oppressors, and acclaiming the triumph of pan-Germanism over the régime of Dr. Dollfuss. This was hastily withdrawn, but it is reasonable to assume that the effort would never have been made without assurance that the coup would be accepted by Germany, if it had succeeded. Efforts indeed were made by a few conspirators by seizing the broadcasting station to raise the country, but save in Styria and Karinthia there was no serious resistance.

¹ Borkenau, *Austria and Hitler*, pp. 283ff.

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But Herr Hitler was only baffled for the moment, and his pressure did not relax. Moreover, the Ethiopian affair dissociated Italy from Britain and France, while his remilitarization of the Rhineland, thereby rendered possible, palpably strengthened him and added to his appeal to the Austrian Nazis. The Duce was willing to foster good relations, if Austrian integrity were assured, and, after approval by him, Austria and Germany signed an agreement on July 11, 1936,¹ which reaffirmed a declaration of the Führer of May 20, 1935, recognizing the full sovereignty of Austria, debarred either from intervention in the internal political affairs of the other, with special mention of Austrian National Socialism, but demanded that Austrian policy should always be based on principles that Austria had acknowledged herself to be a German state. The accord was regarded as satisfactory by the Catholic Church, and by the supporters in Austria and Hungary alike of a Habsburg succession, and Italy seems to have believed that she had solved the problem of protecting Austria, pleasing Hungary, and securing German cordiality.

The Duce little knew the persistent character of his rival and friend. On February 12, 1938,² Dr. Schuschnigg, the Austrian Chancellor, was bidden to proceed to consult with the Führer in his home at Berchtesgaden, and returned to Austria with instructions to make Dr. Seyss-Inquart, a Sudeten German of Nazi sympathies, Minister of the Interior

¹ *Survey Int. Aff.*, 1936, pp. 446ff. See O. Dutch, *Thus died Austria* (1938).

² Seton-Watson, *Munich and the Dictators*, pp. 15ff. Gedyce, *Fallen Bastions*, pp. 190ff; for Mussolini's desertion, 209ff. For French defeatism, A. Werth, *France and Munich*, pp. 116ff.

with control of the police, to add pro-Germans to his cabinet, to set free political prisoners, and to permit Nazi activities in Austria. The Führer had no doubt made up his mind as to his end, but his success in securing the removal of Mr. Eden on 20th February and the fall of the French Government on 10th March played into his hands. The freedom of the Nazis to demonstrate against the Chancellor was readily accorded by the new Minister of the Interior, and Dr. Schuschnigg intimated on 9th March that next Sunday a plebiscite would decide whether the people desired an independent German Austria, Christian and united. It was widely believed that for this there might easily have been a majority of from sixty to eighty per cent. The Führer moved, demanded on 11th March the postponement of the plebiscite and the resignation of the Chancellor, who gave way to prevent sacrifice of life. German troops advanced and seized Austria next day,¹ 700 aeroplanes and 200,000 troops arrived during the week-end, and the frontiers were manned by officials with long lists, prepared in advance, of those who were not to be permitted to leave. Herr Hitler arrived in the evening to accomplish his alleged mission to bring back his home country to the great German Reich. Next day a Reich law reduced Austria to a mere province of Germany.

Austria was at once subjected to the control of the German police, prominent men like Major Fey were driven to suicide, Jews were vilely abused, over 7,000 people perished,² and a reign of terror spread which precluded any serious objection to the *coup d'état*. A plebiscite in

¹ D. Reed, *Insanity Fair*, pp. 396ff; Gedye, *op. cit.*, pp. 289ff.

² Gedye, *op. cit.*, pp. 341ff.

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the Reich gave on 10th April a 99.73 vote percentage for the new position ; it clearly lacked moral weight. The Roman Catholic Church had been advised by Cardinal Innitzer to welcome the change, an error of judgment which he and the Church were to regret.

There was obviously no time for effective action before the coup. The Duce seems to have had some foreboding of the danger, for on 10th February he had begun to see if he could come closer to Britain. At any rate he was determined not to fight, and nothing of encouragement to resist was forthcoming to Dr. Schuschnigg in the crisis ; indeed, the Duce proved inaccessible, and on 13th March the Führer sent him his rather comic message, "Mussolini, I will never forget you for this," which indicates that up to the last the Führer had feared that the Duce might stand fast by his declarations, before and after the death of Dr. Dollfuss, that he would defend Austrian independence. Britain and France had no chance to do anything, nor would they have acted in any case, and their protests¹ that the new régime in Austria lacked juridical foundation mattered nothing at all. Britain had too many commercial interests in Austria to risk their neglect, and in due course an accord² was reached placing relations with Germany regarding Austrian affairs on a fairly satisfactory basis ; an exchange of notes of May 6–September 10, 1938, regulating the application of German treaties to Austria. Germany finally agreed to accept responsibility for the Austrian debt held in Britain. The League of Nations did not attempt to intervene ; in

¹ Mr. Chamberlain, House of Commons, March 14, 1938. On his futility see Gedye, *op. cit.*, pp. 278ff.

² *Cmd.* 5788, 5888. Cf. Garner, *A.J.I.L.*, 1938, pp. 421ff, 766ff.

March the Secretariat was informed that the law of 13th March had incorporated Austria in Germany, and that Austria had thus ceased to be a member of the League.

The gains of Germany from this aggression were vital. She won contact with Italy, thus ensuring the fidelity of that Power, with Hungary, and with Yugoslavia; the Little Entente suffered an immediate blow, Bohemia and Moravia were encircled, and the whole of the communications of south-eastern Europe, by rail, river, and road, fell under German control. She added about 6,750,000 to her population, supplies of timber, and great iron ore deposits with magnesite for aeroplane manufacture, and not least useful, her seizure of the National Bank added gold and foreign exchange valued at twenty million pounds. Moreover, Germany gained enormously by increasing her hold on the trade of the Balkan States. Rumania now was dependent on exchanges with Germany for a third of her foreign trade, the German share in Hungary's imports was increased from 20 to 43 per cent., and she took 44 in lieu of 12 per cent. of her exports. Some 44 per cent., as against 16, of her imports came to Yugoslavia from Germany, and Greece and Turkey were also affected.¹

It is, of course, easy to sympathize with the view that the union was natural, and that the Führer in carrying it out was merely hastening an inevitable and desirable result. But that reasoning is not conclusive. Austria had a character of her own, a Catholic south German culture, and the Nazi faith was not acceptable to a very large number of her people, so long had they had freedom to express their views. The fatal error of Dr. Dollfuss was that he alienated the

¹ Gathorne-Hardy, *Short Hist. Int. Aff.*, 1920-38, p. 453.

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Socialists when they still disliked the Nazi movement, so that many in anger passed over to support of the Nazis as enemies of their oppressor. Dr. Schuschnigg had perhaps a hopeless task to resist, but his visit to Berchtesgaden was patently a blunder, for the fury of Herr Hitler was sufficient to daunt even a braver man than he was reputed to be. His acceptance of the introduction of a Nazi Minister of the Interior assured the destruction of the state, but his effort at a plebiscite ensured him, on resignation, imprisonment under drastic conditions, with threats of a trial for his resistance to the Nazi movement. Nothing can reflect more discredit on the Führer than this miserable persecution of those who have resisted him; it reveals the spirit of the murderer of Captain Röhm.

The Austrian episode was marked also by its preliminary—the change of Herr Hitler's advisers. Finding the High Command reluctant to face a European war arising from the seizure of Austria, he rid himself of its leading figure, Field-Marshal Blomberg, and others, replacing them by those whose views followed his own, appointed a secret Cabinet Council to advise him in foreign affairs, and gave Herr von Ribbentrop the post of Foreign Minister, thus freeing himself from any serious possibility of criticism.¹

The number of murders immediately following the annexation cannot be put down merely to the wickedness of the Austrian Nazis. It was a revelation of a definitive purpose, followed in Czechoslovakia and on a huge scale in Poland—terrorism as a means of securing future con-

¹ See Chap. II., § 14, for the exaggerated importance attached to the Blomberg marriage. For Hitler's relations with von Fritsch, see Gedyé, *op. cit.*, pp 220, 316, 318.

quests. Those who opposed Herr Hitler were taught in clear terms that, if their opposition failed, no mercy would be meted out. The hint was not lost on the anti-Nazi elements among the Sudeten German elements who had no desire to become Nazis, but who could not forget the fate of non-Nazis of note in Vienna.

3. *Czechoslovakia: Munich*

We know now that from 1933 the Führer had resolved upon the bringing back to the Reich of the ten million Germans beyond it, *i.e.* in Austria and Bohemia, and had realized that only by their own strength could this be done. Czechoslovakia,¹ as constructed after the war, was essentially made up of a Czech majority (7,447,000 in 1930), a powerful Slovak element (2,309,000), a large German population (3,231,600), and smaller groups of Magyars (691,900), Ruthenians (549,000), and Poles (81,700). The Czechs had since 1526 been united under one sovereign with Austria and Hungary, but their adherence to the Lutheran reformation led, in 1618, to the renunciation of the Austrian connection and the Thirty Years War; but Czech independence was crushed at the Battle of the White Mountain in 1620; the counter-reformation movement restored Catholicism and brought about a long period of depression of the Czech language, a Slav speech, and of Czech culture. Germanization seemed to conquer when, in 1784, it became the official speech; but the French

¹ E. Wiskemann, *Czechs and Germans* (1938); P. Paneth, *Czechs against Germans* (1939); G. E. R. Gedyé, *Fallen Bastions* (1939); A. Werth, *France and Munich* (1939).

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revolution set loose the spirit of Nationalism, the intellectual leaders of the upper classes appealed to the political consciousness of the middle and lower classes whom Germanization had not seriously touched. A great revival of the language and civilization took place, and the effort was made in 1848-49 to secure for Bohemia her due place as an equal with Hungary and Austria in a federation; the rejection by the Emperor of this solution decided the fate of the Empire. Bohemia, left dependent when Hungary gained autonomy, in 1867, was ultimately able through the courage of her soldiers and the great skill of her statesmen, including Dr. Masaryk and Dr. Beneš,¹ to secure recognition by the Allied Powers as a state. The Czech National Committee thus recognized took over control of Prague at the end of October 1918, and the Slovak National Council declared the independence of their country on 30th October. Their racial and linguistic connection with the Czechs was close, but politically they had been under Magyar control since the ninth century, and had in the nineteenth century deliberately developed their own speech. But in June 1918 their leaders had decided to make common cause with the Czechs, and common sense suggests that their choice was intelligent. Their country cannot stand alone, and the most that can be said against the Czechs is that during their period of union the latter did not show sufficient sympathy with their less politically and industrially mature kinsmen, though their language and culture received full respect.

¹ P. Crabitès, *Beneš* (1935); G. Lias, *Beneš of Czechoslovakia* (1939); E. Beneš, *My War Memoirs* (1928); T. G. Masaryk, *The Making of a State* (1923); P. Selver, *Masaryk* (1940).

The Carpathian Ruthenians, of course, are in a different position, for their affinities are definitely Ukrainian, but as they disliked, with cause, the Hungarians under whose political control they fell, they were ready to accept union with the Czechs and Slovaks, with whom they are connected in race, while the Magyars are of alien stock and non-Indo-European speech.

The inclusion of Germans in the state was the result of necessity, rather than choice. The boundaries fixed were not newly drawn to give to the new state German people and territories, though this delusion was widely held in Britain in 1938 and diligently propagated by the enemies of the state. The boundaries were those of the kingdom of Bohemia as stabilized for nine hundred years save in the Egerland, added in the fourteenth century, and on the Silesian frontier fixed, after the victories of Frederick of Prussia, with Austria. Czechoslovakia gained only trifling areas at Hlučín, near Troppau, the railway station of Gmund, and a stretch of river near Nikolsburg. The difficulties of her position were plain. The Germans had enjoyed domination for centuries, and they disliked the change of power, but they were far better treated in the state than any other minorities in other lands, including as a chief offender Italy, which set about to denationalize the unfortunate Germans placed forcibly under her power. In other respects the new state showed admirable qualities; it preserved democracy alone of the states of central and eastern Europe; it remained financially sound in the period of disaster which prevailed from 1920 to 1924, and its foreign policy was consistently friendly to the Western Powers. To them its importance was paramount. Prince

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Bismarck¹ had insisted that "Who holds Bohemia is master of Europe," and it formed an essential link with Russia, to which both France and Czechoslovakia became bound by new ties in 1935 under the treaties then arranged.

But the democracy of the state was as hateful to the Führer as the fact that it blocked his eastern plans, and in the minority issue he had a lever with which to destroy support for the state, while it was in a dangerous strategic position, owing to the unfriendly attitude of Poland, then favoured by Germany, and to the difficulty of obtaining Russian aid except, via Ruthenia, through Rumania, whose help was morally, but not legally, due.

The annexation of Austria clearly menaced Czechoslovakia, but anxiety was relieved by the assurance at once given by Marshal Göring to the Czechoslovak minister that Germany had no aggressive designs, and by Baron Neurath's declaration that Germany remained bound by the Locarno Pact between the two Powers. These assurances were cited in the Commons by the Premier on 14th March, and Lord Halifax insisted that "we naturally expect the German Government to abide by them." On 24th March the Premier refused to bind himself to Czechoslovakia as fully as France and Russia were bound, but also refused to wash his hands of central Europe, insisting that "if war broke out it would be unlikely to be confined to those who have assumed such [legal] obligations. . . . It would be well within the bounds of probability that other countries besides those which were involved in the original dispute would almost immediately become involved." But Herr

¹ Ripka, *Munich: Before and After*, pp. 293f.

Hitler was not impressed,¹ and the plan was at once made effective of demands of a constantly increasing character from the Sudeten German party. As early as 23rd April these included complete autonomy, abandonment of relations with Russia, and permission to follow a Nazi policy. On 20th and 21st May an attack from Germany was averted merely by the adoption by the French and British Governments of a firm attitude, and on 2nd June Dr. Goebbels openly threatened to repeat the Austrian coup. This was followed up energetically by denunciations of the Czechoslovak Government in the Press and every other way. The British Government failed gravely to realize the dangers of the situation, but the Czechoslovak Government, realizing the danger, set about drawing up a Nationalities Statute to give the Germans the maximum possible, and a mission of Lord Runciman² was determined upon to aid in conciliation. He did his best, but he soon found that the Germans merely put up their demands, and that separation was the minimum they would accept. Germany meanwhile mobilized a million men. Sudeten Germans were formed into a legion on the frontier. At this stage a dangerous influence made itself felt; M. Daladier had on 12th July repeated the French pledge to Czechoslovakia, but his Foreign Minister, M. Bonnet, seems to have warned the republic on 23rd July that this action

¹ It is clear that as early as 10th May the Premier let American journalists know that he desired Czechoslovakia to cede the Sudeten area to Germany; his personal responsibility for this destruction of the state is thus complete so far as Britain is concerned; G. E. R. Gedye, *op. cit.*, pp. 400ff; Seton-Watson, *Munich and the Dictators*, pp. 38f.

² *Cmd.* 5847 (1938); Gedye, pp. 430ff. For Czechoslovakia's surrenders, see Ripka, *op. cit.*, pp. 17ff.

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would depend on British support. On 7th September an article in the *Times*¹ heralded the destruction of Czechoslovakia by urging the detachment of the Sudeten area, and no attention was paid in Germany to the *démenti* from both the Foreign Office and Downing Street that any such policy was entertained by the British Government, which still stood for autonomy for the Germans, but within the republic. The lead of the *Times* was followed at Nürnberg on 12th September by Herr Hitler, who accused President Beneš of torturing the Germans, systematically reducing them to economic ruin, and seeking to exterminate them altogether. But he demanded only self-determination. But on 14th September his tool, the Sudeten Herr Henlein, demanded intervention by German armed force, and then fled to Germany. Lord Runciman at this stage effected a complete *volte-face*; he had insisted that a hard and fast separation of German and Czech was impossible, and that economic connections were so close that an absolute separation was not only undesirable, but inconceivable; history had proved that in times of peace the two peoples could live together on friendly terms. But, for reasons which are inexplicable, he now held that there should be the immediate and drastic action of the transfer of predominantly German districts to Germany without the formality of a plebiscite, and without the slightest protection for the Czechs to be transferred without their assent or the German elements who did not desire to exchange liberty for subservience to the Führer, while the Germans were to have local autonomy in the republic. It cannot be said that Lord Runciman had any such knowledge or

¹ Really in sympathy with and so a *ballon d'essai* for the Prime Minister.

intelligence in foreign affairs as to justify his thus condemning a country to ruin; his health suffered from the strain, as a prolonged absence from his ministry on a holiday, which caused caustic comments on his drawing pay he did not earn, proved, and he must bear some share in the causation of the war.

But the main responsibility, so far as Britain was concerned, rests with the Premier, who by a fundamental error¹ decided on 15th September to fly to Germany to confer at Berchtesgaden with Herr Hitler. The novelty of the step fascinated the British public, and they ignored its folly, which was greatly increased² because the Premier refused to take with him any member of the Foreign Office staff or the Foreign Secretary, but selected a gentleman whose one qualification for this type of work must have been that he had never had any connection with it. Mr. Chamberlain forgot that he was to confront alone a man of dynamic energy some twenty years younger than himself, in the superior position of one being asked for concessions, and fortified by full knowledge of all the aspects of the case. The result was inevitable; Herr Hitler overwhelmed the ageing Premier with an ultimatum, and in obedience to it he hastened to summon MM. Daladier and Bonnet to England to agree upon the ultimatum to be passed on to Prague. The plan adopted provided for the immediate transfer to Germany of all districts mainly inhabited by Germans, *i.e.* over 50 per cent., thus denying Germans of the minority any rights, without plebiscite;

¹ France had on 13th September decided not to fight; Werth, *op. cit.*, pp. 252ff.

² Keith, *British Cabinet System*, pp. 559ff.

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the arrangement of details by an international body, including a Czech representative ; and promising a guarantee of the new frontier against unprovoked aggression in lieu of the existing treaties involving reciprocal military obligations.

This ultimatum,¹ drawn up without consultation, demanded that the Czechoslovakian Government should violate the constitution by dismembering the state without Parliamentary sanction ; and the Government protested against the failure to consult, the disastrous terms for its economic life, and the certainty that it would very quickly come under the absolute influence of Germany, with the result of destroying the balance of power in central and southern Europe. They appealed to the Locarno Pact, whose validity had been reasserted by Germany in March, and made a supreme appeal for reconsideration. Then followed the most discreditable train of events. The British and French ministers to Prague received and carried out instructions shameful to Britain and France alike, demanding acceptance, on a plain warning that France would not fulfil her treaty obligations, while, of course, Britain would not act. Much heroism on the part of France will be necessary to wipe out the distrust of that country caused by her despicable action. It has often been suggested that there was severe pressure from Britain on France, and it may be that M. Daladier used that argument to carry with him his doubting colleagues, but there is no clear proof. What is certain is that the Czechoslovak protest of 20th September² was deliberately omitted from the British

¹ *Cmd.* 5847, pp. 8f.

² Seton-Watson, *Munich and the Dictators*, pp. 181ff ; Ripka, *op. cit.*, pp. 78ff.

White Paper, thus throwing grave doubt on the value of British publications, and that Mr. Chamberlain on 28th September reduced his forcible ultimatum to a statement that the Czechoslovak Government was urged to accept the terms. In Paris the disgraceful course¹ was adopted of spreading the deliberate lie that the President, the Hodža Cabinet, and even the General Staff, had invited Paris to put pressure on Prague so as to reconcile Czech opinion to the course desired by responsible opinion. This seems to have been motivated by the desire of MM. Daladier and Bonnet to excuse their deviation from the French Cabinet decision that pressure was not to be applied, which they had ignored.

The Czechoslovakian Cabinet had no alternative but to obey. It had been basely deserted by France, and while Russia might help, and Rumania might allow passage of Russian forces, it was uncertain, for Russian action was under the treaty of 1935 conditional on that of France. Moreover, it would be dangerous to allow the territory to become the battlefield between Nazism and Bolshevism. The Ministry yielded, despite the blow such action must be to democracy, telling its people that it had been "exposed to pressure for which there was no precedent in history, and which amounted to a 'Diktat' such as is imposed upon a vanquished people. We submitted in order to avoid greater losses, misery, and bloodshed. We are sacrificing ourselves to save peace, as Christ sacrificed Himself to save humanity." The Ministry, however, in submitting pointed out that it did so on the assumption that there would be no German invasion, and no transfer of territory until the

¹ Werth, *op. cit.*, pp. 267ff.

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new boundaries had been fixed, and that it followed from the Anglo-French pressure that these two Powers "would accept responsibility for our reduced frontiers, and would guarantee us their support in the event of our being feloniously attacked." The Ministry then resigned, for its submission had caused grave unrest, and General Sirovy, Inspector General of the army, replaced the Premier, but under pledge to accept the plan.

Poland and Hungary¹ now saw their opportunity to share the spoils, and their representatives brought their claims before the Führer, who saw how to complete the ruin of his hated rivals. When then Mr. Chamberlain flew to meet the Führer at Godesberg,² he found that the conditions were far more onerous than before. A large area of the republic was to be ceded to Germany on 1st October, all Czech forces and police being withdrawn by that date. The territory was to be handed over with all fortifications, commercial installations, railways, rolling stock, etc., and without the removal of foodstuffs, cattle, or raw materials. All Sudeten Germans were to be released from military or police forces, and a final delimitation was to take place, by plebiscite under an international commission, of further areas. Even Mr. Chamberlain resented³ the ultimatum, and returned to England, withdrawing his advice against mobilization, which was effected on the 23rd, M. Daladier, despite the objections of M. Bonnet, once more saying that France would fulfil her obligations if Czechoslovakia

¹ Ripka, *Munich: Before and After*, pp. 113ff.

² *Cmd.* 5847, pp. 10ff.

³ G. E. R. Gedye, *Fallen Bastions*, pp. 468f, suggests that the future surrender was planned at Godesberg. Werth, *op. cit.*, pp. 271f, thinks this too Machiavellian.

were attacked. M. Litvinov, at Geneva on the 21st as on the 23rd, asserted his country's readiness to keep faith, and the Polish Government was warned that if Poland attacked Czechoslovakia Russia would regard the Polish-Russian Non-Aggression Pact as terminated.

Czechoslovakia rejected the plan, when sent by Mr. Chamberlain, as absolutely and unconditionally unacceptable, and after a long Cabinet discussion their rejection was intimated to Germany. The French Cabinet plucked up courage, under the advice of General Gamelin that the Czech fortifications could not be included in the surrendered territory, and a partial mobilization was swiftly and successfully effected. Mr. Chamberlain then made the grave blunder of showing his reluctance to resist; a useless message was sent to the Führer, who gave an arrogant reply, and in a speech at the Sportpalast, which showed clear signs of his most serious defect—unrestrained and disgusting violence—made a vehement denunciation of President Beneš and promised him the fate of Herr von Schuschnigg. This resulted in a British *communiqué* to the Press: "If in spite of the efforts made by the British Prime Minister, a German attack is made upon Czechoslovakia, the immediate result must be that France will be bound to come to her assistance, and Great Britain and Russia will certainly stand by France." To the discredit of France, widespread efforts were made by circles hostile to Czechoslovakia to belittle the declaration.

Mr. Chamberlain on 27th September broadcast a speech which was uniformly uninspiring and maladroit, containing as it did a reference to "a quarrel in a far-away country between people of whom we know nothing," which was

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ludicrous in the Premier of the United Kingdom, who must be supposed to understand the vital importance of Czechoslovakia to the framework of European peace. Yet he also made the fundamental error of treating the fate of Czechoslovakia as of no interest to Britain: "If we have to fight it must be on larger issues than that." He made also, in good faith but quite erroneously, the allegation that the Führer had promised him that "after this Sudeten German question is settled, that is the end of Germany's territorial claims in Europe." The Führer's words were interpreted very differently and more correctly¹ in the official German Press as meaning that no further claim beyond those already put forward, including the Ukraine, would be adduced. But mobilization of the fleet was ordered, and the United States, Argentine, and Chile urged that the Führer should not proceed to a war as unnecessary as it was unjustifiable. Italy showed no eagerness to back Germany, General Franco announced that he would remain neutral, Bulgaria and Yugoslavia were sympathetic, Russia's warning restrained Poland, and Hungary became more moderate.

Note must here be taken of the deliberate failure of Britain to come into line with Russia.² On 17th March M. Litvinov had stated Russian readiness to join in collective action, within or without the League. But on 24th March Britain rejected the idea as inopportune, and France followed suit. M. Kalinin on 11th May, and the Soviet Ambassador at Washington on 25th August, reiterated Russian loyalty to her treaty obligations, but no notice was taken. On

¹ Seton-Watson, *op. cit.*, p. 83ff; Werth, *op. cit.*, pp. 333ff.

² Seton-Watson, *op. cit.*, pp. 91ff; Gedye, *op. cit.*, pp. 390, 411, 425, 495.

2nd September, however, M. Litvinov assured the French representative in Moscow that Russia would act if France did, and suggested staff talks between Paris, Moscow, and Prague to concert defence, while Britain, France, and Russia should make a joint *démarche* in favour of the Czechs, and that Article 11 of the Covenant should be invoked. M. Bonnet, on 11th September at Geneva received a like statement, but it is doubted if he let London know, for Lord Winterton on 10th October asserted that Russia only made very vague promises owing to her military weakness.¹ M. Maisky lodged a formal protest at this false allegation, and satisfaction was duly given. It is, however, clear that France and Britain were throughout unwilling to act with Russia, and the fact throws much light on the Russian action in August 1939; no Power could reasonably be expected to trust either.

Mr. Chamberlain in taking diplomacy into his own hands had cut out the necessity of satisfying the King, and had refused at a time of war crisis to allow Parliament to meet, an act contrary to all constitutional practice. He now met the Commons on 28th September, and gave a long account of his proceedings, which was marked by complete lack of sympathy for Czechoslovakia, ending up with an assurance that he had just learned that the Führer at the request of the Duce had agreed to receive him at Munich. This was the occasion for the most deplorable scene in the Commons. No opportunity was given for further discussion, not a word could be said for Czechoslovakia, and

¹ At the League Assembly on 21st September, and in conversation on the 23rd with Lord De La Warr, M. Litvinov repeated the views of 2nd September; Ripka, *op. cit.*, pp. 147ff.

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Herr Hitler must have been convinced that the Commons was so afraid of him that he could fix his own terms, which he proceeded to do. It stands to the credit of Sir A. Sinclair that, when Mr. Attlee and Mr. Greenwood were useless, he urged Mr. Chamberlain to see that the new Czech state in its new frontiers should have a chance of economic survival and complete freedom and independence.

The proceedings at Munich¹ took the inevitable form of the Dictators, in the absence of Czechoslovakia and Russia, settling the fate of the state, with the ready acquiescence of Mr. Chamberlain, who seems to have been incapable of any sympathy with democracy, and with the less joyful aid of M. Daladier, who knew that he had critics who might prove dangerous. There were no concessions of any value. The evacuation of the territory claimed by Germany was to commence on 1st October, and to be completed in four stages by 7th October, while an international commission including a representative of Czechoslovakia was to define a fifth zone to be evacuated by 10th October. The commission was also to settle what other territory was to be the subject of plebiscite, to take place by the end of November; it was to carry out the final delimitation of frontiers, and recommend minor departures from the ethnographical determination of the zones to be transferred without plebiscite. A right of option into and out of the transferred areas could be exercised in six months. These terms were enforced on Prague by Mr. Chamberlain and M. Daladier, the Czech delegates not being permitted to argue or allowed time to communicate with their government, whose

¹ *Cmd.* 5848.

protests were brushed aside.¹ Once more the *modus operandi* was a complete negation of democracy, and Mr. Chamberlain and M. Daladier dictated as destructive a peace to Czechoslovakia as was ever dictated by a conqueror. No doubt, in view of the French Treaty, the position of M. Daladier was the more disgraceful, but there is enough dishonour to go all round.

These brutal terms were to be mitigated by the readiness of Britain and France to enter into an international guarantee of the new frontiers of Czechoslovakia against unprovoked aggression, while Germany and Italy professed readiness to join in the guarantee when the question of the Polish and Hungarian minorities had been satisfactorily disposed of.

Mr. Chamberlain, who had convinced himself that he had accomplished great things for Europe, on the 30th induced the Führer to sign a document, which was exhibited in triumph to the rejoicing mob which greeted him at Heston on his landing, bringing, as Lord Beaconsfield² from Berlin in 1878, peace with honour for our time, and which was acclaimed as a peace pact, or in more diplomatic language at least "an Anglo-German Pact renouncing war in the settlement of their differences." All that it really was, as Mr. Chamberlain later admitted,³ was a statement that the two gentlemen who signed it were agreed to regard "the agreement signed last night and the Anglo-German Naval Agreement as symbolic of the desire of our two

¹ Ripka, *op. cit.*, pp. 224ff; Seton-Watson, *op. cit.*, pp. 102ff.

² Beaconsfield's achievement was to extend liberty in Europe, Mr. Chamberlain's to destroy it.

³ October 6, 1938; but on 9th November, at the Guildhall he asserted its great importance; *The Struggle for Peace*, pp. 323, 363f.

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peoples never to go to war with one another again." It was added that " We are resolved that the method of consultation shall be the method adopted to deal with any other questions that may concern our two countries, and we are determined to continue our efforts to remove possible sources of differences and thus to contribute to assure the peace of Europe." The Führer had, it is said, assured Mr. Chamberlain that he sincerely intended to disinterest himself in the case of Czechoslovakia, when the minorities questions had been solved, and to guarantee the Czech state as finally formed, and, while he did not drop the colonial claim, he would not press it by war.

The reception given to the conquering hero,¹ who had saved Britain from war at the expense of Czechoslovakia, just as he had placated Signor Mussolini at the expense of Ethiopia, was brilliant. The *Times*, which on September 26, 1939, was to circulate far and wide, *Hitler, Step by Step, 1933-39: The Calendar of Aggression*, proclaimed that " No conqueror returning from a victory on the battlefield has come home adorned with nobler laurels than Mr. Chamberlain from Munich yesterday." It may have been that it felt that the victory was really its own, for it had on 7th September urged the dismemberment of Czechoslovakia, and there is no reason to doubt that its opinion carried great weight. One thing must be noted. When it, in 1938, placed implicit faith in the mere assurances of the Führer it had before it all the record of his earlier broken promises, and, if it thought it irrelevant then to take note of them, is it

¹ So also M. Daladier, but a subscription to present Mr. Chamberlain with a villa only reached £1,500; Werth, *op. cit.*, pp. 318ff. See also Q. Wright, *A.J.I.L.*, 1939, pp. 12ff.

quite fair to rake them out in 1939? One might venture to ask—Is it cricket?

Mr. Chamberlain had created a constitutional innovation in concluding the Munich Treaty without obtaining the royal sanction or Cabinet approval, or submitting it for the acceptance of Parliament. Moreover, he had negotiated it without the presence of the Foreign Secretary, and he presented it for acceptance to his colleagues in conditions in which rejection was impossible; yet such is the eagerness of men for office that Mr. Duff Cooper alone determined to mark his disapproval of the mode of procedure and the terms arranged by resignation. His exposure of the unsatisfactory character of the terms was supported by Mr. Churchill among others. The plain fact even then was that Mr. Chamberlain had conceded at Munich what he had denounced at Godesberg. The Premier glorified his magnificent service to the world by securing peace, asserted his belief in the security and happier future of Czechoslovakia under the proposed guarantee, and on 6th October, in replying to the debate, made the deliberate assertion¹ that "We had no treaty obligations and no legal obligations to Czechoslovakia." This deliberate denial of all binding force of the League Covenant, Articles 10, 16, and 20, is the classic repudiation by Britain of the binding nature of the most solemn treaty ever concluded by her only nineteen years earlier, to which the full approval of Parliament was accorded by the Treaty of Peace Act, 1919. It is idle to pile up lists of treaty violations by other Powers on the

¹ A like assertion was made on October 3, 1938, by the Archbishop of Canterbury and Lord Sankey; its falseness was firmly pointed out by Lord Cecil; 110 H.L. Deb. 5 s. 1322, 1345, 1327.

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assumption that Britain has not been guilty of equal violence of law and morality. When the British Ambassador at Berlin in a last hour attempt¹ to divert the Führer from his purpose of war, told him that "Our word was our word, and we had never and would never break it," the Führer must have smiled with legitimate contempt at so flagrant a falsehood. The reluctance of the minor Powers in the present war to accept any Allied assurances rest on the justification of the treatment of Ethiopia and Czechoslovakia. There is no more bitter comment on the action of the Premier that we fight to-day without effective allies to undo a wrong for which we and France bear a deep load of blame.

The causes of this contemporaneous deterioration in courage and morality of the British and French peoples are obscure. A grave sign of British collapse was evident in the growing tendency to Fascist views in the upper classes of society ; not all of the supporters of Herr Hitler have been so candid as Lord Redesdale² in admitting *ex post facto* the error which he shared with the Premier. Herr von Ribbentrop was misled dangerously by these exponents of hatred of liberty and democracy who had applauded the destruction of Ethiopia and the Spanish Republic. Another aspect was the isolationism preached by men equal only in political incompetence, such as Sir O. Mosley, Lord Rothermere, and Lord Beaverbrook, whose voices in Parliament commanded no audience, but who inculcated in the readers of their news organs the fatal absurdity of

¹ *Cmd.* 6106, p. 128.

² *The Times*, March 9, 1940. In Miss Unity Mitford's case Hitler-adulation reached its height.

the possibility of British security through isolation. Yet another ground was the decay of the Christian spirit in the Church of England; incredible at one time would have been the declaration of the practising Christian Lord Halifax at Geneva that recognition of the Italian conquest of Ethiopia did not impinge on principle, or his broadcast of 28th October that his conscience was clear as regards Munich.¹ The Archbishop of Canterbury did not intervene in the debate on the recognition of the Italian conquest of Ethiopia to convey condemnation, nor deplore British action at Munich.

Moreover, the critical spirit essential in democracy was lacking; the same submission to authority which had created Herr Hitler and Signor Mussolini was manifested towards Mr. Chamberlain. More sinister still was the propagation of and ready credence given to all kinds of unworthy rumours. The strength of the British forces in general was derided,² the French air force was declared to be wholly unprepared, Russian intervention impossible, Germany ready to ruin London immediately after war, and so on. Apparently the advice given by the Air Ministry has been consistently wrong; in 1939 the Ministry was assured that immediate air attacks with enormous casualties were inevitable, and a totally foolish evacuation of government staffs, great businesses, universities, schools, etc.,

¹ Seton-Watson, *Munich and the Dictators*, p. 143.

² Lord Chatfield's argument (October 3, 1938) that it was impossible to defeat Germany renders his inclusion in the War Cabinet unintelligible; his removal may thus prove of high advantage. Lord Trenchard's argument (110 H.L. Deb. 5 s. 1462f.) must have satisfied Herr Hitler of British impotence, and encouraged him to risk war. Fortunately their defeatism was not shared by Mr Churchill or Lord Cecil.

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carried out, all intelligent opinion being submerged in a blind panic. But the pacifism of a satisfied Power was doubtless an important consideration, and we must accept the view that, incredible as it seems, ministers really believed that the Munich surrender would inaugurate a reign of peace. It would be unkind to give even the names of those who hailed a ghastly blunder as an act of magnificent statesmanship.

The voice of common sense may be recorded ; on September 30, 1938, I wrote to the *Scotsman*, having on the 16th, 19th, and 26th pointed out the certainty of disaster from the Prime Minister's departure from precedent in seeking to meet Herr Hitler in discussion :

“ Munich will undoubtedly be ranked by historians as marking the definitive acquisition of hegemony in Europe by Herr Hitler. As I anticipated, Mr. Chamberlain and M. Daladier submitted to the dictation of German terms, and have acquired the rank of peacemakers by the convenient method of imposing further surrenders on Czechoslovakia. They have not even the excuse that their surrender of Czechoslovakia is part of a great European settlement. They know that Signor Mussolini and Herr Hitler demand that wholesale concessions shall be made to the demands of Hungary and Poland, and that, with German armies in possession of the areas ceded by Czechoslovakia, that state, and they also, will be compelled once more to accept the dictation of Germany and Italy, and that the way will be made ready for the undisputed control by these Powers of eastern Europe, preparatory to advance against Russia.

“ I have commented already on the constitutional

anomaly by which a government, which owes its position to pledges of fidelity to the League of Nations, has been able, while Parliament was not in session, to coerce Czechoslovakia by threats of refusing the aid due under the Covenant, and to present the tardily summoned Commons with a *fait accompli*, rendering dissent all but impossible. Nevertheless, both Mr. Attlee and Sir A. Sinclair must accept part responsibility for the final responsibility for the final surrender, by reason of their silence in the Commons. Once more is there exposed the danger of lack of constitutional checks, for, unhappily, the one safeguard in our constitution, the royal authority, is for the time being in abeyance owing to the recent accession of the sovereign, and the loss of its prestige owing to the circumstances of the last demise of the Crown. We have every reason to regret that in this essential crisis of European affairs the wise control of King George V. should have been lacking.

“The renewal of the offer of 19th September that Britain and France will join in a general guarantee of the new boundaries of the Czechoslovak State against unprovoked aggression is worthless, and is merely an effort to delude public opinion into thinking that security is being given to the mangled and quite indefensible Czechoslovak State. It cannot be too clearly understood that a general guarantee would impose no obligation on Britain unless the other Powers concerned agreed to act, and a single abstention would legally excuse action. Moreover, ‘unprovoked aggression’ is impossible to define, and any Power might refuse to act on the ground that aggression was really self-defence.

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Further, we have seen in the case of Spain the League of Nations acquiesce in the doctrine that it is not aggression to go to the aid of a rebellious faction in a state. Moreover, when Mr. Chamberlain has broken the solemn obligation of Article 10 of the League Covenant, why should any successor hesitate to break so utterly rash a pledge as that now proposed? The Czechoslovak State was created in its present form in order that it might be strong enough for self-defence; the new state will be wholly ineffective for this purpose, as the merest glance at a map will show. How could Britain or France really aid such a state when Germany decided to occupy its territory? Surely it is merely dishonourable to give a pledge which means nothing, and which we neither could nor would keep. We must realize that we are abandoning Czechoslovakia to her fate, and that we must be prepared to look on inactive while democracy therein is overthrown, and the state falls under full German control.

“Nothing, it need hardly be said, has come of the rumours that Mr. Chamberlain would achieve European appeasement and settle the affairs of Spain. Italy has sharply denied the rumour that his friend Signor Mussolini was prepared to recall his troops. It is inevitable that she should expect that she should be allowed to dominate Spain as a counterpart to German domination of Czechoslovakia. A peacemaker must be rewarded.”

How these obvious considerations escaped the attention of the Foreign Office cannot even be imagined. The plain

fact is that the Premier was blind because he determined to shut his eyes, and that Lord Halifax followed suit. The value of their guarantee was soon to be tested, and to be found utterly wanting. Yet hardly a member of the Cabinet but dwelt on its importance.

In the case of France a profound defeatism hampered action.¹ M. Bonnet as Foreign Minister lacked courage, and went so far as to throw doubt on the accuracy of the famous British notification that, if Czechoslovakia were attacked, France, Britain, and Russia would act in her defence. All the forces of reaction on the Right² and Centre mobilized their Press to prevent France keeping faith, deriding the possibility of British aid, exaggerating the defects of France's own forces,³ and suggesting that the mobilization showed the men hostile to war. M. Daladier, less resolutely pacifist, lacked the moral courage to face the situation effectively and ended in yielding to the worse course. The recovery since of French courage seems to be largely due to Signor Mussolini's obvious contempt, and that of Italy, which made France realize that her treachery to Czechoslovakia had reduced her to the ranks of the second-rate Powers. How far the revival will endure it is hard to say. One enormous advantage was sacrificed when Munich was accepted. The Germans had not yet completed their preparations, and attack via the Saar⁴ was still possible.

¹ A. Werth, *op. cit.* In the present crisis M. Bonnet was dropped from M. Reynaud's cabinet, March 21, 1940.

² M. Flandin congratulated Herr Hitler on his feat, and was praised for his own work (in destroying French resistance); Werth, p. 331. He still has weight.

³ On the air force see Werth, pp. 335ff.

⁴ Werth, p. 285; see, for the German difficulties, Ripka, *op. cit.*, pp. 212ff; Gedye, *op. cit.* pp. 385f.

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The true view of Munich was that of an old Frenchwoman : “ All right if it’s put off for a long time—but if it’s only for a few months it’s hardly worth it. *On l’aura dans des pires conditions.*” The attitude of the Right and of the now suppressed Communist Party must remain a grievous handicap to French greatness.

The utter eclipse of the League of Nations was displayed at Geneva, where the President opened the session of the Assembly with a mournful oration and closed it after the crisis with empty platitudes, talking of Europe shrinking back “ appalled by the ghastly prospect of what it saw in the abyss,” while the plain fact was that Mr. Chamberlain and M. Daladier surrendered Czechoslovakia so completely that even Herr Hitler could find no excuse for war.

4. *Czechoslovakia : from Munich to Prague*

There was one way only to justify the staggering sacrifices demanded of Czechoslovakia—the strict performance of the obligations undertaken by Britain and France. Mr. Chamberlain stressed the merits of the guarantee, and Sir T. Inskip definitely stated on 4th October that the government felt under “ a moral obligation to treat the guarantee as being now in force,” though neither then nor later was any explanation given how Britain and France, who dared not fight for Czechoslovakia when her thirty divisions and her fortifications were intact, could afford protection to her despoiled of all her defences.

It was also clear that Britain and France—through their representation on the International Commission on the

boundaries, together with Czechoslovakia—should have been able to secure a just delimitation; but from the first the Allied representatives¹ acted as though their one object was to please Germany. Ethnographic considerations were ignored whenever the German military authorities demanded. In the fifth zone the Commission awarded to Germany 254 Czech communes with 221,044 Czechs and 14,565 Germans in Northern Moravia and Silesia, 38 Czech communes with 54,287 Czechs and 16,559 Germans in Southern Moravia. To achieve these results the Commission accepted the preposterous German demand that the reckoning should rest on the last Austrian census of 1910 instead of the Czechoslovakian of 1930, though that census based enumeration not on nationality or mother tongue, but on the speech used in intercourse, which in many cases was German, though the nationality was Slav. In all 719,000 Czechs were handed over to Germany, leaving 250,000 Germans to 6,476,000 Czechs. The obvious plan of exchanges to remove Germans from the territory left to the Republic was deliberately rejected, in order that the Germans should remain to serve as a nucleus for the destruction of the state. It is idle to deny that this must have been Herr Hitler's aim from the first. The railway system was disrupted by running German zones of occupation across the main lines connecting Prague with the Moravian capital, and both with the industrial area round Moravska Ostrava and Slovakia. The holding of a plebiscite which might have saved some-

¹ Ripka, *op. cit.*, pp. 485ff; Seton-Watson, *Munich and the Dictators*, pp. 112ff. Lord Halifax on January 20, 1940, admitted that all points had been settled as Germany willed. Cf. M. Hindus, *We Shall Live Again* (1939), pp. 375ff.

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thing from the wreck was cancelled, and the right of option was rendered useless ; moreover, with utter careless and heartless indifference no provision had been made to allow those Sudeten Germans who had been loyal to Prague to save themselves from the tortures of the concentration camps into which they were hurried by the hatred of their victorious rivals. On the British and French members of the Commission rests a heavy weight of responsibility for the shameful treatment of a country whose interests they were bound by every principle of decency to protect.

The claims of Hungary ¹ were dealt with by Germany and Italy alone ; the hapless Czechoslovakian Government, deserted by Britain and France, tried to save something for Slovakia by yielding to the demand that matters should be left to the two Powers interested in despoiling it still further. The award of Vienna by Herr von Ribbentrop and Count Ciano awarded Hungary areas to which her claim was worthless.² Thus, by using the out-of-date Hungarian census of 1910, Košice, which was the essential centre of the economy and culture of east Slovakia, was made Magyar, though only 18 per cent. of the population of 70,200 in 1930 was Magyar. Even more monstrous was the decision secured by Count Ciano under which Užhorod—administrative capital of Carpathian Ruthenia, a semi-autonomous province—was given to Hungary, which, backed by Poland, was eager to acquire Ruthenia in order to establish a common frontier along the Carpathian watershed, and to

¹ For the Magyar complaints see Ö. Tarjan, *The Ways of Czechoslovakia and its Magyar Minority*.

² Seton-Watson, *Munich and the Dictators*, pp. 116ff ; Ripka, *op. cit.*, pp. 498ff.

separate Rumania from Czechoslovakia. Poland¹ was allowed to seize not merely Teschen, to which her ethnic right was sound, but to add a district double the size, with 134,311 Czechs and 17,351 Germans—the Poles forming only 30 per cent. Those who trace the workings of Providence in human affairs may count the bitter miseries of the Poles under Germany as part retribution for the vile crime of attacking Czechoslovakia, and stabbing her in the back. It is not surprising that the new Polish Government should have renounced the wicked folly of hatred of fellow Slavs which marked the old régime, whose one claim to distinction in history is the monumental incapacity of its military plans, whence Germany derived a victory of dazzling brilliance.

Even more discreditable was the demand from Prague by Berlin of the surrender of additional areas transferring a further 60,000 Czechs to German servitude,² while the concession of an arterial road from Vienna to Breslau, under the military and customs control of the Reich, cut the Republic in two, and foreshadowed its reduction to a mere dependency.

Against these encroachments on Czechoslovakia's rights neither France nor Britain protested. Incredible as it may seem, on 28th October Lord Halifax assured American listeners that his conscience was clear, just as Sir John Simon had asserted that every man and woman of honour endorsed the achievement at Munich. The Archbishop of Canterbury, while sympathizing with Dr. Beneš whose resignation had followed on Munich, fell back on the miserable argument of asking what would the Czechs have attained by

¹ Ripka, *op. cit.*, pp. 495ff.

² *Cmd.* 5908, Ripka, *op. cit.*, p. 494; Seton-Watson, *op. cit.* p. 119.

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fighting, to which Lord Lloyd gave the essential reply: "Have nations no souls? Every argument that the Primate used might have been argued in the case of Belgium. Did that stop Belgium fighting? Did it stop her preserving her soul? No, because she had a gallant leader, and because we did not fail her at the last moment or go back upon our guarantee."¹ There is, it has been wittily² remarked, honour among thieves, and conscience plays queer tricks; Herr Hitler assured the world that the blood bath of June 30, 1934, left him clear of heart in having accomplished a solemn duty, and it is easier to feel blameless when one has merely sacrificed a people's liberty, even if the loss brings death and misery to many individuals. The effect on American public opinion of the British position was untoward, and unquestionably tended to strengthen that bitter dislike of interference with European affairs which expressed itself so forcibly in 1940 through the President and his entourage, and in the vote taken by investigators of public opinion.

But, if Lord Halifax's conscience were clear,³ certainly it behoved him to secure that every step should be taken to make a stand for the rights of Czechoslovakia under the treaty. It is certain that nothing whatever was done by him in this regard, and for that a serious burden of responsibility lies, even if it is admitted that he never from the time when he stepped into Mr. Eden's shoes had primary control of foreign affairs, which the Prime Minister kept in his own tenacious hands. It must be added also

¹ 110 H.L. Deb. 5 s. 1412.

² Seton-Watson, *op. cit.*, p. 107 n 2.

³ For his non-Christian actions see *ibid.*, p. 40.

that Sir J. Simon and Sir S. Hoare, both marked out by the injuries which they had inflicted on League principles, seem to have formed an inner group to deal with foreign questions—and evil communications corrupt good manners.

The Prime Minister's complacency seems to have remained unruffled. He might have recalled the courage displayed by his own father who, no less eager than he for appeasement with Germany, had opposed an unyielding front to the violence of German abuse when he was forced to realize that no terms could be achieved with so untrustworthy a Power. He might have hesitated to destroy the great achievement of his brother, who had laboured with Herr Stresemann to bring about appeasement and had deemed the security of Czechoslovakia essential to his plan. At least he might have realized how frail was the edifice of appeasement which he had built at the sacrifice of Czechoslovakia, and have concentrated on the work of preserving the shattered Republic. His inaction was the more surprising, because on returning home he had started an energetic drive to improve defence, including the pressing on of precautions against air attack, which could only mean that he feared war, despite the formal assurance of the contrary in his peace pact. Nothing, of course, was more embarrassing than this attitude, and Herr Hitler naturally saw in it evidence that the pact was merely a device to blind him to the Premier's design of ultimate revenge for his defeat at Munich. Unluckily, some countenance to this view was given by those circles in Britain which defended the Premier's action, not on the grounds which he gave, but on the score that he was merely playing for time to make an effective resistance.

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The Führer is said by Lord Halifax ¹ to have repented of having yielded peace without an exploit of arms, and at any rate he soon showed that he was determined to keep Britain on her good behaviour. On 9th October, on 6th and 8th November, he denounced the warmongers in Britain, in special Mr. Churchill, Mr. Eden, and Mr. Duff Cooper, and gave plain warning that he could not regard a Britain which placed them in power as friendly, and Mr. Chamberlain indicated his sympathy with this point of view by using his speech of 1st November to contend that criticism of Munich was equivalent to a bird fouling its own nest. Encouraged by his pacifism, German papers actually accused some British statesmen of complicity in the murder of Herr von Rath in Paris, nor could any satisfaction be obtained, while British relations with Germany were rendered tense by the fine of £80,000,000 and other disabilities placed on Jews, after a pogrom had been arranged in which synagogues were freely destroyed. When the Premier himself addressed the Foreign Press Association in December, the German members and their Ambassador absented themselves because Mr. Chamberlain had had the temerity to deprecate denunciations of Lord Baldwin, who had broadcast an appeal for the Jewish victims of the German madness.

Meanwhile, Germany had worked steadily to secure an accord with France, reached on 6th December,² which put for them the position recorded in Mr. Chamberlain's peace pact. It recorded their agreement on the necessity of peace, the absence of any territorial question between them, and the finality of the Franco-German boundary, and subject to their relations to other Powers to consult on any inter-

¹ January 20, 1940.

² *French Yellow Book*, pp. 38f.

national difficulty. It was later alleged by Herr von Ribbentrop¹ that in his conversations with M. Bonnet he had received assurance that thereafter Czechoslovakia would not form the subject of an exchange of opinions, which meant that France had disinterested herself with regard to Czechoslovakia, as Britain was supposed to have done.

This point is of grave importance. On 2nd November the frontier issue with Hungary was decided by the Italo-German award at Vienna, and there could be no question but that the decision of the terms of the guarantee to be given to Czechoslovakia by Britain, France, Germany, and Italy should then have been immediately taken up. That patent duty seems to have been neglected by both British and French diplomacy for the moment, but on 14th December² M. Bonnet did broach the subject with Herr von Ribbentrop, who showed himself far from interested, and on 22nd December³ the French Ambassador at Berlin reported that Herr von Weizsäcker had intimated the expectation that the idea of a guarantee should be dropped, and that Germany alone should give any guarantee needed. Mr. Chamberlain⁴ seems to have taken no serious step until his visit to Italy to pay homage to the King as Emperor of Ethiopia. He then touched on the hostility to France which had manifested itself in the Chamber of Deputies in demands for Corsica and Nice, and he ascertained that the Duce was not unwilling to consider a guarantee of Czechoslovakia, if satisfied on the constitution of the country, on its neutrality, and the actual delimitation in detail of the frontier. It will be seen that Italy thus repudiated her obligation under the

¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 111ff.

² *Ibid.*, p. 42.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 48.

⁴ House of Commons, January 31, 1939.

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Munich terms, making its fulfilment dependent on wholly new conditions, negating the independence of Czechoslovakia. Britain and France were patently under the necessity of swift action, but not until 4th February did M. Bonnet send the Ambassador instructions to make inquiries,¹ which remained unanswered until 2nd March,² when the reply was wholly in the negative, and strong exception was taken to any Anglo-French guarantee, as involving the undesirable interference of the Western Powers with eastern Europe ; British difficulties in a delimitation of Palestine were pointedly recalled, and stress was laid on discontent in Czechoslovakia with the Vienna decision as to her boundaries. A further obstacle to any action was the disturbed internal conditions of the country.

It is almost incredible, in view of this absolute repudiation of western intervention to guarantee Czechoslovakia, that British opinion as to the situation down to 10th March³ was deliberately encouraged on behalf of the Premier to be optimistic, so that the Press on the eve of disaster was totally deceived. It is impossible to find any excuse for this deliberate misleading of the Press, which was entitled to expect good faith from the Premier and Lord Halifax ; action of this kind has the fatal disadvantage that it spread distrust on all government assurances, and that that distrust is completely justified. Not only was the German reply of 2nd March known, but on 18th February⁴ the French Minister at Prague had enumerated the ten conditions for a German guarantee. They demanded the withdrawal of Czechoslovakia from the League ; the assimilation of its

¹ *French Yellow Book*, p. 60.

² *Ibid.*, p. 66.

³ 345 H.C. Deb. 5 s. 1883.

⁴ *French Yellow Book*, p. 65.

foreign policy to that of Germany, with adherence to the Anti-Comintern Pact; complete neutrality was to be exacted; a portion of the gold reserve of Czechoslovakia to be handed over; the markets of Czechoslovakia were to be open to the industries of the Sudeten Germans, who were also to have special financial advantages; the Anti-Semitic laws were to be applied in the republic; any officials disliked by Germany were to be dismissed; and the Germans in Czechoslovakia must be allowed to wear their insignia, and display the Hitler flag. There was also ample advice from British and French diplomats that Herr Hitler had resolved on the acquisition of Czechoslovakia for the Reich. In these circumstances optimism was criminal folly; yet on 9th March the government informed the Press that the international situation seemed to give less cause for anxiety than for some time past, that they were inclined to be optimistic, and that an arms limitation conference seemed to be within the bounds of practical politics before the end of the year.

Never has governmental stupidity been more rapidly revealed. On 10th March¹ the Czechoslovak Government had to dismiss Dr. Tiso, the Slovak Premier, and three ministers for their determination to separate Slovakia from the rest of the Republic, a movement clearly supported and engineered by Germany. Dr. Tiso appealed to Herr Hitler, who was ready to take immediate action. Lies were immediately broadcast alleging grave disorder and danger to German lives in Slovakia and Moravia. On the night of the 13th inst. Dr. Tiso was in conclave with the Führer;

¹ *French Yellow Book*, pp. 70ff; Ripka, *op. cit.*, pp. 359ff; *Central European Observer*, 1940, pp. 25ff, 44.

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by his order, on the 14th Slovakia proclaimed her independence; fourteen divisions were massed on the borders of Bohemia and Moravia, and troops penetrated to Moravska-Ostrava. President Hacha and his Foreign Minister were received by the Führer, who, aided by Dr. Goebbels and Field-Marshal Göring, dictated terms to them; the aged and feeble President fainted, but was revived to sign an instrument declaring that¹ "Both sides gave expression to their mutual conviction that the aim of all efforts in this part of central Europe should be the safeguarding of calm, order, and peace. The Czechoslovak President declared that, in order to serve this purpose, and in order to secure final pacification, he placed the destiny of the Czech people and country with confidence in the hands of the Führer of the German Reich. The Führer accepted this declaration, and expressed his determination to take the Czech people under the protection of the German Reich, and to guarantee to it an autonomous development of its national life with its particular characteristics." The moral value of such an accord is obviously worthless, but it must be added that the Führer threatened an immediate bombardment of Prague if there were refusal. His troops streamed in *en masse* on the morning of the 15th, followed by himself, and on the 16th he declared Bohemia and Moravia to be a part of the territories of the Reich with the status of a protectorate. Slovakia at the same time surrendered her independence² and became a protectorate proper, while Hungary, which had begun operations on the 14th with an

¹ 345 H.C. Deb. 5 s. 888f.

² *French Yellow Book*, pp. 77ff. A formal treaty was reached on March 23, 1939. See *Polish White Book*, pp. 59f.

ultimatum, seized the Carpatho-Ukraine, and by accord with Poland established contact with that country, thus making good what she was refused by the decision of Vienna.

All the vital facts were before the Prime Minister when, on 15th March, he conveyed them to the Commons. Turning to the guarantee, he declared that the situation had radically altered since the Slovak diet declared the independence of Slovakia.¹ "The effect of this declaration put an end by internal disruption to the state whose frontiers we had proposed to guarantee, and accordingly the condition of affairs described by the Secretary of State for the Dominions [the acceptance of a moral guarantee], which was always regarded by us as being only of a transitory nature, has now ceased to exist, and His Majesty's Government cannot accordingly hold themselves any longer bound by this obligation." No more unjustifiable repudiation of a moral obligation can well be imagined. The guarantee should long since have been made formal and fully operative; France and Britain had never put any pressure on Germany or Italy to carry out the solemn obligation imposed at Munich, and they had deprived Czechoslovakia of the one tangible gain which, according to the Premier, was to make up for her loss of territory and fortifications. After this grave failure in duty, when Slovakia—under German persuasion, in order to save herself from the destruction which was known to be awaiting the republic—declared at the bidding of Herr Hitler her independence, Mr. Chamberlain considered it compatible with the national honour to disavow the guarantee. No Power can be reproached by Britain with breach of faith without

¹ 345 H.C. Deb. 5 s. 437; see Mr. Dalton's criticism, 540f.

demanding the retort that no state has excelled Britain in the breach alike of formal treaties and of moral obligations. The Dominions Secretary, who had accepted the obligation, should clearly have declined to remain in a Ministry which thus destroyed his word. It is indeed probable that the pledge of Sir T. Inskip was regarded with scant satisfaction at the time when it was given, and that the Premier was only too pleased to take the first possible opportunity to free himself from it.

It may, of course, be asked, How could the pledge be honoured when Czechoslovakia never appealed for action? The answer is that it could not be honoured, whether the President appealed or not, and this reveals the wholly discreditable nature of the guarantee. Mr. Chamberlain and M. Daladier must have known that they could not keep faith, once Czechoslovakia lost her fortifications, and that in promising a guarantee they were acting like financiers who guarantee sums they know they cannot pay, on the speculative chance that things will so work out that they will never be confronted with the need of action. They knew also that the promise would very remarkably simplify their task to prove to their people that they had worked well at Munich, and in fact in both countries the guarantee was extolled by supporters of the Prime Minister on every hand, while in France it helped to save M. Daladier from the storm of indignation which should have rewarded her perfidy to Czechoslovakia. But to give guarantees which you know you cannot keep is a dishonourable act, and, while financiers may disregard their own honour, Prime Ministers have to remember that the honour of their countries should not be pledged without all reasonable certainty that any

undertaking shall be made good. The disastrous effect of their action was to be seen in September, when Herr Hitler, almost to the last moment, could not believe that Mr. Chamberlain would keep to Poland a pledge which he had dishonoured for Czechoslovakia; thus the Premiers prepared the way for a war wherein success must mean death for hundreds of thousands, even millions. Nor, of course, are their colleagues guiltless; it is almost incredible that Sir S. Hoare should, on 3rd October, have asserted¹ "I myself believe that the international guarantee in which we have taken part will more than compensate for the loss of the strategic frontier." Is there no limit to human credulity, and will such naïveté serve us when applied to the conduct of the war? It must be added that Mr. Chamberlain again deliberately repudiated the binding force of the League Covenant: "We had no treaty liabilities to Czechoslovakia; we had always refused to accept any such obligations." Stress must be laid on this confirmation of his dictum of October 6, 1938, whose validity had not gone unassailed.

We have seen that Germany has insisted that the Western Powers had really retired from interest in Czechoslovakia, and colour is lent to this doctrine by Mr. Chamberlain's attitude.² He took the view that the Munich settlement was right, and had received the approval of the vast majority of world opinion—which was hardly true. But the state had become disintegrated, and the settlement has not proved to be final. "That may or may

¹ 339 H.C. Deb. 5 s. 156; for Sir T. Inskip's pledge see *ibid.*, 303.

² 345 H.C. Deb. 5 s. 439. The French attitude was much the same; A. Werth, *France and Munich*, pp. 383ff.

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not have proved to be inevitable, and I have so often heard charges of breach of faith bandied about which did not seem to me to be founded on sufficient premises, that I do not wish to associate myself to-day with any charges of that character." All that he did say was that he could not "believe that anything of the kind which has now taken place was contemplated by any of the signatories to the Munich agreement at the time of its signature." He disapproved unilateral action, nor, even if the Czech Government had acquiesced, could the manner in which the changes had been brought about be held to be in accord with the spirit of Munich. Moreover, Germany was now for the first time effecting a military occupation of territory inhabited by persons of another race. Still, he would pursue the path of peace.

These pale declarations had vanished when Mr. Chamberlain spoke at Birmingham on 17th March.¹ The

luckily failed to do, but he also undermined their future position by declaring that, if France and Britain had fought in 1938, and had been victorious—"never could we have reconstructed Czechoslovakia as she was framed by the treaty of Versailles." He thus precluded himself from agreeing to the natural Czech aspiration to secure again by the present war the splendid frontier which was theirs. He asserted, however, that, despite his love for peace, he would be prepared to fight for liberty. But, while accusing Herr Hitler of having departed thus from the assurances given to him regarding his disinterestedness in non-Germans, he did not explain in any way why he had acquiesced for months in the failure of Germany to accord a guarantee, which must have shown any competent observer that the Führer had no intention of honouring his pledge. Yet it must be admitted that his failure could only be interpreted in the light that he had, as Herr Hitler believed, like M. Daladier, disinterested himself in the fate of Czechoslovakia. Nor is it surprising that the Führer derived this view from the happenings at Munich.

Words, of course, meant nothing, and not only did Britain recognize Slovakian independence *de facto*, but, while protesting¹ against the action of Germany as having any basis in law, she determined despite many protests to apply to Germany for the grant of an *exequatur* for a Consul-General at Prague, which admittedly meant recognition *de facto* of the annexation, but the application was accompanied by a repetition of the British attitude on the legal aspect

¹ March 17, 1939: also France; *French Yellow Book*, pp. 87, 97. Russia made a convincing denunciation, March 19, 1939; *Central European Observer*, 1940, p. 32.

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of the case, and Germany very properly declined to accord the *exequatur*.¹ A further effort at conciliation must be noted. The Bank for International Settlements transferred from London some £6,000,000 in gold which represented Czechoslovakian funds to Germany. Mr. Churchill, among others, deprecated this accession of strength to an obviously hostile Germany, but Sir John Simon insisted² that the Bank enjoyed under treaty international recognition and freedom from control, so that the directors of the Bank of England, who sat on its control, were not subject to him nor bound to consult him. The worthlessness of this apologia was patent; the annexation of Czechoslovakia was regarded as illegal by the British Government, which was fully entitled to disregard the status of the Bank, and to legislate to safeguard the Czechoslovakian funds from appropriation by Germany. Moreover, insistence on the lack of power to control the British directors was rendered ludicrous by the fact that the German directors were, contrary to the statute of the Bank, under the direct control of the government whose officers they were. The episode exposed the lack of patriotic zeal on the part of the directors and the grave weakness of Sir John Simon, and went far to convince the public that without Mr. Churchill's steadfast devotion to his country the Ministry could not be trusted to protect the needs of Britain. It was no doubt Sir J. Simon's desire to placate the Führer, but he ought to have known that the time for that was over, and the injury which he thus permitted to be done to his country must have been increased by the conviction which Herr Hitler

¹ Mr. Butler, House of Commons, July 31, 1939.

² May 26, 1939. Cf. 348, H.C. Deb. 5 s. 1099ff, 2006ff.

must have derived thence that Britain still strove for peace at any price. The same view was doubtless taken of the request for an *exequatur*; business considerations, it must have been thought, overweigh with Britain pedantic ideas of keeping faith. Indeed, under British law *de facto* recognition has all the legal effects of *de jure* recognition, so that we know that, had Germany consented, Britain would have for ever renounced all interest in the fate of Czechoslovakia.

As it is, at no time has Mr. Chamberlain modified his attitude that the acquisition by Germany of all territory where live a majority of Germans is sound and must be respected; thus, while the restoration of Czechoslovakia has been adopted by him as a war aim, as in his broadcast of 24th February, it is the restoration of a new Czechoslovakia whose life may well prove as precarious as that of its predecessor. There are such things as strategic considerations, and, as Germany during the war has of her own free will determined on the justice of removing populations from foreign lands, it is legitimate to hope that in any peace settlement such a removal may render it possible once more to establish the old frontiers of the kingdom of Bohemia. But it must be noted that Mr. Chamberlain's doctrine of the justice of racial reunion does not possess the value which he and others have often placed upon it. His treatment of the Sudeten Germans as naturally falling to be forced into the Reich was morally unsound; it is unprincipled to regard a man because of his nationality as compelled to desire to be under the political system which others of that nationality may like, and the Premier's attitude on the Czechoslovak question was gravely injured by his facile acceptance of a false ideal. A little knowledge !

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5. Memelland

Herr Hitler, realizing from the impotence of the western states that further aggression would be safe, at once proceeded to demand from the Foreign Minister of Lithuania the surrender of the Memelland.¹ The ultimatum gave a maximum of four days, and it was intimated that any attempt to communicate with other Powers for aid would be met with military force. Surrender was inevitable. On December 12, 1938, and on 16th March the British Government had explained to Lithuania that it could only endeavour to afford aid to secure respect for the Statute of 1924 governing the status of the territory so far as it was in their power, and naturally the Lithuanian Government made no appeal, but agreed on 22nd March to immediate return of the area, with the grant to Lithuania of a free harbour zone. Both Powers further agreed not to use force against the other or to support the use of force directed by a third party. The British Government expressed sympathy with Lithuania in the *fait accompli*, but it was difficult to take the episode very seriously as compared with that of Czechoslovakia. Lithuania's own title rested on force exerted in 1923² in defiance of the Allies, and, though the acceptance by Lithuania of the Statute of 1924, prepared under League auspices, regularized the position, it could hardly be denied that the Germans had disliked the tutelage, and had for years been instigated by Nazi propaganda to work for their freedom from connection with Lithuania.

¹ 345 H.C. Deb. 5 s. 1255f, 1684f.

² *Survey Int. Aff.*, 1920-23, pp. 260; 1935, i. 246ff.

While, then, the mode of termination was brutal and illegal, it is hardly doubtful that the end could hardly be resisted on any grounds of British interest.

The utter eclipse of the League was marked in either case ; the destruction of Czechoslovakia and the return of Memelland came before neither Council nor Assembly. A further evidence of the worthlessness of the Anglo-German declaration at Munich was afforded by the failure of Germany to consult with Britain on the issue, and another breach of an assurance given, that no change would be made in the status of Memelland so long as Lithuania observed the Statute, was duly recorded by those curious to know how often the Führer had shown that his promises meant nothing.

CHAPTER VI

THE PROXIMATE CAUSE OF THE WAR—GERMANY AND POLAND

1. *The Franco-British Alliance with Poland*

THE shock of the absorption of Czechoslovakia and of Memelland by unilateral decision, excluding any influence of Britain or France on the course of events, compelled Mr. Chamberlain to revise in vital aspects his political outlook. Hitherto ¹ he had denounced the plan of alliance as a counsel of despair, but now he appreciated that the old plan had the merit, as compared with his efforts of appeasement, of preserving the liberty of states. On March 23, 1939,² he emphatically disclaimed any desire to stand in the way of any reasonable efforts of Germany to expand her export trade, but stated his readiness by all means "in our power" to oppose a procedure under which independent states were subjected to such pressure under threat of force as to be obliged to yield up their independence. On 31st March ³ he announced the vital decision that Britain and France would support Poland "in the event of any action which clearly threatened Polish independence, and which the Polish Government accordingly considered it vital to resist." On 6th April ⁴ it was announced that the agree-

¹ 339 H.C. Deb. 5 s. 649.

² 345 H.C. Deb. 5 s. 1462.

³ *Ibid.*, 2415; cf. 2475ff.

⁴ *Ibid.*, 2996ff.

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ment of assistance was to be mutual, and a formal pact was to follow ; it was signed on 25th August.¹ This sign that the period of British retreat had ended was followed by a swift stroke by the Duce, who, striking at Albania on 7th April, had secured the offer of the Crown for his sovereign by 13th April, as recorded below. On the 13th France and Britain, now in effective co-operation, promised unilateral aid to Greece and Rumania if their independence was menaced, and on 12th May a mutual guarantee of support with Turkey was announced.

Simultaneously with this return to saner principles, the Premier announced on 26th April the introduction of compulsory training of youths between twenty and twenty-one for six months. The announcement caused deep appreciation of the crisis, for the government had no mandate for a vital departure from precedent, and after Munich the Premier had pledged himself not to adopt conscription in peace. He had now virtually to confess that war was imminent, as the only way of excusing a breach of faith.

The essential question arises, Was the Polish alliance justified, or did it bring war upon Europe by encouraging the Poles to resist moderate and reasonable proposals, in harmony with the principles professed by the Premier ? The question is not wholly easy to answer, for it is extremely difficult to regard it free from considerations drawn from the treatment of Czechoslovakia. But the cases are very different in important respects, and it is easy to see how the Führer could not anticipate any very serious resistance by France or Britain. Czechoslovakia was essentially a democratic state, with a strongly defended frontier, a fine army,

¹ *Cmd.* 6106, p. 37.

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a capable President who for years had struggled hard to uphold the principles of the League of Nations, and for a prolonged period had laboured hard to secure peace in Europe, acting as a centre of stability amid troubled surroundings. Her treatment of minorities was far above the average, if not perfect ; she had produced new proposals which assured the Germans the widest autonomy. Poland, on the other hand, was a state under the rule of an unattractive oligarchy, which was clearly incompetent politically and economically ; the final power since the destruction of the constitution by Marshal Pilsudski rested with a successor whose military incompetence was to result in inflicting on his country by far the most discreditable defeat in its long and melancholy list of reverses. Its army was known to be badly equipped, its frontiers ill defended, its air force far below that of Germany. It held within its boundaries large masses of non-Poles, whose lands had been won by war and extended far beyond the line deemed wise by Lord Curzon when the treaty of peace was under discussion.¹ Moreover, there were no worse treated minorities in Europe save the Germans of the South Tyrol, for whom a mode of release was shortly to be found in evacuation.² The peasants, even those of Polish race, had been neglected by a long series of incompetent and corrupt politicians. Law, liberty, equality, justice were strangers to the state.³

¹ Lloyd George, *The Truth about the Peace Treaties*, ii. 980ff ; R. L. Buell, *Poland* (1939).

² On German grievances see *Survey Int. Aff.*, 1937, i. 387ff ; Lloyd George, *op. cit.*, ii. 1384ff.

³ Cf. Keith, *The King, the Constitution, the Empire, and Foreign Affairs*, 1936-37, pp. 133, 134.

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It was natural to suppose that Britain, which had sacrificed Czechoslovakia, would hesitate to commit herself to alliance with such a state, and above all, an alliance which allowed Poland, not Britain, to decide when a *casus belli* had arisen. The Premier had always shown himself to dislike any binding ties whence war might spring, and it would surely be impossible for him to commit himself if it were shown that Poland had been generously treated by Germany and had been given an offer of a fair and even generous kind. And, in fact, such an offer could be said to have been given. But it can only be understood with relation to the attitude of Germany to Poland since their pact of January 26, 1934.

2. *Poland's Relations with Germany*

That treaty represented a remarkable alteration of the position of Poland. From the first she had grave difficulties to face. Her western boundary rested on League Council decisions which gave Germany a standing grievance regarding Danzig; the so-called Polish Corridor separating western Germany from East Prussia, an area racially German; and Polish Silesia, wherein there was a considerable minority. Her eastern boundary rested on force of arms, for it was won by the defeat of Russia. She had thus two dangerous neighbours, and her obvious ally was France, and it was with the aid of Britain and France that she obtained a distinct measure of reassurance regarding Germany through the terms of the treaty with that Power negotiated at Locarno, and reinforced by a French treaty. But relations with France were not wholly harmonious. Polish military

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circles did not like the fact that it was due to the advice of a French general that she had been saved from Russia at a moment when the British Government was contemplating the acceptance by Poland of a completely humiliating peace dictated by the Soviet Government. Nor did Poland like the admission of Germany to the League with a permanent seat on the Council, while she herself could continue thereon only by the favour of the Assembly.¹ In 1933 occurred a manœuvre by Italy which deeply annoyed Poland and weakened her regard for France. To the Duce the position of the great Powers in the League had long seemed unsatisfactory. The need of carrying with them for any policy the minor states diminished the utility of the League, and for disarmament they did not count. But he was strongly convinced that peace could not be had without treaty revision, and such revision must be that affecting Poland, for Hungarian, Bulgarian, or Austrian grievances could not by themselves endanger peace. He suggested therefore to Mr. R. Macdonald, on March 18, 1933, at the Disarmament Conference the idea of a pact,² between Britain, France, Germany, and Italy, whose purpose should be peace, and whose essential detail treaty revision. The scheme miscarried utterly in its Italian form, for the permanent Council of the Little Entente Powers protested bitterly—with the support of the Press of their countries, France, and Poland—and, as modified and signed on 8th June, it lacked any real value.

The effect of these negotiations on Poland was to determine Marshal Pilsudski to accept an offer by Germany of

¹ Stresemann, *Diaries*, ii. 503ff.

² Keith, *Int. Aff.*, 1918-37, i. 272ff.

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a ten years pact,¹ during which both Powers renounced the use of force in the settlement of differences arising between them. The pact looked rather meaningless, as the Powers were already bound to avoid use of war by the Kellogg Pact, signed by both, but it marked a new outlook on the part of Poland. The Führer was held to be irrevocably opposed to Russia, and the idea which won the minds of the incompetent Polish Government was that it could play off Russia against Germany instead of having to face their cordial relations, since the treaty of Rapallo in 1922 had created a friendship not without danger for Poland. It would thus be possible to emancipate Poland from too great dependence on France, and to inaugurate a policy of seeking to become a neutral buffer state between the two deadly enemies, renouncing the duties of collective security. The inevitable tendency of the new policy was to estrange France and Poland, while her oligarchic government felt itself in closer ideological connection with Germany than with French democracy. Marshal Pilsudski, unhappily for his country, was not of the calibre of the Duce; like General Primo de Rivera he could keep his state peaceful by his command over the army and his popularity as the liberator, but his mind, clouded perhaps by disease, was destitute of constructive ideas, and he did nothing whatever to solve a single Polish problem, while Colonel Beck, in whose hands the details of foreign policy lay, was without foresight, and his efforts to play Germany off against France, and vice versa, merely earned him distrust, fully justified,

¹ January 26, 1934. *Survey Int. Aff.*, 1933, pp. 183ff; 1934, pp. 386f; 1935, i. 204ff, 211, 275, 288f.; *French Yellow Book*, pp. 144ff (M. Noel, May 2, 1939); *Polish White Book*, pp. 20f.

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from both. There was the further difficulty that Germany never regarded the pact as excluding negotiations for the satisfaction of her demands during its currency, while Poland believed that it had ten years' respite from any claims.¹

The result of the new relations between Poland and Germany was naturally distrust in Europe, and in March 1938 it seemed to be justified when Poland presented an ultimatum to Lithuania, with which diplomatic relations had been severed since Poland deprived the state of Vilna. Her attitude must clearly have had German sanction, and Lithuania decided to yield to the claim that diplomatic relations should be resumed ; the pretext made was that of a border shooting episode, but Poland did not press her success, and no great harm was done. It was, however, a clear violation of the Kellogg Pact, and showed the low morality of the Polish ministry. It is clear that in the following months Poland was in close relations with Germany, and must have appreciated fully the determination of the Führer to take possession of the Sudeten area. Thus, when Germany struck, it was easy for Poland, fresh from discussions with Herr Hitler, to aid in the ruin of Czechoslovakia by armed intervention and the forced appropriation of a far larger territorial acquisition than ethnography could justify. For Polish action there could be no shadow of an excuse. It was a violation of obligation, deliberate and brutal, depriving Poland of any claim to sympathy and associating her as an accomplice with the Führer.

There can be no doubt that at this moment and later

¹ M. Noel, April 28, 1939 ; *French Yellow Book*, p. 140.

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Germany entered into conversations with Poland, which were aimed at securing accord for a joint attack on Russia, which would secure lands for both Powers at the expense of that state.¹ But another project appears to have been placed before Colonel Beck when he saw the Führer at Berchtesgaden ; he was shown a map of Europe modified in the Führer's hand (we know that he loves to study maps) whereon appeared Danzig and the Corridor as German, Lithuania and Memel as Polish. Poland would thus receive access to the sea to make up for the loss of Danzig and the Corridor, and no doubt the way would be open for the two Powers to deal with Russia at their leisure. The *Polish White Book* now shows that as early as October 24, 1938, Herr von Ribbentrop asked for Danzig and extra-territorial communications across Pomorze, Poland and Germany to act towards Russia on the basis of the Anti-Comintern Pact, to co-operate in colonial questions, and to promote emigration of Jews from Poland.

How far Poland was taken into the secret of the annexation of Bohemia and Moravia is unknown. But the rapidity with which was accomplished the Hungarian seizure of Ruthenia, thus establishing the connection with Poland which the award of Vienna had negated, suggests that Poland had been fully alive to the truth of a situation which the British Premier so completely misunderstood as late as March 9, 1939. At any rate, a few days after, the German proposals for a settlement of relations were received. They were not in the least novel. The French Ambassador at Warsaw had reported on 4th February that Poland had

¹ *French Yellow Book*, pp. 143, 161f. Cf. *Polish White Book*, pp. 47ff.

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rejected the essential condition demanded by Germany regarding the Corridor.¹

According to the Führer, speaking on 23rd April,² the terms put before Poland on 21st March were these : (1) Danzig should return as a free state into the framework of the Reich ; (2) Germany should receive a route through the Corridor and a railway line possessing the same extra-territorial status for Germany as the Corridor had for Poland. In return Poland was given an offer by Germany (1) to recognize all Polish economic rights in Danzig ; (2) to ensure for Poland a free harbour in Danzig, of any size desired, which would have completely free access to the sea ; (3) to accept at the same time the present boundaries with Poland, and to regard them as ultimate ; (4) to conclude a twenty-five years non-aggression treaty with Germany, a treaty which would therefore extend far beyond the duration of Herr Hitler's life ; and (5) to guarantee the independence of the Slovak State by Germany, Poland, and Hungary, jointly, which meant in practice the renunciation of any unilateral German hegemony in the territory.

Were these propositions actually made in their entirety ? Colonel Beck on 5th May³ denied this claim. The idea of a triple guarantee of Slovakia had never been brought before him until 28th April, and it was flatly incompatible with the political and military protectorate of the Reich over Slovakia, which had been announced several days before the German conversation of 21st March. There had been allusions only by the German representatives to the possibility of discussions over the status of Slovakia if a general

¹ *French Yellow Book*, p. 59.

² *Cmd.* 6706, pp. 21ff.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 27.

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agreement could be attained. This suggests that in effect Germany did make the offer to reconsider the status of Slovakia, and the importance of such an offer was clear, as is shown by the grave damage to Poland in the war through the possession by Germany of full power to use that territory as a basis of operations. Colonel Beck also denied that any concrete offer of a non-aggression pact had been made, but admitted that the matter had been mentioned by eminent representatives of the German Government. Dr. Kriegk—in the *Nachtausgabe* of 6th May,¹ in a semi-official refutation of the Polish case—insists that the project was definitely communicated to Colonel Beck by the Führer himself on 5th January, and it seems most probable that this was true. He contends also that the issues had been all dealt with, and must have been known to the Polish ministry from Beck's own communications with the Führer and Herr von Ribbentrop, and those between his Ambassador at Berlin and the German Foreign Office, in October 1938 and January and March 1939. It is frankly very difficult to resist the interpretation that the offer in substance was fully understood by Poland.²

The Polish response was an offer of a joint guarantee of the separate character of the free city of Danzig, the existence of which was to be based on the complete freedom of the people in internal affairs and on the assurance of respect for Polish rights and interests. As regards communication across the province of Pomorze, misnamed the Corridor, Poland would facilitate the transit of persons

¹ *French Yellow Book*, p. 161.

² All the points (save that as to Slovakia which only arose in March 1939) were mentioned at Berlin on 24th October; *Polish White Book*, p. 47.

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from the Reich to East Prussia, and remove any technical difficulties as regards rail or motor traffic. She was anxious to secure the most liberal treatment of travellers, but could not cede her sovereignty over the territory traversed by railways or motor roads. Her concessions in this regard, however, must be dependent on the decision of Germany to agree to her view as to Danzig. The Polish reply was represented by the Führer on 28th April as a rejection of his offer, and as merely intimating readiness (1) to negotiate on the question of a substitute for the Commissioner of the League of Nations at Danzig, and (2) to consider facilities for the transit traffic through the Corridor. Colonel Beck on 5th May criticized this method of treating his counter-proposals and of representing his guarantee procedure as merely concerned with the position of the High Commissioner in Danzig, but frankly it is clear that he had refused definitively, after much earlier discussion, the essential German proposals, and Dr. Kriegk asserts, with every appearance of accuracy, that the Polish Ambassador when presenting the reply of 26th March was told explicitly that it was regarded as a refusal.¹ Moreover, the Führer adds that the partial mobilization then ordered by Poland indicated that she did not regard her reply as affording an occasion for friendly discussions. Her true attitude was shown in the negotiations which followed with Britain for a guarantee pact.

Herr Hitler was silent on the wider schemes which he had voiced to Colonel Beck, and the latter merely alluded

¹ This agrees with M. Lipski's report; *ibid.* p. 68. His report of the German offer of 21st March shows that Slovakia was keenly discussed, and asserts that the German coup at Prague was not arranged with Poland, which was also deceived as to Memel.

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to them in ambiguous terms, reserving the right to recur to them later on. On the whole, however, it is really not doubtful what was offered to Poland. Was she wrong to refuse these terms? And should Britain, by according a treaty, have approved, *ex post facto*, the Polish refusal? In considering the second question, we must note that Poland had rejected the proposals before she had sought British support, so that the problem for Britain was not to give advice on an issue on which Poland had not committed herself, but to decide whether to accept the *fait accompli* and to deal with the situation thus created. It was, of course, open to her to counsel reconsideration of the Polish attitude, but it may have been clear that Poland would not have agreed on any ground thus to act.

There was, of course, a good deal to say for the German claim for Danzig, and Poland in that regard had acted with much folly. The Führer, with his usual skill, had seen that the method of recovering Danzig was to convert it into a Nazi stronghold; early in 1933 the government there, autonomous in all internal affairs, was a coalition one, and in a Volkstag of seventy-two there were only thirteen Nazi members. But the ill-luck of such a number was for their opponents. With Nazi tactics¹ they forced a dissolution and obtained a majority over all other sections of four; on the strength of this they proceeded to convert Danzig into a Nazi state. The constitution was steadily violated by illegal acts against Jews and political opponents, especially after Herr Greiser became President of the Senate, and the Führer supplied as Gauleiter a German, Herr Forster, who was not even a Danzig citizen. But the League still was

¹ *Survey Int. Aff.*, 1935, i. 210ff.

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ready to listen to appeals from the minorities, and the High Commissioner, Mr. S. Lester, was firm within the limits of his powers. The Permanent Court, on reference from the League, asserted that in Danzig as a *Rechtsstaat*, certain legislative measures destructive of personal liberty and freedom of speech were unconstitutional,¹ and during the brief heyday of the League, when sanctions were still in force, Herr Greiser appeared before the Council in January 1936 and promised reformation, and the legislation was revoked in February. In July, however, the fatal effects of the withdrawal of sanctions against Italy and the Italo-German *rapprochement* were visible. Germany had allowed renewal of disturbances in June. Herr Forster had declared that as Gauleiter he owed responsibility to the Führer only, and the High Commissioner had been deliberately insulted on the occasion of the visit of the German cruiser *Leipzig*. Before the League Herr Greiser was defiant and insolent; in September the League miserably capitulated, all moral authority and virtue having departed from it since the betrayal of Ethiopia, and withdrew Mr. Lester, by the pleasing device of making him deputy Secretary-General. His departure led to an orgy of arrests and the complete suppression of the opposition parties. This should have evoked League action, but the Council, conscious no doubt that its strength was gone with its failure over Ethiopia, adopted in January 1937 a report drawn up by Poland, which involved the abandonment of any right of the League to intervene to protect the opposition to the Nazis. It is not surprising that the Nazis now achieved their object of securing in May 1937 a two-thirds majority necessary

¹ *Ibid.*, i. 239, 244. *P.C.I.J.*, Series A/B, No. 65.

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to destroy the democratic constitution, the use of force bringing about defections from the Social Democrat and Centre parties, while the German National party merged itself with the Nazis.¹ The desertion of its duties by the League was as immoral and cruel as it was illegal. But the main responsibility for the handing over of democratic Germans and others to the Nazi tyranny rested on Poland, which, herself harsh and unjust in her treatment of minorities and bitterly opposed to democracy in practice, was callously indifferent to their sufferings if thus she could keep on intimate terms with Germany. Her statesmen were so foolish as not to see that they were creating an unanswerable case for reunion with Germany, and were destroying the safeguard which would have existed if democracy were allowed to survive; it would then have been impossible to amend the constitution and to make Danzig a Nazi state pining with unanimity for reunion with the motherland.

In the actual circumstances of March 1939, it seems clear that Poland had *prima facie* lost any right to insist on maintaining hold of an essentially German city, and that Mr. Chamberlain, in view of his insistence on dismembering Czechoslovakia with vociferous British approval, could not support Poland in a refusal to transfer on the generous conditions mentioned. The issue of a corridor across Pomorze could hardly be regarded as serious. It might have been conceded in such a way as to constitute scant danger for Poland.

But Poland's reasons for demanding control of Danzig rested on important strategic and economic considerations.²

¹ *Survey Int. Aff.*, 1936, pp. 539ff.; 1937, i. 398f.

² *French Yellow Book*, pp. 169ff.

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Her port of Gdynia was less than ten kilometres from the nearest point of Danzig territory, and would fall under the fire of batteries placed between Zoppot and the western boundary of Danzig ; moreover, the construction by Germany of fortifications in the south-west of the Danzig area, which forms a salient, would render more difficult than ever the defence of the Corridor. It would, no doubt, be necessary to provide a bridge to join the two banks of the Vistula, but that could easily be effected.

From the economic point of view both ports were required for the maritime share of Poland's foreign trade ; two-thirds in value of that trade, more than three-quarters in volume, passed through these ports ; in 1938, of a total of 19,200,000 tons, 16,300,000 used these routes. Danzig had a third thereof in volume, 17 per cent. in value ; Gdynia, 46 per cent. in volume, and 48 per cent. in value. Danzig was the port of export for grain and wood and the coal of the Dombrova basin, Danzig alone had the necessary material to handle grain and wood. Gdynia was the port for the coal of Upper Silesia, and could take over all coal exports, but to equip her for handling the rest of the traffic would be a slow and costly proceeding. Moreover, while the railway from Silesia to the Baltic avoided Danzig, the line from Warsaw to Gdynia actually passed Danzig. Poland must have a free access to the Baltic ; Napoleon had recognized it, and the recent acts of Germany had placed her traffic through Bohemia and Moravia at the pleasure of Germany, and Memel, as an alternative outlet, had been lost. Danzig was essential to Poland, but again it was from Poland that Danzig drew her sustenance.

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But Poland looked beyond these considerations. What was the real desire of Germany? Might it not be to obtain a stranglehold on Polish oversea trade and thus to bring Poland into subservience? Was not this the motive of the wholly unnecessary demand for an extra-territorial corridor, just as Czechoslovakia had been cut in two by the motor road from Vienna to Breslau? Moreover, was not the tone of Germany rather that of one seeking war, not peace? Peace was a valuable and desirable thing, and a generation which had shed its blood in several wars assuredly deserved a period of peace. But peace had its price, high but definable, Poland did not recognize the doctrine of "peace at any price." There was only one thing in the lives of men, nations, and states which was beyond price, and that was honour. Poland, therefore, could not negotiate on any footing save of equality, she rejected any negotiations which took the form of demands whose rejection was forbidden.¹

It was natural for Herr Hitler to think that Britain would not support Poland in her resistance. It was indeed a small thing to ask her to surrender a virtually German town; had not Mr. Chamberlain handed over intact to Germany all the splendid fortifications of Czechoslovakia, heedless of the fact that they revealed the secrets of the Maginot line, their model? Had he not supplied Germany with an incredible amount of splendid munitions, destined for use against France and Britain if they supported Poland? Had he not placed it in the Führer's power to destroy an industrious democracy, loyal to the League of Nations? Why should he support a state notorious for its refusal to

¹ *Cmd. 6106*, p. 32.

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execute its obligations to its minorities,¹ ruled by a manifestly incompetent oligarchy which systematically neglected its duty to ameliorate the condition of the people, and which refused to allow the Parliamentary system to function? It seems clear that the Führer, reasoning on very strong grounds, believed that Poland could not be given British support. He must have gained strength also from the conviction of Herr von Ribbentrop, derived from his close associations with the most unintelligent and pro-Fascist classes of English society, that Mr. Chamberlain's love of appeasement would keep him steady. Were not a certain class of newspapers already denouncing any idea of fighting over Danzig as they had denounced fighting over the Sudeten land? Would not the *Times* help his cause by pleading for the right of Germans to return with Danzig to the Fatherland, just as it had driven the Ministry to surrender Czechoslovak interests?

The reasoning thus suggested was, however, defective. The British Premier indeed had wrought grave mischief, and had doomed his people either to enormous losses or to destruction, but he had done so because—however wrongly—he believed that liberty was not endangered. His faith in democracy might be slight, but, like Lord Halifax, who would rather die than be subject to a Hitlerian régime, he was prepared to stand up for liberty, and he now saw that liberty could not be achieved by sacrificing free peoples to dictators to be maltreated, whether by Italy or Germany. He had believed—however foolishly—that Czechoslovakia would have a happier life under her new régime than in the past. He had believed the Führer's protestations that

¹ *Survey Int. Aff.*, 1934, pp. 396ff.

he had no intention of including the Czechs in the Reich, and he had found that he had been wholly—it must be added, inexcusably—misled. He was now prepared to make a stand, and the *Times* was not prepared, in view of the public feeling on the issue, to make its logical stand for the surrender of Danzig. Public opinion in general was strongly moved by the fate of Prague and the brutality of the Führer's methods, and Mr. Chamberlain can have had no illusions as to the probability, if he yielded once more, that Mr. Churchill would subject him to so devastating an attack that the crumbling of the ranks of his out and out supporters would undermine the edifice of his control of Parliament. Hence he disappointed all normal expectations, and not merely decided to back Poland, but to back it in such a way as to put it within the power of Poland to call Britain into war if she thought fit. Nor can he have had any illusions as to the probability of war, since he must have known that over Danzig Poland would not yield. We may take it for granted that the terms of the treaty were deemed to have the advantage of preventing the pro-Fascist elements of his party exercising further pressure on him to refuse to fight for Danzig. Once this determination was taken, and it had received the emphatic endorsement of Parliament, war was certain, and none but optimists could shut their eyes to the fact. The Premier therefore introduced the principle of rapid acceleration of readiness for war, while in Germany the hectic pace of war work was, if possible, accelerated, and Poland very inefficiently set about the long neglected task of preparing for a struggle. France had adopted the same view as Mr. Chamberlain without hesitation. The only point that remains obscure

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is why neither Britain nor France did anything to arrange for sending military, air, or naval forces to stiffen Polish resistance. Were they misled by Polish assurances of readiness for war? Did they fear to trust their forces to Polish command, lest they, too, should be involved in the débâcle which seemed inevitable when the badly trained and equipped Polish forces clashed with those of Germany? Had their experts taken the measure of the incompetence of the Polish Supreme Command?

3. *The German Denunciation of the Treaties with Poland and Britain*

Before war broke out some diplomatic manoeuvres were to be tried. On April 28, 1939, the Führer denounced the German-Polish Declaration of 1934, and the Anglo-German Naval Agreement of 1935. The action taken against Poland was justified in the view of the Führer¹ by her failure to accept his proposals for an honourable settlement of the issues affecting mutual relations, and by her accepting, with regard to another state, obligations which were not compatible either with the spirit, the meaning, or the text of the Declaration, thereby arbitrarily and unilaterally rendering the Declaration null and void. The point is interesting; it rests on the fact that, if Germany threatened Britain with war, then under the pact with Poland that Power would be bound on a British demand to come to the aid of Britain, just as Poland would be succoured against aggression by Britain. Could this be

¹ *Cmd. 6106*, pp. 24ff.

squared with the definite accord of 1934 : " Both governments announce their intention to settle directly all questions of whatever sort which concern their mutual relations " ? Did not this mean that all issues between the two countries were to be dealt with to the exclusion of the League or any other Powers ? The answer is essentially in the affirmative. There is no doubt that this was the sense intended, and that *prima facie* the German case is sound. But Poland had two answers. In the first place, Germany had admitted the compatibility of the Declaration with the Polish-French alliance, which showed that the new treaty with Britain, as essentially defensive, was well within the right of Poland to conclude ; Germany herself had concluded engagements with Italy, and in 1939 with Slovakia, which were inconsistent with her thesis. Secondly, the Declaration of 1934 was a deliberate carrying out of the Kellogg Pact, under which any state which resorted to war to enforce a claim was denied the benefits of the Pact, for example, immunity from attack by another member of the states signing it ; if, therefore, Poland were compelled to attack Germany, it would be because Germany had attacked Britain, and had thus forfeited all claims under the Pact and the Declaration of 1934. It cannot be said that this reasoning is satisfactory. The British alliance was obviously intended to save Poland from having to settle her difficulties by her own efforts, and, if the issue mattered, it would be unfair to rule illegal the German denunciation. On the other hand, Poland might certainly have denounced the Declaration because Germany had refused to continue amicable conversations to solve the difficulties, and was patently determined to ignore her

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obligation under the Declaration under no circumstances "to proceed to the application of force for the purpose of reaching a decision" in any dispute. She could plead also that it was this violation of German obligation which had driven her to seek a British guarantee.

The denunciation of the Anglo-German Naval Agreement¹ was based on the radical change of British policy, as evidenced by the acts of Ministers and the Press, which showed that "the British Government is now governed by the opinion that England, in whatever part of Europe Germany might be involved in warlike combat, must always take up an attitude hostile to Germany, even in a case where British interests are not touched in any way by such a conflict. The British Government thus regards war by England against Germany no longer as an impossibility, but on the contrary as a capital problem of English foreign policy. By means of this encirclement policy the British Government has unilaterally deprived the naval agreement of the 18th June, 1935, of its basis." Part III. of the treaty of 1937 as to exchange of information as to naval programmes was also invalidated, but Germany would observe the qualitative limits set. The British reply of 23rd June² was devastating. It pointed out that it had pursued a definitely pacific policy, that it had given guarantees only to small Powers to relieve them of anxiety as to their independence and thus to contribute to peace, and that it had done its best to further German trade, having made available under the Anglo-German Payments Agreement a considerable supply of free exchange to enable

¹ *Cmd.* 6106, pp. 51f.

² *Cmd.* 6106, pp. 53f.

Germany to purchase raw materials. It pointed out that the Naval Agreement had been definitely agreed to on both sides as to be permanent, denying thus any right of unilateral denunciation, and that in view of Germany's action the declarations of building plans must be deemed no longer binding. Britain would consider a new treaty if desired, but would wish to know how unilateral denunciation was to be avoided in it.

4. *The Controversies over Danzig*

Germany now started to repeat over Danzig the controversies which had precluded the fall of Czechoslovakia. The *modus operandi* was to drive Poland into the position of an aggressor by a series of insolent provocations. The President of the Senate started by attacks on the acts of the Polish customs officers, a Freikorps was rapidly raised, military preparations were made, and on 14th July the British Ambassador was compelled to warn the German Foreign Office that the Führer was wrong in his conviction that Britain would not fight for Danzig.¹ On 9th August Germany for the first time intervened officially in the dispute between the Danzig Senate and Poland on the issue of customs officers, using very menacing language, warning Poland that any ultimatum addressed to the Senate might have grave consequences. Objection was also taken to obstacles to exportation of goods from Danzig, and the threat made that, unless difficulties ceased, the Free City would have to find other means of export and import.

¹ *Cmd.* 6106, p. 76.

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Poland replied categorically denying any juridical right of Germany to intervene, asserting the intention to deal effectively with any efforts of Danzig to deny her rights, and declaring that any further intervention by the German Government to the detriment of these rights would be an act of aggression.¹ On 15th August² the British Ambassador impressed upon the State Secretary at Berlin that Britain would stand by Poland if she were attacked, reminding him of the categorical declarations of Mr. Chamberlain on 10th July³ and of Lord Halifax on 29th June,⁴ which would on no account be departed from. The State Secretary gave a very broad hint that it would be an error to rely on Russian co-operation; he thought that the U.S.S.R. would even join in the end in sharing the Polish spoils. The reason for this warning will be seen below.

The next device of Herr Hitler was revealed as the wild lies propagated throughout Germany by the Press regarding appalling atrocities against the German minority in Poland. The British Ambassador showed the baseless character of the allegations. On 22nd August,⁵ after Herr Hitler's brilliant coup of arranging a pact with the U.S.S.R. was announced, Mr. Chamberlain sent the Führer a grave letter of warning, so that there might be no misunderstanding, such as was alleged in 1914, as to Britain's determination to fight if Poland were attacked. Sir N. Henderson saw the Führer twice next day, but could not move him, and his reply to Mr. Chamberlain was defiant, and announced German mobilization as a reply to the

¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 86f. For a warning on March 28, 1939, see *Polish White Paper*, p. 69.

² *Ibid.*, p. 88.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 74.

⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 58.

⁵ *Ibid.*, pp. 96ff.

British precautionary measures announced by the Premier. On 23rd August the Danzig Senate declared Herr Forster head of the state, a violation of Polish rights against which that government protested. But with admirable self-restraint, under British advice, it refrained from any military action against the City, which had been strongly fortified and provided with munitions from Germany in defiance of the constitution. On 24th August¹ the Polish Ambassador, under urgent instructions, sought contact with the German Foreign Office, but could only see Field-Marshal Göring, who was pessimistic, but hinted that Poland should abandon her alliance with Britain, and left the Ambassador with the impression that the Führer was determined to have a free hand in eastern Europe. On 25th August² the Führer sent for Sir N. Henderson to ask him to fly to London to put the case to the Premier; he was eager for friendship if the Polish issue were settled; warned that Britain would keep faith, he refused to promise a negotiated settlement; "Polish provocation might at any moment render German intervention to protect German nationals inevitable." The suggestion, of course, was the ludicrous invention of Poland seeking to attack Germany. On the same day Lord Halifax suggested that, if negotiations could be begun, a corps of neutral observers might be employed, and that an exchange of populations might be envisaged; both suggestions met with no difficulties from Colonel Beck.³

On 28th August⁴ Lord Halifax, with the assent of Poland, urged direct negotiations between Germany and

¹ *Cmd.* 6106, p. 119.

² *Ibid.*, p. 120.

³ *Ibid.*, pp. 123ff.

⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 125ff.

Poland for a settlement as equals, and expressed eagerness to reach an Anglo-German understanding if a peaceful accord were reached with Poland. Herr Hitler declined forthwith to commit himself, and a mean manœuvre followed. At 7.15 p.m. on the 29th Sir N. Henderson was told that the proposal for direct negotiations was accepted, but a Polish envoy must arrive next day ; when he objected that this seemed an ultimatum, Herr Hitler and Herr von Ribbentrop demurred. At 4 a.m. next morning the Ambassador explained that the German Government must not expect to have a Polish representative on that day. The British Ambassador at Warsaw¹ reported that Colonel Beck would not proceed to negotiate on the German assumption that the procedure would follow the lines of the ultimatums given to Austria, Czechoslovakia, and Lithuania, and suggested negotiations in a neutral capital, say Rome.

At midnight, on 30th August, the British Ambassador handed Herr von Ribbentrop the British answer to the German demands of the 29th. The British view urged the communication to Poland via the Polish Ambassador of the German proposals. In reply² Herr von Ribbentrop raced through a long set of terms which the Ambassador could not fully grasp, but when he asked for the text he was told that it was now too late as no Polish plenipotentiary had arrived by 30th August. It was in vain that Sir N. Henderson protested ; only at 9.15 p.m. on the 31st did he receive the text of the terms. The Polish Government on the 31st³ assured Britain of willingness to negotiate

¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 140f.

² *Cmd.* 6106, p. 145.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 148. Cf. *Polish White Book*, pp. 118ff, 218f.

directly, but their Ambassador was not received until the evening by Herr von Ribbentrop, and communication with Warsaw was cut off, while the terms were broadcast, and German forces attacked Poland next morning.

An immediate warning was sent to Germany that Britain and France would give Poland the support due under their treaties if Germany did not cease aggression and withdraw her forces. No reply was received, and on 2nd September ¹ the Premier explained the position to the Commons, mentioning the peace suggestions of Signor Mussolini, but making it clear that, unless German troops were withdrawn, Britain could not take part in any conference to discuss the issues. On 3rd September an ultimatum was duly delivered, to expire at 11 a.m. ² Germany's reply at 11.20 was in a defiant spirit, and the Premier then announced in the Commons that Britain was at war. ³ France, which had kept fully in touch with Britain, delivered likewise an ultimatum, ⁴ to expire at 5 p.m. The slight delay in action was due to the desirability of completing certain preparations to secure full readiness for operations of defence; a curious belief prevailed that Germany, though deeply engaged in Poland, could spare aircraft to bomb all Britain, and a costly and foolish evacuation of women and children brought home to Britain that it was at war, and that the Ministry were, at least, needlessly timid.

¹ *Ibid.*, p. 172. ² *Ibid.*, pp. 175ff.

³ *Ibid.*, pp. 178ff. Cf. M. Daladier's address, *French Yellow Book*, pp. 415ff. On 4th September a Franco-Polish protocol was signed; *Polish White Book*, pp. 137f.

⁴ *French Yellow Book*, pp. 411ff. Appeals for peace by the President of the United States, the Sovereigns of Belgium and Holland, and the Pope were lost on Germany; *Cmd.* 6106, pp. 181ff.

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The terms which were never offered to Poland or known to her before the expiration of the duration of the offer can be briefly noted. They were far inferior to those of 21st March, and this fact can be adduced to suggest that the March offer was not made *bona fide*. Danzig was to go at once to the Reich in accordance with its ethnic character and the will of its people. The Corridor was to be evacuated forthwith by Polish troops, police, and authorities, then to be under the sovereignty of an international commission on which Italy, the U.S.S.R., Britain, and France would be represented. Its fate was to depend on a plebiscite, at which there could vote only Germans born therein up to January 1, 1918, or domiciled therein at that date, and Poles, Kashubes, etc., with like qualifications. The Germans who had been expelled were to be allowed to return forthwith. The plebiscite was to be held not earlier than twelve months, and a simple majority was to decide the fate of the whole area. Gdynia, however, as essentially Polish sovereign territory was to be excluded from the Corridor, its area being defined by an international commission of arbitration if necessary. Road and rail connections between Germany and East Prussia, and between Poland and the sea, to secure free transit were to be set up. If the Corridor went to Poland Germany would receive in sovereignty a traffic zone, a kilometre wide, whereon to build an auto road and four lines of railway track, giving communication via Bütow and Danzig or Dirschau. If the Corridor went to Germany, Poland would have a like strip of territory to give communication with Gdynia. Both Danzig and Gdynia would fall to be demilitarized, as well as the Hela peninsula, into whichever hands it fell. An international

committee of inquiry would hear all complaints by either side and order compensation for economic or physical damage or other acts of terrorism. Special rights for Poland in Danzig or Germany in Gdynia might be arranged. But more significant was the requirement that to the minority in either country left as the result of the plebiscite must be accorded the preservation, the free development, and the application of their nationality, including such organization as they thought necessary ; the minority was to be excused military service. A very remarkable provision gave Germany the right, if she recovered the Corridor, to proceed to an exchange of population with Poland to the extent to which the nature of the Corridor lent itself thereto.

In these proposals the obviously unfair provisions were those which fixed January 1, 1918, as the decisive basis for the plebiscite. The policy of Germany had been directed towards the Germanization of the Corridor, and many Germans after the transfer to Poland left it, while many Poles gladly settled in their ancestral lands, whence German policy had endeavoured to expel them. Moreover, to include any Germans born therein at any time up to 1918 was patently absurd, for such persons, if not domiciled, had no claim to have any real right to settle in the Corridor. The return of Danzig and the demilitarization of Gdynia would mean a grave danger to Poland's external trade and a final negation of her right to possess a navy, and Poland notoriously was proud of her capacity for development at sea under her possession of full access thereto. The defence of the Hela peninsula was one of the satisfactory features of the war.

It is clear that the right claimed for Germans left in

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Poland to have the Hitler organization meant a constant menace. In Czechoslovakia Germans had been urged to stay simply that they might form a nucleus for the further demands made on March 15, 1939, and Germany doubtless knew that this point could not be conceded. But, had the proposals been merely a programme of possible terms, Britain and France would no doubt have advised careful consideration with a view to a settlement. It was, however, the last thing desired by Herr Hitler that there should be a settlement; hence the procedure which made certain that Poland should never be given the chance to receive them before they were cancelled. Possibly he thought it just possible that Colonel Beck would flinch at the idea of war and hasten to Berlin to accept any conditions dictated, as had Dr. Hacha and Dr. Schuschnigg, but it is hardly likely. All that he wanted was to be able to parade his alleged will to a peaceful settlement, which, we may safely hold, was the very last thing desired by the Führer.

5. *The Russo-German Pact as the Immediate Cause of War*

Few things are more paradoxical than the Pact of Non-Aggression between Germany and the U.S.S.R., signed on August 23, 1939.¹ Under it the two Powers preclude themselves from aggression on the other, either singly or jointly, and bind themselves not to support any third Power which attacks either. They are to remain in continuous consultation on questions touching their common interests, and neither shall participate in any grouping of Powers

¹ *Cmd.* 6106, p. 104.

directed directly or indirectly against the other. All disputes shall be settled by friendly discussion or arbitration agreements, and the accord is for ten years with automatic renewal for five years unless denounced by either party.

This accord was the crucial factor in the decision of the Führer to resort to war. His own testimony on this topic is as clear as it is convincing. So able a man as Herr Hitler could have no illusions on the issue, even if his technical advisers had not been there to warn him. A war in the west and a war with Russia presented dangers too grave for even the most crack-brained adventurer to face, and still less was the Führer willing to run the risk, which, he knew, would greatly disturb his own people. His one miscalculation was his belief that the accord would secure his ends without war. He thought that the Western Powers had given their support to Poland on the belief that they could rely on Russian co-operation and that their will to war would quail before his *fait accompli*. It was a most natural supposition, and the Ambassador's assurances on August 29 that "our word was our word, and we had never, and would never break it" fell on ears that were deaf, because the assertion was so palpably false. The reason for the failure of the coup to impress his enemies is simple. British diplomacy had known that it might be achieved, that Soviet aid for the Allies was uncertain, and had resolved to proceed on the assumption that it could not be relied upon. But this knowledge was not shared by the public, which was astonished at a result which it had been far from anticipating.

The reasons for popular astonishment are simple. The public in general assumed that the U.S.S.R. was so seriously

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menaced by Germany that in her own interest she would be willing to support any stand against aggression. This view seemed to be amply confirmed by the Soviet suggestion of 18th March, after Prague, that a conference should be held between Britain, France, Russia, Poland, Rumania, and Turkey to plan resistance to further aggression. Mr. Chamberlain was only in the process of conversion to resistance, so that the British reply held a conference premature, but suggested a joint declaration, envisaging consultation, immediately on the occurrence of aggression, by Britain, France, Russia and Poland—a proposal accepted by the Soviet Government, but rendered abortive by the refusal of Poland to sign together with the U.S.S.R.¹ This fact, showing the foolish hostility of Poland to the state whose aid was essential, was of the gravest consequence. Had it been known generally, the course of events might have been altered. As it was, Britain proceeded on 31st March, without any consultation of Russia, to enter the lists on the side of Poland by according a unilateral guarantee, made bilateral almost at once. The public assumed that in giving this support to Poland Britain could rely on Soviet concurrence and aid. Otherwise the reaction to the new guarantee, which compelled Britain to go to war if Poland thought fit, would have been very different.

Was the British Government right in guaranteeing Poland when it could not rely on Soviet support, and in concealing from the public the true facts? The answer seems clearly to be that the guarantee should not have been

¹ D. N. Pritt, *Light on Moscow*, pp. 61f. Polish hostility is proved by the Ambassador's Report, November 6, 1939; *Polish White Book*, pp. 207f.; 346 H.C. Deb. 5 s. 24ff., 49ff., 125ff., 135ff.

accorded, except on condition that Poland was prepared to be guided by British advice in regard to her relations with the U.S.S.R. The Premier knew that Poland was determined not to act with Russia, and that that attitude created a most dangerous position. He should have realized that a Polish Government, which would not face facts, was incompetent—its incompetence has been denounced by the Premier of the new government in the most scathing terms¹—and that to involve the fate of Britain by placing in such hands the power to force her to go to war was midsummer madness. But in any case he should have made clear to his people that there was the gravest doubt whether Britain could rely on Soviet aid in protecting Poland, in view of the attitude of Poland, which had bitterly offended Russia by her share in the destruction of Czechoslovakia.

It was doubtless the attitude of Poland which paralysed British action, and Mr. Chamberlain's next approach to Russia was deferred until 15th April, after the seizure of Albania by Italy had driven Britain on 13th April to give unilateral guarantees to Greece and Rumania, again without consultation with Russia. His proposal, then, was that Russia should give a unilateral guarantee to Poland and Rumania—a proposition which certainly could not be regarded as particularly attractive. We know from Mr. Chamberlain's statement of October 3, 1939, that "when we gave the guarantee to Poland the matter was imminent. We did not know that Poland might not be invaded within a term which could be measured by hours and not by days." Things had hardly changed, it may be assumed, by 15th April, so that Russia was being asked to act most generously

¹ *The Times*, January 4, 1940.

without any return for a Power which was clearly hostile, and for Rumania against which she had claims for territorial revision in the return of Bessarabia.¹ It is not surprising that the Russian reply² was to suggest a far wiser scheme than a guarantee to two states only, thereby placing the others in jeopardy of the diversion to them of German aggression. She suggested, therefore, a triple pact against aggression, Britain, France, and Russia; pledging mutual assistance; a military convention reinforcing the Pact; and a guarantee of all states from the Baltic to the Black Sea. The reference to the Baltic was significant and essential. Russia had no mind to give pledges involving her in risk of war with Germany, unless she were assured that Britain and France were bound to secure her from aggression based on the influence of Germany in the Baltic states.

There was regrettable delay in dealing with this reasonable Russian offer. It appears clear that Mr. Chamberlain was reverting to the hope of appeasement; the *Times* was sympathetic, the British Ambassador, recalled after Prague, returned to Berlin on 24th April, an event naturally interpreted in Berlin—which was taken by surprise at the quick surrender—and in Moscow, as indicating that Herr Hitler had been forgiven. On 3rd May the *Times* printed a letter from Lord Rushcliffe, a close friend of the Premier, which advocated appeasement, and on 5th May³ the hostility of the Premier to the Soviet Government was revealed in a very discourteous reply to a suggestion that he should establish contact with M. Stalin: "Perhaps the Hon.

¹ *Bull. Int. News*, xvi. 1243ff. ² Pritt, *op. cit.*, pp. 65f (April 17).

³ 346 H.C. Deb. 5 s. 2222.

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Member would suggest with whom I should make personal contact, because personalities change rather rapidly." It is easily understood that in this frame of mind his reply to the Russian plan on 9th May¹ was merely a reiteration of the idea of unilateral procedure, which evoked from Russia on 14th May a reiteration of her proposal as essential, if it were really desired to resist aggression. There was again inexplicable delay in a reply, possibly due to some fear of annoying Italy; but Mr. Lloyd George, who had from the first insisted that the pledge to Poland was insanity without a Russian pact, kept pressing the issue, and on 27th May the French and British Ambassadors in Moscow were authorized to discuss a triple pact, but their authority was clogged by the suggestion of bringing in the League of Nations, whose authority Mr. Chamberlain had himself destroyed, and of confining the guarantee to Poland and Rumania, Powers for which Russia had no affection, thus omitting the Baltic States, whose safety concerned her deeply. M. Molotov on 31st May² put the matter with much force, making it clear that Russia insisted on equality of treatment and reciprocity of security for her interests. He stressed also the essentially defensive aim of the proposed pact as contrasted with the military and offensive accord achieved by Germany and Italy on 22nd May; he also stressed the efforts of Germany to secure close economic relations, and her pressing offer of a credit of 200,000,000 marks, and the conclusion of a satisfactory trade accord with Italy.

There was a definite hint behind these remarks, which the British Government must have understood, though the

¹ Pritt, *op. cit.*, pp. 67ff.

² Pritt, *op. cit.*, pp. 70ff.

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public did not appreciate it. So vehement had been the abuse of Bolshevism by Herr Hitler and Herr von Ribbentrop that the man in the street assumed that Germany would have nothing to do with "the incarnation of human destructive forces." Had he not said on January 30, 1937: "We look upon Bolshevism as upon an intolerable danger to the world; we shall try to keep this germ away from the German people by every means at our command. . . . Any treaty links between Germany and present-day Bolshevik Russia would be without any value whatsoever." It was forgotten that he had declared on February 20, 1938, his satisfaction with the Polish state, that he had renewed his assurances of appreciation on 14th and 26th September, when Poland was smiling on his schemes against Czechoslovakia, and on January 30, 1939, eulogised Marshal Pilsudski as having brought to Poland like benefits to those given by Nazism to Germany, adding that "during the troubled months of the last year the friendship between Germany and Poland was one of the reassuring factors in the public life of Europe."¹

But French and doubtless also British diplomats had seen the dangers. It was manifestly vital to Herr Hitler to be secure against war on two fronts, and to be able to trust to supplies from Russia to enable Germany to resist the British and French blockade, which was the one obvious mode of pressure which menaced German security. On December 16, 1938,² the then Premier of Bulgaria, M. Kiosseivanov, was said to have intimated plainly to the French minister that the policy of Germany was aimed not so much at south-east Europe as at Poland, and that, if Russian

¹ *Cmd.* 6106, pp. 3f.

² *French Yellow Book*, pp. 47f.

propaganda were diminished, accord with the U.S.S.R. would be possible, and a fourth partition of that land would be at hand. A further hint of danger was given by the removal from office of M. Litvinov, whose eagerness to secure a pact with Britain had plainly failed to please M. Stalin; and on 7th and 9th May¹ M. Coulondre, the French Ambassador at Berlin, reported the possibility of a Russo-German *rapprochement*, developing the theme more fully on 22nd May,² when he pointed out that the scheme had the support of Herr von Ribbentrop, who had a personal hatred of Britain, which he had failed to captivate by his diplomacy. But Herr Hitler was still doubtful of the response of public opinion to a reversal of policy, though the German response to the dismissal of M. Litvinov suggested a rally to a more favourable view of a Russian alliance to partition Poland, which was favoured by important industrial influences, and in certain high military circles.

But nothing could eradicate the dislike of Mr. Chamberlain³ and Lord Halifax for anything that might seem like dividing the world into potentially hostile groups, though it was plain to see that the division existed, with Poland assured of protection against Germany. On 8th June Lord Halifax still preached appeasement, suggested a conference, and was sympathetic to the German claim for living space at the expense of other Powers. Lord Davies justly raised the point whether such a speech did not suggest that the government was not in earnest with the negotiations with Russia, and was merely offering in the negotiations a sop

¹ *French Yellow Book*, pp. 153ff.

² *Ibid.*, pp. 172ff.

³ 345 H.C. Deb. 5 s. 1462 (March 23). On 19th May Mr. Churchill, Mr. Eden, and Sir A. Sinclair insisted on an equal alliance.

to public opinion. Certainly Russia could feel no confidence in Lord Halifax's convictions. M. Molotov sensibly suggested a visit from Lord Halifax, who in November 1937¹ had spent a happy time with Herr Hitler and his entourage, but the Foreign Secretary would not go. It was natural that he should shrink, as Herr Hitler so long did, from contamination by intercourse with Bolshevism, but charity covers a multitude of sins, and even a High Anglican might have remembered that duty to country should take precedence of personal feelings. There was urgent need of close contact with the Russian Government; for the Premier to visit Russia as he had done for Germany was undesirable. Such action exaggerates the power of a Premier, deprives him of the control of the King, the Cabinet, and the House of Commons, and places him in a position in which he can present his policy to his colleagues as something fixed which they can reject only at the cost of his dissolving Parliament or resigning. But Lord Halifax could have gone, and war might have been averted as it should have been. Instead, the discourteous policy was adopted of sending a minor officer from the Foreign Office on 12th June,² at a time when the *Times* correspondent at Berlin was warning it that, if the negotiations failed, the Reich would attempt to secure the Russian front by an economic *rapprochement* and political assurances, as it was in fact already doing. Scant wonder that on 29th June³ there appeared in *Pravda*, in an article by M. Zhdanov, Chairman of the Foreign Affairs Commission of the Soviet Parliament, a strong condemnation

¹ *Survey Int. Aff.*, 1937, i. 336ff.

² Pritt, *op. cit.*, pp. 83f; 348 H.C. Deb. 5 s. 882, 1282, 2205.

³ *Ibid.*, pp. 85f.

of the negotiations as showing the insincerity of Britain and France, which had taken 59 out of 75 days of negotiation to put forward their proposals.

Russian scepticism was naturally strengthened by the unfortunate interview of Mr. Hudson, Parliamentary Secretary to the Department of Overseas Trade, with Herr Wohltat, a well-known figure in London as a German official charged with industrial concerns, which was rumoured to have led to suggestions that German appeasement might be furthered by an enormous loan. The whole business is obscure, but Mr. Hudson was never famed for discretion, and the rumours did Britain harm. On 29th July Mr. Lloyd George¹ pointedly denounced the inaction of the Ministry, and commented acidly on the visits of the Premier and Lord Halifax to Rome—to celebrate the destruction of Ethiopia—but their sending a clerk in the Foreign Office only to Moscow. Worse bungling was to follow; M. Molotov naturally asked on 23rd July² for a military mission, suggesting that the political talks would gain thence, and a mission was promised on the 25th. But by consummate folly neither General Gamelin nor Lord Gort was sent, the names of those selected were little known in Britain itself, and their dispatch by slow steamer took them to Russia only on 11th August, where they turned out to have no authority to do more than refer home. The definitive point, however, was the discovery that Poland³ refused flatly to agree to allow passage across her territory for Russian forces, did not require Soviet aid, would not accept it, and was adequately prepared to face a German attack without it. If it were not for the subsequent display

¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 86f.

² *Ibid.*, p. 88.

³ *Ibid.*, pp. 91ff.

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of supreme incompetence by the Polish High Command, such folly would have been incredible, while the French and British military missions seem to have failed to impress on Poland the supreme folly of which they were guilty, or on their own countries the unwisdom of aiding a power so devoid of intelligent guidance.

The result was inevitable : conversations ceased ; on 19th August an economic agreement was concluded between Russia and Germany, on the 23rd the Non-Aggression Pact ; and on the 26th the useless mission withdrew. The government naturally itself condemned, though in guarded language, the Russian change of face, while the Press on the governmental side violently denounced Russia. It was made clear, however, that the loss of the Pact meant nothing to many, who hated association in any form with Bolshevism. These were the people who had delighted in the slow destruction, with British acquiescence, of the Republican Government in Spain, and, as good Roman Catholics, detested the Soviet Government for its hostility to religion, little knowing that the fate of the negotiations was to condemn vast numbers of Poles to death and the faith to severe trials at the hands of Germans rather than of Russians.

Various charges have naturally been made against Russia in connection with her action. It is said that she was guilty of double dealing, in that she was negotiating with Germany contemporaneously with her negotiations with Britain and France.¹ This is clearly a ludicrous charge. Russia, it is plain, continued to negotiate with Britain and France because she hoped to achieve solidarity ; when she found

¹ Cf. Mr. Chamberlain, House of Commons, August 24, 1939 ; 351 H.C. Deb. 5 s. 5f, 48f, 1855f.

them unwilling to treat her fairly and Poland determined not to allow her to enter Polish territory, she most reasonably turned to Germany, with which she had long been in negotiation, and settled affairs by a pact of Non-Aggression. As late as 28th August¹ the British Ambassador assured Herr Hitler that in his opinion an Anglo-German alliance was not impossible ; all political negotiations must be fluid, for any Power which cuts herself off from other Powers leaves herself bound to accept such terms as the rival Power is willing to give.

Russia is also charged with a crime against democracy—but to regard Russia as a democracy is patently absurd—and with destroying the Popular Front, but such a front could never be constituted between capitalistic countries and a Communist state. She is reproached with abandoning anti-Fascist principles, but she is a totalitarian state, and there is a fundamental affinity between such states. She simply acted from what she believed to suit her best. If she is accused of having sabotaged the League of Nations, the charge comes very badly from Britain and France, which destroyed the League in the affair of Ethiopia. Her distrust of the Powers which connived at the destruction of the Spanish Republic and of Czechoslovakia is natural.

On the other hand, a pact with Germany has added considerably to Russian security. Japan has displayed a markedly more accommodating mood since she found the Anti-Comintern Pact undermined by the reconciliation of Russia and Germany. Italy has been alienated from Germany, and in some measure induced to remain non-belligerent ; Hungary has been disillusionized. Of major

¹ *Cmd.* 6106, p. 130.

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importance, of course, is her acquisition of a wide accession of territory to which reference is made below.

The British apologia for a resounding diplomatic defeat has rested on an allegation that the Soviet terms could not be accepted because they infringed the rights of the Baltic States, whose protests against any action by Britain affecting their complete independence were given wide publicity. The issue apparently involved was that of guarantees against indirect aggression,¹ which might have been so construed as to warrant Russia taking measures of precaution involving use of the territory of the Baltic States. It may safely be assumed that incitement to refuse was forthcoming from Germany. In any case it was on the Polish issue that the negotiations failed, and it suffices to note that the recalcitrant states were rewarded for their objections to a British and French guarantee by immediately falling under the domination of Russia, which forced treaties upon them under which their nominal independence is submerged by the cession of air and naval bases by Estonia and Latvia and air bases by Lithuania, while the presence of Soviet garrisons ensures that there shall be no risk of danger to the U.S.S.R.² How long the states will be allowed to evade Boshevization is obscure. The virtually enforced removal thence of the German population is a decisive sign of the diminution of Germanic power resulting from the compact.

If we seek to assign the cause for the Allied set-back,

¹ Cf. Lord Halifax's speech, December 5, 1939. The objections of Finland were proclaimed by her Foreign Secretary and President on 6th and 7th June, and the other states were also vocal. Cf. 348 H.C. Deb. 5 s. 402, 2203.

² Pritt, *Must the War Spread?* pp. 200ff. For Finland, see § 8, below.

it can be found in the lack of vision of Mr. Chamberlain, who did not realize the necessity of a pact in the interests of peace, just as he had not realized that by deserting Ethiopia he was preparing the way for war, and that by deserting and coercing Czechoslovakia he was making certain either war or the destruction of the Empire. The same lack of foresight found classical exemplification in the information given for him to the Press on 9th March, which took an optimistic view of a situation which every one but himself knew to be most dangerous. Lack of familiarity with foreign issues until old age and the limited outlook of the successful business man have rendered his control of external policy disastrous to his country and to Europe; and his departure from the far wiser views of his father and brother condemns his self-assurance and dislike of independent advice, which made him lean not on the skilled advice of the Foreign Office but on the immature imaginings of one wholly unversed in international issues. Experts have their value, and it is incredible that the Foreign Office approved the *communiqué* of 9th March; significantly, the Premier made the absurd reply to an interrogation¹ that he could not discuss the relations between public departments. He was obviously guilty of Mr. Lloyd George's worst fault, that of running foreign affairs irrespective of his Foreign Secretary, which helped to bring about his fall from power. Lord Halifax is in some degree to blame for his failure to visit Russia;

¹ 345 H.C. Deb. 5 s. 1883f. Refusal, notified on March 6, 1940, to issue the correspondence with Russia as promised in December 1939, may be assumed to support the Russian case. No Czechoslovakian correspondence has been vouchsafed, despite Mr. Mander's request.

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M. Stalin's and Herr Hitler's hands are both dyed deep with innocent blood, but he should have refused to visit both. Just as in India his good intentions left for Lord Willingdon a vast mass of confusion to set right, so his foreign policy has been defective in coherence. It is only too obvious that at the time when the Ambassador at Moscow was labouring to convince Russia of British sincerity, the idea of reconciliation with Germany, which must be dangerous to Russia, was widespread, and was shared by Lord Halifax. Both statesmen, of course, were deeply affected by that strong body of society and financial opinion which would even now gladly see peace made with Germany in order that Herr Hitler's army may be hurled against the hated Bolshevists. There are as dangerous ideologues in Britain as in Russia.

6. Russia's Intervention in Poland

The pact between Russia and Germany has no provision for armed aid to either from the other, but it was natural that public opinion should feel strongly that there must be some accord for the allocation to Russia of a part of the spoils of the victory rightly anticipated by Germany. It was not, therefore, altogether surprising when the Soviet forces in overwhelming strength poured into Eastern Poland on 17th September and rapidly occupied a very large area of Polish territory, a partition between Germany and Russia being effected by an accord of 28th September, under which some 96,000 square miles of territory were allocated to Russia which secured for her own control access to Rumania.

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There is no doubt ¹ that the entry of Russia did not take place until the Polish cause was lost, and—except in a few areas, including the city of Warsaw, in which a desperate defence was being carried on in the vain hope that the Allies would, by attacking by air the cities of Germany, bring relief to the hard-pressed garrison—the Polish defence, directed with incredible incompetence, had collapsed or was collapsing. It is hopeless to argue that the situation could have been retrieved, had Russia not stabbed Poland in the back. The day was lost, for, from reasons not generally comprehensible, the western Allies had left Poland to fight alone, while French troops amused themselves by slight advances in No Man's Land, whence they were duly withdrawn when German forces appeared in strength.

It was probably the Polish collapse—wholly amazing when we remember the strength of the army, 1,500,000, and the bravery and endurance of the soldiers—that induced Russian action rather than the existence, as suggested in Germany, of a definite line of delimitation settled in advance between the two aggressor Powers. Until full proof is available, it is probably wiser to assume that the opportunity proved too tempting, and that any virtue Russia had succumbed. But it must be added that only by such action could Russia safeguard her own rights. If she did nothing, it is plain that Germany would in a few days occupy all the country, and that she would be in a very strong position to retain it.

The Russian action clearly violated the Non-Aggression Pact between the two countries, and the excuse adduced

¹ Pritt, *Light on Moscow*, pp. 124ff. Contrast *Polish White Book*, pp. 191ff, 221f.

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was that the government of Poland had ceased to exist, and that Russia felt bound to invade to safeguard the interest of the Ukrainians and White Russians, the pact having fallen to the ground with the disappearance of the Polish Government. As a general principle of international law the Russian declaration lacks sufficient grounds, but a strong case can be made out against the right of Poland to rely thereon. Her government had with savage brutality struck at Czechoslovakia in the moment of her misfortunes, and, not contented with Teschen, to which Poland had racial claims, had insisted on seizing an area full of non-Poles. Further, Russia had warned Poland that, if she persisted in her onslaught on Czechoslovakia, she would deem cancelled the Non-Aggression Pact. It must, therefore, be held that Poland could hardly rely on that pact or the Kellogg Pact, which she had deliberately violated, or on the League Covenant which also she had broken. The matter had reduced itself to essentials, unaffected by treaty considerations, and on the merits of the case it might well be held better¹ for the Ukrainians and White Russians to fall under Russian than German rule. We may dismiss the idea, based on German assertions, that the line fixed represented one previously arranged, that Germany would have stopped at the line and left Eastern Poland unoccupied. Such action would have been absurd. The Poles in the unoccupied territory would have rallied and become a menace to the German occupation of the western lands.

The lands seized were lands to which Poland had very

¹ Keith, *Manchester Guardian*, September 18, 1939, reprinted in Pritt, *op. cit.*, pp. 131ff. For Polish admissions of Russian protests as to Czechoslovakia, see *Polish White Paper*, pp. 204, 221.

slight right. Ethnically, they are essentially White Russian or Ukrainian by race, Slav peoples, and the Peace Conference had not the slightest desire to present them to Poland ; ethnology, self-determination, and common fairness negated the idea. But Poland won them, in part in war in 1919 from the hapless Ukrainian Republic, in part in 1920 from Russia by war terminated by the treaty of Riga in March 1921. If she had been used to treating minorities wisely, there would have been no serious harm in the mode of acquisition, but, unluckily, Poland has a very bad reputation for treatment of non-Polish races. The case of Eastern Galicia is definitely in point. It was accepted as Polish by the Conference of Ambassadors in March 1923 on the definite condition that autonomy should be conceded, but instead even religious liberty was not accorded to the members of the Orthodox or the Uniate Churches. In 1930 the League Council was made to take up the question of the " pacification " of the territory by the Poles, but the discussion of the issue was delayed while a report was being prepared, and in 1931 the resolution passed was worthless.¹ In 1934² Poland was guilty of unilateral refusal to respect her obligations under the minorities treaty on the score that it could not bind her unless and until the great Powers applied it to their own conditions. The sequel of this repudiation was the steady deterioration of the position of the Jews, marked by murders, ill-treatment, pogroms, destruction and looting of shops and stores, desecration of synagogues,³ even the utterly foolish separation of Jewish from non-Jewish students in the universities.

¹ Lloyd George, *The Truth about the Peace Treaties*, ii. 1395f.

² *Survey Int. Aff.*, 1934, pp. 396ff.

³ Pritt, *op. cit.*, pp. 139f.

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Efforts were unceasingly made to force Britain to relieve Poland of the maximum number possible of her three and a quarter million Jews, of whom two and a half million were stated to be surplus to the state's readiness to permit their continued existence in Poland. As late as October 1938 a pacification of the Ukraine was in progress, aiming at destroying the political, educational, and economic organization therein. It is perfectly clear that the minorities of Eastern Poland had grave reasons for resentment of Polish rule, and that the Allies would be indeed unwise if they were to pledge themselves to restore Eastern Poland to a revived Poland without ascertaining if the people concerned desired such attachment. It is, of course, to be recognized that the present Polish Government, under a Premier whose military talents were denied exercise by the jealous and corrupt oligarchy destroyed by German arms, has announced its determination that there shall be no more oligarchical rule, that minorities shall have full rights, and that Jews shall be treated absolutely as equals, a policy attested by the appointment of a Jew to the Ministry. But the automatic return of the territories to Poland would be destitute of justice and morality.¹ Nor are the Allies bound to any such course, though the Premier and the President of Poland alike have declared that they expect the integral return of Poland to its old extent. Britain has made it clear that it is not pledged as against Russia by the treaty of August 25, 1939, for that was arranged with Poland

¹ As early as April 6, 1939, the autonomy of Eastern Galicia was urged; 345 H.C. Deb. 5 s. 3033. The Russian transfer of Vilna to Lithuania, October 10, 1939, is justified on the ground that the area is not really Polish; cf. *Polish White Book*, pp. 193ff.

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to apply only to German aggression, and no further pledge has been accorded.

Russia, no doubt, could plead also the right of self-preservation¹ for her action in taking control of the lands which she has occupied, nor can the value of her action to the Allied cause be denied. Instead of Germany obtaining forthwith domination over Rumania by carrying her frontier up to the Rumanian boundary, she has to depend on Russian favour for supplies of grain and oil from that essential source. Her gains from Russian trade, however lessened by the period of Russian preoccupation with the Finnish war, must be important in the long run, but it is certain that they would have been far greater had the whole of Poland fallen under her sway.

A most instructive contrast can be drawn with the Russian attack on Finland, of which a desperate defence has duly been evolved.² We are asked to believe that Britain claims and exercises a right of intervention in any war, as when in 1807 she seized the Danish fleet to prevent it falling into the hands of Napoleon. Unfortunately, this action of Britain is cited by modern British jurists only to denounce its illegality.³ The case of Salonika⁴ in 1915, cited as in point, is without value; the Allies were invited thither by M. Venizelos, Greek Premier, and their right to remain was undoubted. The suggestion of a newspaper correspondent that Britain might intervene in Iran as showing British conceptions of international law is really ludicrous. The further suggestion that the intervention of

¹ Mr. Churchill, broadcast, October 1, 1939.

² Pritt, *Must the War Spread?* pp. 137ff.

³ Wheaton, *Int. Law* (ed. Keith), i. 152.

⁴ *Ibid.*, i. 196.

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the United States in Cuba for humanitarian grounds is in point is quite untenable. Even more curious is the argument that in the Mutiny Act of 1818 the maintenance of a force to preserve *inter alia* the balance of power is recited; the army was wanted not to destroy weaker neighbours, but to protect them from aggression and so preserve the balance of power.

A case which rests on such untenable bases is *prima facie* suspect, but a cause may be good though its advocacy is in hands unskilled in international law, and the real argument may be faced. Is a Power entitled to demand territorial cessions from another Power, because to obtain them will strengthen its power of defence? The answer is simply that neither in international law nor in international morality has such a claim any basis. If a frontier has to be changed, it is for the Power which desires change to put forward reasons amicably. In fact this happened, and Finland showed herself ready to appreciate the desire of Russia for greater security for Leningrad. What she did refuse was to surrender Hanko and to allow Russian forces therein, because that would have meant the complete strategic dominance of Finland, and in turn the loss of Finnish independence. The allegation that the Finnish Prime Minister broadcast on 13th October to the Finnish people that the Russian demands did not affect the integrity of Finland is clearly an error, but to compare a broadcast with the Finnish state paper is absurd, and incompatible with common fairness. The further allegation that frontier incidents were caused by the Finnish forces is doubtless parallel with the lies of Herr Hitler regarding atrocities perpetrated on Germans by bloodthirsty Czechs and Poles.

The further argument that the Finns should have yielded because, if they did so, they would have Russian goodwill, and, if they did not, would have to fight, is almost incredibly bad. A people is to surrender its security on the faith of a Russian promise, backed with a threat of illegal force, in complete violation of a solemn Non-Aggression Pact; what value could attach to the good faith of those who were ready to violate a solemn treaty?

The next argument is an allegation, patently false, that Finland must have been urged to make war by Britain, France, and the United States. Sympathizers with Communism no doubt do not understand the love for liberty of honest men. But how an allegation can be made without a scrap of proof is difficult to understand: that the German wireless should suggest it, is natural; that any British lawyer should believe it, is amazing. But the whole argument, that if the Soviet Government wishes a thing it is entitled to take it, passes from the realm of common sense and decent morality into the strange substitutes thereof in a land whose leading politicians turn into its bitterest enemies and have to be exterminated.

The whole theory that Finland was a menace to Russia by the probability of great Powers making use of her as a basis of attack is a pure invention, as incredible as it is foolish. The incredible meanness of a country, with enormously greater powers, attacking a small country because she believes that the Powers which would naturally lend it aid are too immersed in war to defend the right, must be accentuated. To deny the right of small Powers to independence is indefensible. To create a bogus government from refugees, and to declare it the sole legitimate govern-

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ment of Finland, and to conclude with these nonentities a so-called treaty, is conclusive of the revival of the most repulsive form of imperialism. What so disappointed many who sympathized with Russia in general was that M. Litvinov's policy of adhering to international law was so completely repudiated, and that Communism stood forth as a match for totalitarianism in fraud and falsehood. Russian action thus provided M. Daladier with a justification for an onslaught on the Communist party and its suppression.

All cases where change of frontiers takes place, it is argued,¹ are instances of Power politics, even if disguised as voluntary action, and on this ground the attack may be justified. The obvious answer is that there is no reason whatever to suppose that anything really necessary for the safety of Russia could not have been secured by negotiation. The one fault that may be ascribed to Finland was her refusal to contemplate a guarantee by France, Britain, and Russia against any form of aggression. Her distrust of Russia played its part in the failure of the proposed pact between the Western Powers and Russia, and her ruin as a result of her refusal is an early example of severe retribution following what was unquestionably a serious diplomatic blunder. Unfortunately, Finland seems to have allowed herself to be moved to adopt this attitude by German representations, just as it seems the sudden breakdown of a gallant defence may have been affected by German advice.

¹ Cf. E. H. Carr, *The Twenty Years' Crisis*, pp. 278, 282, for a curious defence on this score of Munich, which ignores the fact that Czechoslovakia was not allowed to bargain, but received dictation from Britain and France.

7. *Italian Non-Belligerency*(a) *The Aggression on Albania*

It is now possible to appreciate¹ the Italian attitude towards the events which preceded the war. The failure of his project of 1933, above referred to, for treaty revision forced the Duce to realize that one duty alone remained for Italy, namely, to provide with her own will and her own forces for the defence of her own interests, for the necessities of her expansion, and for the construction of her own imperial system. Hence the Ethiopian affair. Contact with Germany was formed during the Ethiopian war, and strengthened during the Spanish conflict, and embodied in various accords. Count Ciano's visit to Berchtesgaden and Berlin in October 1936 led to agreements, to the recognition of the Italian Empire on 24th October, and the declaration by the Duce on 1st November² of the establishment of the axis: "This vertical line between Rome and Berlin is not a partition, but rather an axis around which all the European states animated by the will to collaboration and peace can also collaborate." The Berlin visit of the Duce in September 1937³ was marked by the acceptance by Italy on 6th November of the German-Japanese Anti-Comintern Pact. The Powers had achieved Munich, but a reaction had set in, and the democracies sought alliance with the Soviet Republic and the ideological, military, and political encirclement of Germany and Italy.

¹ Reviewed by Count Ciano, December 16, 1939.

² See *Doc. Int. Aff.*, 1936, pp. 343ff.

³ *Survey Int. Aff.*, 1937, i. 324, 332ff.

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Count Ciano insists that on the basis of this theory Germany and Italy acted quite independently in 1939 as regards Bohemia and Moravia on the one hand, and as regards Albania on the other. It seems probable enough that this is true. Italy, no doubt, must have felt that the aggrandizement of Germany after Munich ought to be regarded as giving her the right to extend her dominions, and the obvious objective was Albania. The Duce had endeavoured by encouraging, but not officially presenting, a formidable list of claims against France to promote Italian interest in that regard, but the reaction of M. Daladier was decidedly disconcerting. France had been thought by Italy to be undecided and open to menaces; it turned out that the idea of parting with national territory raised a storm of popular anger, which was shared even by those who had urged Italy to seize Ethiopia, and who now reminded Italy of her ingratitude in forgetting that no real sanctions had been imposed because of French insistence on moderation. At any rate the Duce could bide his time. The obvious victim was much less formidable, for Italy had long been acquiring influence, legitimate and illegitimate, in Albania, and the feebleness of the control and the personal unpopularity of King Zog rendered aggression both easy and likely to be profitable.

It is true that action which must vitally affect the *status quo* in the Adriatic ought not to be taken in any circumstances under the Anglo-Italian Treaty of April 1938 without prior consultation with Britain. But such consultation would raise difficulties, and at the moment deemed auspicious the British Fleet was conveniently dispersed, not, of course, as unkindly rumoured, by the connivance of the British

Admiralty, but because the British information system was acting, as patently it often did, ineffectively, so that a considerable expedition could be directed against Albania on 7th April without British measures to protect the state being even considered.¹ France seemingly was equally ill-informed. The way for success had been prepared by intrigues to win over adherents, and the forces, especially the air force, brought into action were of overwhelming strength, so that Albanian resistance was impossible, and the King and Queen with their newly-born child were compelled to flee hastily from the country. On the 10th a British protest was duly sent, but naturally disregarded; on the 12th an Albanian Constitutional Assembly, acting at the dictation of Italy, met and abrogated the constitution, set up a new government, and offered the Crown to the King of Italy, who was graciously pleased to accept it; Albania's inclusion in the Italian Empire was duly approved next day by the Fascist Grand Council.

The whole affair was a case of absolutely premeditated aggression, and American opinion on its immorality was marked by the personal appeal from President Roosevelt to the Duce, no less than to Herr Hitler, asking for a guarantee that for a period of ten, preferably twenty-five, years they would not invade some thirty named countries. Mr. Chamberlain's whole fabric of appeasement thus came tumbling round his head. He had given his blessing to the creation of the Italian Empire, which he had helped to create, and had sacrificed his Foreign Secretary in order to placate Italy. His reward was to be treated as a cipher

¹ The issue had been raised at Rome on 4th April, so that there was some delay; 345 H.C. Deb. 5 s. 3994f.

in European issues, and to be exposed to his countrymen as the dupe of the Duce, no less than of Herr Hitler. With his usual remarkable resilience he rallied from the shock, and faced Parliament, which had hastily been brought back for a single day's session in the Easter vacation, with a definite policy.¹ Public opinion throughout the world had once again been profoundly shocked by this fresh exhibition of the use of force. To every one, whether Christian or Moslem, it must be apparent that a powerful nation had imposed its will upon a small and relatively defenceless country, and had done so by an imposing show of armed force. The action of Italy raised in an acute form the issue of the maintenance of the *status quo* under the Anglo-Italian agreement of 1937, reaffirmed in the Treaty of 1938; the Adriatic formed part of the Mediterranean, and Italy could not deny that Britain had a definite interest in the question. It was not only the future of Albania that was at stake; disquiet and uneasiness had been manifested in the adjoining area, and throughout the Balkan Peninsula. A rumour had been current, which had reached the Greek Government, that Corfu was menaced, Lord Halifax had warned the Italian Chargé d'Affaires that any such action must be of the gravest concern to the British Government. The Duce had assured the Greek Government of his absolute determination to respect the insular and territorial integrity of Greece, and the danger had passed. But the British Government attached the greatest importance to the avoidance of disturbance by force or threats thereof of the *status quo* in the Mediterranean and the Balkan Peninsula. In the event, therefore, of any action being

¹ 346 H.C. Deb. 5 s. 5ff.

taken which clearly threatened the independence of Greece or Rumania, and which either government considered it vital to resist with its national forces, the British Government would feel bound to lend all the support in its power to the country attacked. A like view had been adopted by France, and the declaration was being communicated also to Turkey, whose close relations with Greece were known. But it was not proposed to denounce the Anglo-Italian agreement; on 9th April satisfactory assurances had been received of the Italian intention to withdraw its forces from Spain on the holding of the victory parade in Madrid, and the evacuation of these forces was an essential part of the agreement. If it were terminated, the Italian obligation would fall. The argument shows neatly how hopelessly the Premier had fettered his action by his acquiescence in the Italian aggression in Spain. The Duce, naturally, had reckoned on this factor in his Albanian coup. He had thus deliberately retained in Spain his forces after the British and French acceptance of the victory of General Franco on 27th February, knowing that thus he had a lever wherewith to paralyse any effort which the Premier might care to make.

Mr. Chamberlain admitted the intolerable nature of a state of things which kept the whole world in a perpetually recurring series of alarms and crises, blighting commerce and industry, depressing social life and culture, poisoning every phase of human activity in every country. Yet he clung to the belief in appeasement, and asserted that the government was in close touch with Russia's representatives. Without any preconceived ideological notions they were endeavouring to marshal the forces still in favour of peace and willing to resist aggression. They must stiffen their

resolution to strengthen themselves for their own defence and the grant of aid to those who, faced with aggression or threatened with loss of freedom, decided to resist. The critics of his speech pointed out that he was now doing what he had refused to do under the Covenant ; the pledges to Greece and Rumania were welcomed, but it was insisted that an accord with Russia was essential, while Turkey should be brought into consultation ; if Turkey and the four Balkan states would stand together, they would be safe, but agreement between Rumania and Bulgaria was vital. Mr. Churchill¹ insisted on the unhappy disposition of the British Fleet at the critical time ; had it been concentrated and cruising in the southern part of the Ionian Sea, the Albanian adventure would never have been carried out. Even Sir J. Simon confessed that there could be no objection to a military alliance of France, Britain, and the U.S.S.R. The fate of that project, half-heartedly embraced, has already been recorded.

Though Mr. Chamberlain, in words, disapproved, in fact he homologated the rape of Albania. His cordiality to Italy did not diminish, and on the earliest opportunity he accepted the hint of Italy that her continued non-belligerency in the war would be encouraged by recognition of the annexation of Albania.² While, therefore, there was no real necessity on business grounds for maintaining con-

¹ 346 H.C. Deb. 5 s. 30ff. He also denounced the ignorance of the government in this case as in that of Bohemia.

² For a brief period nothing was done. *Ibid.*, IIIIf, 1483. The new British Ambassador was not accredited to the Italian sovereign as King of Albania, but his appointment was dated 24th March. On 3rd June Italy took over Albania's foreign relations, and the British Minister remained as Consul-General ; 348 H.C. Deb. 5 s. 875.

sular representation with a country so unimportant in war time for British trade, he applied for an *exequatour* for a Consul-General, without any attempt to save his face by denying that recognition *de jure* was implied. It would, of course, have been useless to attempt such a reservation,¹ and no doubt to help Italy to remain on the fence was worth while, since Britain had no desire to raise a finger for Albanian independence. The British public was acquiescent, not so much because it believed that the acquisition of Albania did not alter the *status quo*, but because the country had not developed substantially under existing conditions, and it was held that it was not impossible that Italian development by providing capital would advance the interests of the people. So far nothing has been done save formulate schemes.

The League, of course, was ignored. The Council managed to shelve dealing with the appeal duly lodged by the Sovereign,² as was remarked somewhat acidly by those who could not see why the Finnish issue could be made the subject of an Assembly decision, while Albania was a tabooed topic, no less than that of aggression on Poland; but essential issues cannot indefinitely be burked. Either Italy must be left at the close of the war in possession of her illegal gains, Ethiopia and Albania, with the result that the struggle for liberty which is the essential British war aim must be deemed as in an essential degree frustrated; or Italy must be induced to allow the people of the lands she

¹ Keith, the *Scotsman*, November 2, 1939.

² An appeal from the Chargé d'Affaires at Paris was held irregular on no good grounds, and the Council merely referred the King's appeal in May to the Assembly; *Monthly Summary*, 1939, pp. 183f.

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now holds subjugated by brute force to decide on their own future status. That she will ever consent to surrender her gains is unthinkable, a fact that deserves the most serious consideration from those who depict the establishment of a régime of ordered liberty in Europe as the goal of peace efforts. The vital question, indeed, is whether the war can be won unless Italy can be induced to maintain her non-belligerency by concessions to which France had displayed the strongest objections, or by further weakening the British position in Arabia and the Red Sea. It is significant that it is by the aid of Italian engineers, as reported in February, 1940,¹ that the ruler of the Yemen has fortified his coast opposite Perim so as to command the channel between that island and the mainland.

One result, however, of the Albanian episode was the attainment by Britain and France of effective relations with Turkey.² The position in regard to that state was rendered difficult, not because of any lack of desire for peace, nor willingness to co-operate with the Western Powers in order to achieve it, but because Turkey was grateful to Russia for the invaluable encouragement extended to her in the days when she was struggling to establish a new state order and to carry out extensive reforms. Russia, for her part, was anxious to obtain the concurrence of Turkey in a policy which would have been inconsistent with the position as to the Straits established by the Montreux Convention of 1936,³ abrogating on certain terms the limitation of Turkish control over the passage of warships through the Straits.

¹ The *Times*, February 24, 1940.

² Monroe, *The Mediterranean in Politics*, chap. v.

³ *Survey Int. Aff.*, 1936, pp. 584ff.

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After the British communication of her guarantees to Greece and Rumania prolonged negotiations resulted in an accord on 12th May, under which, pending a permanent agreement, the British and Turkish Governments in the event of an act of aggression leading to war in the Mediterranean area lent each other all possible aid. On 24th June a like accord was signed for France, which had agreed to surrender the Sanjak of Alexandretta, hitherto included under her mandate for Syria, to which Turkey on ethnic grounds had a just claim; the area is now the Hatay Republic. The Russo-German Pact of August 1939 created a serious position by introducing an element of divergence between the relations of Turkey to the U.S.S.R. and the Western Powers. Efforts were made by the Foreign Minister on a visit to Moscow in September to secure accord with Russia before concluding a final treaty with Britain, but through the intervention of Herr von Ribbentrop, who visited Moscow on 27th September, his mission failed. But the issue was solved in the treaty of 19th October,¹ by adding a protocol exempting Turkey from action involving her in war with the U.S.S.R. Turkey receives a full promise of aid if attacked by any European Power or involved in war through an act of aggression in the Mediterranean area. She will aid Britain and France if an act of aggression by a European Power involves them in war in that area, or if they are engaged in hostilities as an outcome of their pledges to Rumania and Greece. Thus the accord serves markedly to strengthen the ideal of peace in the Balkans, and since the war Italy has shown a strong desire that such peace may

¹ *Cmd.* 6123, 6165.

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be maintained, a matter which affects her vitally as a Balkan Power.

(b) *Italy and Poland*

It was under the influence of the events following on the Albanian coup that Count Ciano met Herr von Ribbentrop at Milan in May.¹ The two robber Powers were agreed that they needed time to complete internal reconstruction and their military preparations before using their power to establish peace, based on the satisfaction of their vital needs ; Italy could not strike for three, Germany for four or five years. Pending readiness, no seriously controversial issues should be raised ; and on this understanding, and in order to present a solid front against encirclement, an alliance was announced. It is clear that the Mediterranean was marked out as Italy's special sphere, Central Europe and the Baltic being reserved to Germany, while complete solidarity was assured in the case only of an ideological war. The actual treaty was signed on 22nd May.

Already in April the Powers were in accord that their aim must be to keep Russia from entering into the system of encirclement planned by the democracies, but nothing further was deemed possible in view of the Nazi hatred of Russia. At Salzburg on 11th August Count Ciano heard of the satisfactory progress of the commercial negotiations between Germany and Russia, and on 21st August he learned by telephone that Herr von Ribbentrop was to go next day to Moscow to sign the new pact. Italy, which had warned Britain as early as 28th May of the danger of giving a free hand to Poland, worked to avert the dangers of war.

¹ Speech, December 16, 1939 ; *Bull. Int. News*, xvi. 1439ff.

The Duce suggested on 31st August¹ that he would call a conference for 5th September to review the clauses of the treaty of Versailles, which was the cause of the existing disturbances in Europe, if he had the certainty of Franco-British adhesion and Polish participation assured by action in London and Paris. The replies from both Britain and France were favourable in principle, despite the military aggression begun on the morning of 1st September, and at 10 a.m. on the 2nd the Duce informed the Führer that a conference was possible. The reply was not a rejection of such possibility but a desire to know if (1) the British and French notes already presented were an ultimatum, and if (2) he could count on twenty-four hours to mature his reply. At 2 p.m. the Duce got into contact with the British and French Governments which, late in the evening, replied that the notes were not an ultimatum, but a warning; but that, as Germany had occupied Polish territories, their evacuation was an essential condition of any conference. The Duce so informed the Führer, but added that, unless he thought otherwise, he did not think he could take further action. There was indeed, as the Polish Government² stressed, no question to consider except the fulfilment by the Western Powers of their plain obligations under the treaties, performance of which was formally asked on 1st September.

Italy at once intimated that she would take no military action. The decision had been taken in advance with the accord of the German Government; it was a position of non-belligerency, thus according with Germany's desire

¹ *Cmd.* 6106, pp. 193ff; *French Yellow Book*, pp. 360, 379, 394, 406, 410.

² *Cmd.* 6106, pp. 169f, 172; *French Yellow Book*, pp. 388, 393f.

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to localize the conflict and the pact and collateral undertakings between the two Powers. But, though Italy needed time to bring her war equipment up to the maximum contemplated, so little did she fear war that since 1911 she had spent more years at war than at peace.

The Italian position is thus clear. She has refrained from war because she is thus able to complete her preparations, so that she may at the crucial moment strike hard, if her demands are not voluntarily conceded by the belligerent Powers. What her aims are can be conjectured from numerous hints. From France she demands either full control or an equal share in Tunis, the cession of French Somaliland with the French railway to Ethiopia, a full share in the body of directors who manage the Suez Canal, and more distantly the acquisition of Corsica and Nice. But France has already declared, through M. Bonnet on December 14 and 19, 1938,¹ that, even if conflict is involved, Italy will never obtain an inch of any part of the French Empire, and on 2nd and 3rd January M. Daladier had an ovation in Corsica and Tunis, where he gave a pledge that France would stand by the Empire. On 26th January in the Chamber he rejected the claims of Italy, which had as a hint on 17th December denounced the Italo-French Pact of 1935, which settled for the time the issues as to boundaries and Tunis in dispute between the countries. France denies the right of Italy thus to upset the final accord then reached; her attitude is not unnatural, for it was on the strength of it that France acquiesced in, and promoted the destruction of Ethiopian independence. Not all evil deeds prosper, and the danger of Italian intervention

¹ A. Werth, *France and Munich*, pp. 397ff.

hangs heavy over the Western Powers. They can, however, rely on their strong preparations in the Mediterranean, their alliance with Turkey, and the reluctance of Spain to take any measures even remotely in favour of Russia.

8. *The Revival of League Activity against Russia and its Failure*

Among the many paradoxes of the history of the League is the fact that its political activity, seemingly moribund, was suddenly called to active life in December 1939 by a complaint against Russia of aggression on Finland.¹ On 3rd December appeal was made to the League by Finland under Articles 11 and 15 of the Covenant. Arrangements were made to summon the Council for the 9th, and the Assembly for the 11th. The U.S.S.R. denied that any war with Finland existed. The Democratic Republic of Finland, displacing the previous government, had asked Russian aid on 1st December, and had signed a treaty on the 2nd instant liquidating the differences between Russia and the government now no longer in power. Russia, therefore, refused to attend either the Council or the Assembly meetings. Colombia sent Finland sympathy; Venezuela, which was due to retire on July 11, 1940, promised to renew co-operation for the occasion; Argentina pointed out that immediate expulsion was the due punishment for the crime; and Uruguay insisted that the presence in the League of a Power which acted as Russia had done would compel her to withdraw from it. Finland

¹ *L. of N. Monthly Summary Special Supplement*, December 1939.

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asked the Council to refer the dispute to the Assembly, where it rested its case on an elaborate documentary proof. Its representative could avail himself of the Russian view as regards Spain on September 28, 1937, when it was argued that to recognize a rebel body as a government was itself an intervention. The Argentine delegate¹ gave a most interesting résumé of Argentine's collaboration, showing how the state had declared sanctions against Italy, despite many close ties, had attempted to aid in the Spanish issue, and had regretted the failure of Czechoslovakia and even Poland to appeal for League action. Non-aggression was clearly no longer capable of being enforced by the League, mutual assistance had been destroyed, but the League still could rid itself of a member which had repudiated without scruple or excuse the fundamental principles of the League. His state could not remain in the League if Russia did so.

A Special Committee was duly constituted to examine the issues, and in accordance with practice it made a vain effort to induce Russia, as well as Finland, which was anxious to agree, to cease hostilities and to accept the mediation of the Assembly. This was refused, and the report of the Committee set out convincingly the case that Russia was guilty of aggression. She had violated a whole series of engagements towards Finland—the Treaty of Dorpat, October 14, 1920; the convention of June 1, 1922; notes of September 24, 1928; the Paris Pact, 1928; the Treaty of Non-Aggression and Pacific Settlement of Disputes, January 21, 1932, extended to 1945 by a protocol of April 7, 1934; and the Convention for the Definition of Aggression of July 3, 1933, signed by the U.S.S.R. and

¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 43ff.

border states, and accepted by Finland on January 1, 1934 ; and Article 12 of the League Covenant. She had refused the good offices of the President of the United States, and had declined all reasonable proposals of Finland for a peaceful settlement, alleging the existence of a government created by herself on conquered territory, while the regular government of Finland, duly elected, was recognized by all other Powers. It recommended, therefore, a formal condemnation of the action taken, an urgent appeal to every member of the League to provide Finland with such material and humanitarian assistance as might be in its power, and to refrain from any action which might weaken Finland's power of resistance, and the authorization of the Secretary-General to lend the aid of his technical services in the organization of such assistance and to consult non-member states with a view to their co-operation. It also advocated the Council to pronounce on the effect of the refusal of Russia to be present at the examination of the issue by Council and Assembly, thereby failing to observe a vital covenant for safeguarding peace, and of the untenable grounds adduced for its action, and suggested that Russia had thereby placed herself outside the Covenant.¹

The Assembly debate produced some variations of opinion. Portugal strongly urged expulsion from the League ; Mexico condemned Russia but doubted the wisdom of expulsion, which would preclude the chance of a settlement within the League framework ; India and Ecuador approved expulsion as did Britain and France, though they had not initiated the movement ; and Poland,

¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 60f. See *The Development of Finnish-Soviet Relations during the Autumn of 1939* (1940).

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Belgium, and the Netherlands approved, provided it was understood that the action of the Secretariat did not involve collective action; while Switzerland, under the entire neutrality, recovered in 1938,¹ refrained for that reason alone from voting for expulsion. Sweden, Denmark, and Norway were sympathetic, but made it clear that in accordance with their view in 1938 they did not accept any idea of sanctions; Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania also declined the application of sanctions; and China and Bulgaria abstained from voting. It is obvious that paramount reasons for not irritating Russia explained the abstentions from voting. The President therefore duly recorded approval, no dissent having been proposed. In the Council there might have been some difficulty to obtain the unanimity necessary for expulsion. But it was held that, if members abstained from voting, that did not prevent an affirmative resolution being carried, and this was arranged on 13th December by suspending the normal rule that no member might be re-elected unless previously declared re-eligible by the Assembly. It was thus arranged that five non-permanent seats should be filled by the Assembly, in lieu of Bolivia, China, Latvia, New Zealand, and Sweden; the first two were re-elected, the Union of South Africa replaced New Zealand in accordance with the normal plan of having one Dominion on the Council, Finland took the place of Sweden, and Egypt of Latvia.

The Council, thus reconstituted,² on 14th December, ruled that for the reasons set forth in the resolution of the Assembly, in virtue of Article 16 of the Covenant, "by its act the U.S.S.R. has placed itself outside the League of

¹ See Chap. IV., § 6, above.

² *Op. cit.*, pp. 68ff.

Nations. It follows, that the U.S.S.R. is no longer a member of the League." As a consequence the U.S.S.R. ceased to be a member of the Labour Organization.

It is impossible to criticize the validity of the view that Russia had been guilty of aggression. The curious wording of the resolution, asserting that Russia had placed herself outside the League, was criticized by Holland,¹ and it is not to be admired. The acceptance by failure to vote in the Council was marked, for Greece, Yugoslavia, and China—as well as Finland, which as an interested party did not vote—refrained from recording votes. It has, therefore, been argued² that the resolution was accepted only by Britain and France; the Union of South Africa, a British Dominion; Egypt, a client state of Britain; Belgium, alleged to be a client state of Britain and France; and Bolivia and the Dominican Republic, held to be client states of the United States of America. But there is clearly no basis for the suggestion of inspiration of the movement by these two states, for the moving force was clearly South American, and the abstentions of Greece, Yugoslavia, and China were clearly motivated by desire to avoid irritating Russia. Iran and Peru³ were not represented, but neither would have dissented; owing to her having given notice to leave the League, Peru had ceased to vote.

The value of the resolution depended vitally on the attitude of Norway and Sweden, and that was soon disclosed. Both sympathized with Finland, but neither would take up arms in her cause. What, however, was decisive, the two governments on 13th and 17th February declared

¹ *Op. cit.*, p. 64. ² Pritt, *Must the War Spread?* p. 225.

³ Under notice to leave the League.

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explicitly that they would not permit the transit through their territories of British or French forces intended to afford aid to Finland. The result was that on 12th March the Finnish Government concluded a disastrous peace on very much worse terms than were offered at the negotiations prior to the war. It is difficult to hold that the Finnish collapse was essential. The British and French Governments had offered men and full co-operation if Finland applied for it, but the Finnish Government and Field-Marshal Mannerheim decided that, owing to the attitude of Sweden and Norway, the troops which were in readiness for dispatch for their support could not arrive in time. In the Field-Marshal's case, in view of his close relations with Germany in the war by which Finland was liberated, it may be assumed that the collapse of his resistance was motivated by desire not to run counter to the policy of Germany, which was believed to have been prepared to send aid to Russia, if the Allies intervened, while the Finnish Government was naturally much affected by his opinion.¹

The peace clearly marks, as in the case of the Baltic States, the end of Finnish independence. M. Daladier made it clear that, if Finland surrendered, the Allies need not sponsor her case at the conclusion of the war. It is true that for the moment the imposition of a Bolshevist régime is spared; the puppet government had proved useless, and it was therefore abandoned by M. Stalin. A Bolshevist republic in Karelia was, however, created. But Finland

¹ Even so, the collapse is curious and needs explanation. Cf. the *Times*, March 11-16, 1940. Fear of Germany was officially admitted by Norway, 14th March, and Sweden, 1st April.

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had to surrender the whole Karelian Isthmus, including Viipuri and the bay islands; territory north and west of Lake Ladoga, with several towns; islands in the Gulf of Finland; the territory of Markajärvi, and parts of the peninsula of Rybachi. More fatal still is the necessity to lease Hanko and adjacent islands, with the right for the Soviet Government to establish a naval base and maintain there military and air forces. In Petsamo, Finland cannot maintain any naval or air base. Russia obtains freedom of transit to Norway across the Petsamo district, and to Sweden, a railway to be constructed for the latter purpose from Kandalaksha to Kemijärvi. Both parties must refrain from aggression and must not enter into any alliance against the other.¹

It is clear that Finland has not the slightest chance of self-defence, and the Scandinavian countries have lost their valuable barrier against Russian aggression. From her new frontier Russia could penetrate by three railways to Helsinki, to the Gulf of Bothnia, and to the Swedish frontier, while the line from the Murmansk railway to Kemijärvi has enormous strategic importance against Sweden. The cession of Hanko enables Russia to control Germany's access to the Finnish nickel mines and the iron ore of Sweden. Vital areas of Finland containing essential industries, especially power production and the great cellulose factory, are lost.²

¹ Norway and Sweden were very far from enthusiastic for a Nordic Defence Union urged by the Finnish President on March 14, 1940. They could not defend Finland now, and Russia vetoed a union.

² About 420,000 Finns have lost homes and lands. On the position of the Aaland Islands, the value of which for defence is undermined, see Padelford and Andersson, *A.J.I.L.*, 1939, pp. 465ff.

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It is idle to ignore the resounding victory achieved by Russia, with the support of German threats to Finland no less than to Sweden and Norway. In the ultimate issue the security of Sweden and Norway was fatally compromised ; they might have in effect to become virtually protectorates of Russia or Germany, and to serve as the battlefield between these Powers, should they determine to fight out their causes. The western Allies were clearly relieved from any concern with their future, and the long years of peace have deprived both countries of military qualities. The efforts of the King of Sweden at defending his Ministry were utterly unsatisfactory. Norway has already met her nemesis, as will be recorded below.

The failure of this effort to revive the activities of the League¹ must not be minimized. Juridically it is impossible to question the right of Norway and Sweden to repudiate their obligation under Article 16 to allow the transit of Allied forces to aid Finland. The French and British repudiation of the Covenant obligations released these Powers from any obligation ; just as war was in contemplation by Russia, the British recognition on 31st October of the Albanian conquest revealed once more that the League Covenant was dead.

It would be untrue to accept the view of German propaganda that the defeat of Finland constituted a gigantic diplomatic defeat for the Allies, flinging them back from eastern Europe and foreshadowing the destruction of their efforts to assert a voice in Europe beyond the Maginot line. In fact, having regard to the attitude of Sweden and

¹ S. S. Jones, *The Scandinavian States and the League of Nations* (1939).

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Norway,¹ the inaction of the Allies was inevitable. To insist on sending aid via these states would have been wholly unwise. But it is true that once again democracies have proved their inferiority in courage and determination to totalitarian states. Italian opinion ascribes the defeat to traditional British indecision, but this is hardly made out, and, if the New York *Herald-Tribune* regrets the failure of powerful democratic neighbours to afford aid, it also admits that the tardiness with which Congress acted, and the hesitation widely disposed towards assuming the slightest risk, are not accomplishments of which the United States can be proud.

For the future of the League and for British policy the episode should have decisive warning. The idea favoured by the Duchess of Atholl and many supporters of the League, that it is still possible to convert it into an effective instrument of international security must be abandoned once and for all. There is no reason whatever to suppose that any assurances given to maintain security under the League would have any greater validity than those given in 1919. Peoples, the history of the League has proved, will not make any sacrifice for ideals, and will act only for motives of national importance. They are also absolutely short-sighted in their outlook, as in the case of Norway and Sweden, but equally in the case of France and Britain, when these two Powers allowed Ethiopia and Czechoslovakia, as well as Austria, to be utterly destroyed, and Mr.

¹ Their one excuse is that they distrusted the value of British assurances, unless, indeed, it is true that those were not tendered until too late. But their duty to Finland was clear, and their moral responsibility patent. See Ibsen's *Brand* in *Survey Int. Aff.*, 1937, i. 54, for anticipatory censure.

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Chamberlain showed his sympathy with the man in the street's objection to fight for any interest not immediately British. Yet that the present war derives directly from the aggression of Signor Mussolini on Ethiopia is beyond doubt, even if we hesitate to assign the affair of Manchuria as an ultimate cause.

While the weakness of the League ideal has been completely exposed, the value of totalitarianism has been brilliantly vindicated. M. Stalin may have lost large numbers of men, and the Russian forces may have conferred distinction on their enemy rather than on themselves, but the spoils of war are his in complete measure, and, as in the cases of his Polish conquests and bloodless victories in the Baltic, there is no prospect that the Allies can affect his retention of his gains. It may safely be assumed that by the time that the Allies have secured victory over Germany, the population of Russian Poland will have been converted to acceptance of the Soviet régime which has distributed lands and has carried out long-overdue agrarian and other reforms. In the case of Finland it may be hoped that the course of events following on Germany's aggression on Norway may enable her to avoid the temptations of Bolshevization, but this is far from certain. At any rate, it will be practically impossible for Britain and France, to which no official appeal was made by Finland, to demand the reopening of the frontier issue. The Karelian Isthmus will doubtless have a population of convinced Bolshevists, whom it would be absurd to remove.

One serious point must be faced. Was the resuscitation of the League, and the proceedings in December at Geneva a help or a mere hindrance? It has been plausibly con-

tended ¹ that the time was spent in exploiting the cumbrous machinery of the League when swift and resolute action by Britain and France would have had an immense material and moral effect in Finland, and in neutral countries in general. Certainly it is true that a special responsibility rested on these Powers, who were powerful, within striking distance by air, deeply concerned for the survival of small nations, and already in a state of war ; that there was prolonged delay in even arranging for the raising of volunteers, and only in February were steps taken to raise an expeditionary force. But it must be pointed out that in the affair of Ethiopia Britain, with the encouragement of the *Times*, sheltered under the plea that she and France had no special responsibility for acting in respect of their neighbour Ethiopia, and that as regards Finland the British Government merely adhered to this precedent. That action on this basis is incompatible with winning a war is indeed obvious, and, while French opinion ² is unanimous in condemning the pusillanimity of Norway and Sweden, it is forgotten that the failure of the western Allies to strike a stroke for Ethiopia, Czechoslovakia, and Austria, and their complete failure to afford effective aid to Poland, cause minor Powers great reluctance to run any risks. The British and French Cabinets, composed as they mainly are of men responsible for one débâcle after another, presumably lack the courage and decision which must be used to assure victory in war. M. Stalin and Herr Hitler have the great advantage of resilient youth of spirit as against the " ossified, desiccated, nonentities " pledged to create a new order in

¹ *The Times*, March 14, 1940, p. 9.

² *Ibid.*, p. 8.

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Europe,¹ but allowing their chances to slip through numbed and ineffective fingers.

To Germany, of course, the débâcle of the League has brought fresh encouragement. It enforces notably the doctrine of the Führer that a great nation has the duty and the right to extend its power at the cost of neighbouring states, and it affords a spurt to secure successes counterbalancing those of Russia. The motives which demand the retention of Czechoslovakia and Poland are greatly strengthened, and the U.S.S.R., while demanding Slav solidarity in the Balkans, has approved President Hacha's unpatriotic desire to make Czechoslovakia a loyal unit in the German living-space, while Russian Poland is rapidly accepting Sovietization, which doubtless is not worse than Polish misgovernment of minorities. If Germans are asked why Czechs and Poles should not have freedom, they readily retort with a like question regarding India, whose wrongs have compelled the desperate gesture of assassination² in the heart of London; they cite the oppression of the Arabs of Palestine in favour of the Jews,³ and of the colonial Empire in general, while they appeal to the unbiassed testimony of their protagonist, General Hertzog, whose thesis is that Germany is only taking a just revenge for the crimes of Versailles, a view shared by Colonel Lindbergh, whose mischievous efforts to prevent American sympathy for the Allies throw light on his success in London in dissuading British relations with Russia.

¹ Hitler, February 24, 1940.

² Sir M. O'Dwyer, March 13, 1940.

³ The Labour and Liberals, on March 6, 1940, voted against fair treatment of the Arabs.

If, then, there is to be an end to this era of broken faith, as Mr. Eden ¹ assures us, and political perjury must be shown to have had its day, it cannot come from any change of heart on the part of Russia or of Germany or of Italy. The doctrines of Herr Hitler, M. Stalin, and Signor Mussolini are all equally pernicious. The necessity of seeking to prevent the Duce adding himself to the circle of enemies doubtless explains the important concession made in March ² in delaying the operation of the Reprisals Order in Council in respect of shipments of coal from Rotterdam, despite the importance of waging effectively economic warfare; but a peace leaving Italy mistress of Ethiopia and Albania is not a peace to establish freedom and liberty, even if Germany were effectively defeated.

To meet the dangers which any peace must leave undealt with needs something greater than an effort to restore the League to activity in the political sphere. The reduction of the activities of the League to economic and social ends on the lines of the report of a Special Committee under Mr. Bruce, which was favourably received by the League in December 1939 ³ is a possibility, and unobjectionable, so long as the fantastic idea that from such co-operation could be born political co-operation for security is discarded; the League is not likely ever to receive the co-operation of Russia, Germany, Italy, Japan, and many minor Powers. What is essential is the formation, not of a federation, but of an effective alliance between France and Britain, which

¹ *The Times*, March 4, 1940.

² *Ibid.*, March 11, 1940. See also the conciliatory reply of 19th March, asserting anxiety to maintain the accords of 1938, though injurious to Britain; Keith, *Scotsman* 6th and 13th March.

³ *L. of N. Spec. Suppl.*, August 1939; *Monthly Summary*, 1939, pp. 456 ff

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should include a revived Czechoslovakia and a democratized Poland such as was promised by Mr. Chamberlain. Such an alliance would have to be real, involving constant co-operation in foreign issues, and military, naval, and air co-operation of a day to day character, so that there could be no question of the ghastly fiasco when Colonel Beck¹ begged for Allied air action to relieve German pressure on Poland, and had to be given a negative answer. Czechoslovakia and Poland alike would have to be rearmed so as to be able to stand firm against attack, and defensible frontiers must be assured for the former Power.

The Balkan States might similarly be induced to form an effective alliance so as to avoid dependency on Russia, Germany, or Italy. This would necessitate Bulgaria receiving a reasonable amount of satisfaction from Yugoslavia, Rumania, and Greece. If Hungary could be brought in by some accord over Transylvania, and if Austria should freely choose to join this group, there might be assured the safety of all the states. But it would be unwise to minimize the great difficulties of bringing about such a consummation, when Italy and Russia have every motive to prefer the states in the Danubian area to remain divided. Without the creation of some such bloc tranquillity is inconceivable. In the north a Scandinavian group is now but a vague possibility. If it is objected that Mr. Chamberlain² has denounced groupings as a policy of utter despair, the obvious answer is that his policy has led to a disastrous war, which nothing but blind credulity can induce us to believe to be a war to end war.

¹ *Cmd.* 6106, pp. 169, 171 ; *Polish White Book*, p. 139.

² 339 H.C. Deb. 5 s. 549.

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Germany, chastened by military defeat—no blockade can now deprive her of oil and food—and Russia will remain beside Italy as potential disturbers of the peace, and in the case of the last two, if they remain non-belligerent against Britain and France, brilliant exponents of successful aggression. The outlook will be black unless Britain and France turn their backs resolutely on the record of years of timidity and broken obligations, and rid themselves of the delusion that other peoples share their comfortable pacifism and conviction that they are entitled to hold all they have gained against the rest of the world, and, despite their declining populations, to object to any claims for even the right of immigration. Some hope may be derived from the aid freely given by the Dominions and India; these states, which would reject any federation, might be willing to co-operate closely with an effective British alliance with France, and thus aid in establishing the rule that no change in the *status quo*, re-established as far as suitable by the peace treaty, shall be accomplished by the use of force. But the possibility of modification on grounds of justice and reason must not be ruled out, or nothing will prevent a new conflagration. The history of the last few years in Britain almost as much as in France offers no grounds for high hopes for the future.

There is scant possibility, however, that relations with the totalitarian states may be rendered easier by the application of economic remedies. It is pointed out¹ that in totalitarian countries the motives of profit for individuals have been removed, and it is suggested that in Britain it is already admitted that to earn more than a limited rate

Carr, *The Twenty Years' Crisis*, pp. 304f.

of profit on essential public services is immoral. The same doctrine is said to have been applied to armament production, but of this assertion concrete proof is wholly to seek; the taxing of excess profits in the last war left vast sums to profiteers and secured reckless disbursements. That these grave blunders will now be avoided is a mere hypothesis. Certainly the manufacturers, and those who finance them, show scant fear of real control, and scandals of an unpleasing character are already reported. That the rearmament crisis or even the war will convince Britain that employment is more important than profit, social stability than increased consumption, and equitable distribution than maximum production, is a hypothesis which may be doubted. Even if we accept that we are willing to subordinate economic advantage to social ends in our own country, it follows not at all that we can rise to the conception of subordinating the economic welfare of Britain to that of Germany, Italy, or Russia, without having any assurance that the increased strength of these nations will not be used simply to strengthen the forces acting against Britain. That Britain and France should co-operate economically, as in finance and politics, is indeed deeply to be desired, but this is a very different thing from either country making sacrifices for rival countries, in the hope of thus buying off enmity, especially enmity based on motives of power. An appeal based merely on the nobility of self-sacrifice¹ may be regarded as merely visionary.

The difficulties of peaceful change² are seen in the most clear way if we eschew generalities, and pose the question of immigration of Indians or Japanese into Australia. It is

¹ Carr, *op. cit.*, pp. 213ff.

² Cf. J. L. Kunz, *A.J.I.L.*, 1939, pp. 33ff.

easy to argue that these peoples should find sufficient room and occupation in their own lands, or at any rate not in Australia, just as the Union of South Africa has endeavoured to cast on India, or some other place, the duty of dealing with the considerable number of Indians born in the Union, which assuredly has a plain obligation to care for them instead of striving to drive them to find new homes. Or, again, we have the exclusion of Indians, Chinese, and virtually Japanese from Canada and the United States, and the Union of South Africa. The United States has the Monroe Doctrine,¹ Japan is seeking to establish a new order for the Far East, Britain asserts her view of the law of blockade, the U.S.S.R. insists on denying individual rights of property, and thus rejects compensation for the deprivation thereof of foreigners. All of these matters are excluded from submission to any other Power to decide by national policy, just as Germany has negated any arbitration or conciliation or judicial settlement of her right to living space, or to destroy the Jewish race. There never was a time when the United States would have consented to submit her claims in respect of control of Cuba, or any of her interventions in Central America, or her creation of the Republic of Panama; just as Britain would not submit to arbitration her relations with Germany, or any other country, regarding her colonies, or those with Egypt, so Rumania has interposed a blank refusal to arbitrate the claims on her of Bulgaria, Hungary, or Russia. Herr Hitler and Signor Mussolini in their aggressions were resolute not to accept any mediation or arbitral decree.

¹ Extended by the Lima Declaration, 1938; C. G. Fenwick, *A.J.I.L.* 1939, pp. 257ff.

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We have, in fact, to face issues which far transcend anything which can be affected by economic appeasement, and that power will diminish as an essential factor in determining the relations of states, in any time to be foreseen, is not believable. Hence the dreams of Federal Union or a revival of the League of Nations must not obscure the solid fact that the only method whereby to prevent the use of power against Britain and France lies in the creation of such an edifice of protective force as to render aggression unwise. That we have to recur to the ideal of a balance of power in a new form may be regretted; that we have no other alternative, if we are not to suffer disaster, may be confidently asserted.

It has indeed been suggested¹ that by the creation of a Permanent Court of International Equity a means of decision might be established for all disputes which the parties were not willing to submit to mediation, arbitration, or judicial settlement, while Article 19 of the Covenant might be altered to allow a two-thirds majority to declare the terms of any award, made over ten years earlier, no longer in accord with circumstances nor with a durable peace. This scheme would require to be supplemented by an international air force² to secure reference to, and acceptance of rulings of, the Equity Tribunal. But it is plain that nations are not in the least likely to accept any such project; those that will peace can doubtless settle far more simply their causes of difference,³ those that do not favour peace

¹ K. Strupp, *Legal Machinery for Peaceful Change* (1937). Contrast F. S. Dunn, *Peaceful Change* (1937), who denies the value of any new machinery.

² Lord Davies, *Nearing the Abyss. The Lesson of Ethiopia* (1936).

³ Cf. C. R. M. F. Cruttwell, *A History of Peaceful Change in the Modern World* (1937).

would not accept the scheme, or, if compelled to do so, would merely plan to destroy it. Whether religion will ever expel war from mankind only time will tell; the projects hitherto devised are patently unavailing.

9. *The Phantom of Neutrality*

If Norway, in the words of her greatest writer, refused aid to Finland, or to allow Allied forces to give aid, on the score that

“ We are small, and lack the might
To join battle for the right ;
Cannot sacrifice the nation
For our share in world-salvation,”

she was shortly to learn that her neutrality would not mean exemption from war.

The neutrality of the Scandinavian countries is at first sight difficult to understand, but it is explicable by the same motives as produce in Britain the phenomenon of conscientious objection to military service. There are two obvious grounds which create such objectors—cowardice and avarice; the conscientious objector stands to gain enormously by refusing service. He escapes all the irksome misery of military training, the lack of freedom, subjection to orders often difficult to defend, and not least the danger of death or injury, as well as increased liability to disease and pain. By remaining in civil employment he draws sums in striking contrast to a soldier's pay, and has added possibilities of gain by promotion or obtaining employment vacated by a more patriotic comrade. Some objectors no doubt are moved by false philosophy; they accept the teachers of hedonism as their guides, and regard

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the pursuit of pleasures, especially physical, as alone justifiable; or they are stupid enough to be misled by the flagrant sophistries of pacifism, supported by false interpretations of Christian teaching. The increase of the numbers of objectors is directly favoured by the policy of the state in permitting their retention even in the service of military departments, and in the ranks of the teachers of youths and children,¹ and in refusing to require that such objectors should be ready to prove their sincerity by accepting civil work at military rates of pay.

For states not immediately attacked the attractions of neutrality are of identical character. Safety from the risks of war, and the profits to be derived from trade with belligerents, are powerful motives, and pacifist doctrine is ever available to denounce any idea of fighting for the right as war-mongering. Moreover, prolonged years of exemption from war creates a spirit hostile to war, and easily cowed by the spectacle of men who are prepared to fight. A moral decadence sets in and timidity becomes a virtue, courage a danger. Such nations earn and deserve the contempt of those peoples who remember the fundamental principle that good can be maintained only by constant activity, and that it is forbidden by every principle of morality and of Christianity to fail to render aid to the oppressed.

The violation by the Scandinavian Powers of their obligation under these principles to succour Finland was complete and unabashed, the King of Sweden identifying

¹ That they do not teach in class their doctrine is of no moment. A teacher has great influence out of school, and many use it, as a matter of principle.

himself with the national dishonour, while Hr. Hansson, the Prime Minister, and Hr. Günther, the Foreign Minister, in the lower and upper chambers of Parliament, won the plaudits of the representatives of the people on 1st April for their defence of their desertion of the Finns, and the part they played in inducing the Finnish Government to accept the disaster of a peace, which, as M. Molotov showed on 29th March, was a crushing blow to Scandinavian freedom. The like cowardice marked the attitude of Norway. On 5th April Professor Koht admitted that Norway had lost in the war 54 ships of over 120,000 registered tons, and 392 lives, in at least 12 cases by the action of German U-boats or bombers, in 9 cases without regard to the safety of the crew. He admitted that on 8th March Norway, Sweden, and Denmark had asked Germany to discuss the problem of sea warfare, but without even receiving a reply. Nonetheless he insisted that Norway would continue to observe complete neutrality, and would treat as grave any infringement by Britain of her territorial waters, though no risk to Norwegian ships or lives was thereby involved.

In fact, Norwegian waters had been permitted by Norway to be used by Germany for the passage through them of a German fleet auxiliary carrying British seamen captured by the *Graf Spee* during her period of action.¹ This proceeding was aggravated by the deliberate failure of Norwegian officials to detect the presence of the captives on the *Altmark*, compelling the British Cabinet to authorize British forces to enter Norwegian waters to liberate the captives, since Norway had failed in her duty to forbid

¹ *Bull. Int. Aff.*, xvii. 225ff, 291ff.

passage through her waters to that vessel, and had made herself *pro tanto* an auxiliary to German warfare. The unrestrained vehemence of the denunciations of the Norwegian Foreign Minister contrasted strangely with his complete failure even to elicit a reply from Germany to his alleged protests against the cruel destruction of Norwegian sailors, and his moral position was undermined by his invention of an alleged British agreement that the rule forbidding sojourn by foreign war vessels in territorial waters in time of war for over twenty-four hours did not apply; the British Government had no difficulty in exposing the falsity of this assertion, which had been broadcast in order to prejudice in the eyes of the world the British action.

But more serious was the use which Norway permitted Germany to make of her port Narvik, and her territorial waters, for the transit of Swedish ore to Germany to be used for munitions. It was patent that Norway should have declined to permit the transit of such ore, so long as Germany persisted in the conduct of war at sea against Norwegian shipping in complete violation of the laws of belligerency. It was patently impossible for Norway to wage war on Germany to avenge her murdered seamen or the bombing of passenger ships, but it was a clear duty on her to take any step which she could easily do to prove that she was neutral and not acting, under the guise of neutrality, as an ally of Germany. It was clearly open to the Allies to insist on Norwegian action, and, in default, themselves to act. They could also claim that the complete violation of belligerent duties by Germany authorized them to adopt measures of retaliation, even if these compelled

entry on neutral territorial waters, but no such claim was requisite. The delicts of Norway herself fully justified and demanded Allied intervention to make good Norwegian failure to perform an obvious duty. For the Allies to accept all the disadvantages arising from the laws of neutrality was one thing; for them to acquiesce in the added injuries resulting from violation of neutral obligations was a totally different question.

The Allied decision was therefore taken to lay mines in Norwegian territorial waters in such a way as to compel German vessels to leave at certain spots these waters and to emerge into the open sea. The notification of 8th April¹ recited the violations of the laws of war—the sinking of neutral, especially Norwegian, ships with heavy loss of life, the bombing of British and neutral trawlers, lightships, and fishing boats, and the machine-gunning of their crews. It pointed out that in these circumstances it was intolerable that German vessels carrying contraband should be escorted through Norwegian waters by Norwegian war vessels; the Allies could no longer acquiesce in Norway affording Germany facilities which placed the Allies at a dangerous disadvantage. An assurance was given that any Allied action would be in strict accord with the dictates of humanity, and Norway was reminded that the aim of the Allies in the war was to establish principles which the smaller states in Europe would themselves wish to see prevail, and upon which the very existence of these states ultimately

¹ See also Mr. Churchill, House of Commons, April 11, 1940. The resignation of Lord Chatfield and Mr. Churchill's presidency over the Defence Committee attested his growing primacy in the War Cabinet, of whose members he commanded far the most public confidence.

depended. Norway protested with a violence absent from her dealings with Germany, a significant proof of her reliance on Allied humanity and her terror of German brutality.

The contrast between Allied and German methods of action was forthwith displayed. Even before mine-laying had been begun by the Allies, naval, air, and military forces of Germany were on their way to seize vital places in Norway and Denmark and to assume guardianship over these states. It is perfectly clear from calculation of times that these actions were not the result of the mine-laying, but the execution of a deliberate policy which happened to coincide in time with Allied action. The German declaration of reasons¹ for action indeed puts the matter on the broadest basis. War had been declared on Germany by the Allies without cause. They had endeavoured to use the Russo-Finnish war to secure a basis in Scandinavia to enable them to attack Germany from the north. The close of that war had frustrated their hopes, but they had determined nonetheless to carry out the project, and Germany had indubitable evidence that England and France intended to occupy certain territories in the Northern States suddenly within the next few days. These states had failed to resist aggression in the past; they had tolerated the most serious interference with their sovereign rights without taking any suitable counter measures; Germany must therefore² take them under her protection, and prevent their being misused or war being brought to the north.

¹ Text in *Times*, April 11, 1940.

² This reminds us of the argument in 1914 that Belgium required safeguarding from Allied attack.

There is no question of the complete fabrication of the German allegations of the intention of the Allies to violate the territorial sovereignty of Norway or Denmark. Even Professor Koht, an unfriendly witness, asserted his conviction that the Allies did not entertain any designs against the sovereignty of Norway, and the assertion is equally ludicrous as regards Denmark. The fate of that country is the harder because, in contrast to the other Scandinavian states, in May 1939 she accepted a pact of non-aggression with Germany which pledged the latter "in no circumstances to go to war or employ any kind of force" against her. The utter worthlessness of German pledges was thus once more revealed. Further evidence of German audacity was contained in the proclamations of the German commanders; it was asserted that agreements were being reached with the governments of Norway and Denmark intended to respect and secure in full measure the existence of each kingdom, the preservation of its armed forces, the freedom of the people, and the future independence of the country. The armed forces were warned not to resist but to establish immediate liaison with those of Germany.

In Denmark only a handful of men made any resistance; the King, his government, and Parliament surrendered at discretion.¹ Was the coup carried out with their connivance? Evidence is lacking, but it was so smoothly operated that it may well have been. The Danes have lost all warlike capacities; with full knowledge of the risk they ran, they made no serious preparations for self-defence, and

¹ The declarations of the King and Hr. Stauning on 9th April are somewhat abject, and suggest collusion. The oil stores may have been deliberately acquired in anticipation of the coup.

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never asked for Allied co-operation. In such a condition Germany, eager for an early victory, was placed under an irresistible temptation to seize the vast stores of oil, 200,000 tons, which Allied incompetence had permitted the country to acquire, and to obtain important supplies of food. It was inevitable that Iceland should assume all functions vested in Denmark under her constitution; whatever the future may bring for Denmark, cut off by the Allied blockade from imports of agricultural essentials and from all exports, no peace treaty can secure any real independence for such a state, and that it must either join a Scandinavian federation or become a protectorate of Germany. Iceland clearly could not be allowed to shelter Germans or German ships; she could secure her enjoyment of freedom only under Allied protection, and on 10th May a British force landed in Iceland. We may see revived the idea of her acquisition of something like Dominion status in the form of a treaty such as that of 1936 between Britain and Egypt. The Faroe Islands are under British control, and should not be returned to Denmark without safeguards.

Did Norway think of acquiescing in Germany's action? It is quite probable that Norwegian statesmen had some idea of what was in store. Germany was patently desperately in need of Sweden's iron ore, and the right to use the Norwegian route counted as important in her eyes. The declaration by the Foreign Minister on the eve of the coup can best be assigned to an inkling of what was proposed for his country. He then asserted that Norway would resist invasion, but for a moment it seemed as if her government would negotiate. In any case the spirit of defeatism so long nourished in Norway was revealed by the wholesale

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treachery of the defenders of the fortresses and the possibility of the swift creation of a puppet government¹ prepared, it seems, to do Germany's bidding, and it seems to have been hoped that the King would follow the lead of the King of Denmark and yield to the demand for his co-operation. It was all to the good, therefore, that Lord Halifax on 10th April asserted the decision taken by the Supreme War Council on the 9th April that the Allies would fight the war to its end in association with Norway, and added that, even if a Norwegian government surrendered under duress, it would in no way weaken the Allied determination to resist on behalf of a powerless Norway both the effect for Norway of this brutal exhibition of violence, and for themselves of an extension of German strategic power in the North Sea and the Atlantic, which it would be impossible for Britain to accept. Nor can we deny the fundamental truth of his contention that the conflict is one between right and wrong, and is being fought, not only on behalf of states engaged now, but of all states that love their liberty and wish to preserve their independence.

Mr. Churchill on 11th April stressed the fact that the severe sufferings of Norway were largely due to the exaggerated character of her neutrality, which had prevented her discussing with Britain measures to secure her

¹ Headed by Major Quisling. Some of the army officers were patently disloyal, and on 15th April the President of the Supreme Court secured the appointment of an Administrative Committee in place of Quisling to continue his work, but not as a full government. A limited recognition was given by the King on 19th April, on which date only was the Norwegian minister sent from Berlin by the German Government, but without a declaration of war.

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safety, and pointed out the lesson to other neutrals thus implied.¹ He noted the strict respect for neutral rights shown by the delay in laying mines; in the Great War Britain, France, and the United States had induced Norway to block use of the channel by U-boats by laying a mine-field herself. Moreover, Germany had used territorial waters to send ore-ships carrying men and munitions who had seized Norwegian ports.

The infection of pacifism in Norway herself was seen in the fact that Norwegians could be found willing to serve as the government, and that Herr Hitler could urge the King to substitute these infamous traitors for the Nygaardsvold Ministry. On 11th April, heartened by British support, the King refused obedience and appealed to his country to fight for freedom. He might well have expected the spontaneous aid of Sweden, but an admonition from Germany brought the King and his Ministry to heel, and elicited profuse assurances that Sweden would remain resolutely neutral,² so that full supplies of all she could export would be available for German use. Though left without a German garrison, Sweden was thus virtually reduced to the status of a client state. Nor is there any reason to suppose that that position is not acceptable to a people which has lost even the desire to defend itself. It may be that the long list of states subjugated without receiving British aid is depressing—Ethiopia, Austria, Czechoslovakia, Spain, Albania, Poland, as also are the

¹ Holland at once refused to discuss measures to bring her aid; so also Belgium. See § 11, below.

² A broadcast from Stockholm on 11th April by the Speaker of the Norwegian Storting was vetoed at the demand of the German consul by the subservient government, whose complaisance is unlimited.

disasters of China and Finland—but no state has any right to existence whose people will not strike, when, as now, they can rely on definitive British and French aid.¹

The facts as to Scandinavia are a definite warning to supporters of Federal Union of the hopelessness of fettering Britain by union with the Scandinavian states. There is every probability that Danes and Swedes and many Norwegians would be found to be supporters of German views against those of Britain. It must be remembered that these peoples have racial affinities to Germans closer than those to the population of the British Islands, and that their mental affinities are also more German than British. It is equally clear that these states could not be relied upon in any plan of rebuilding the League of Nations. That must involve the existence of a fixed resolve to honour solemn pledges, of a full appreciation of the duty to respect and maintain the personality of other states, and of a belief in objective justice and liberty, and in the attitude of the states towards Finland, no less than towards Poland, there is no sign of any truth or love of liberty. It is difficult to foresee the future for states with these characteristics. The normal plan of a Scandinavian federation is negated by the prohibition of M. Molotov, and nothing but a complete Allied victory can so rule out Russian intervention as to make the scheme practicable. But, as they are, these weak Powers serve only to aid totalitarian states in their menace to the democracies.

¹ Cf. Burke on conciliation with America: "When bad men combine the good must associate; else they will fall one by one, an unpitied sacrifice in a contemptible struggle." It is fair to say that Sweden had to crush a widespread Nazi movement; but the *Aftonbladet* on 8th April was definitely hostile to the Allies.

The events recounted contain a grave warning to those Scottish Nationalists¹ who are guilty of the folly of seeking to place Scotland in the position of Eire. Save as united with England, Scotland would be a feeble Power, dependent, as is Eire, on the patronage of England for the maintenance of her existence and autonomy. Nor, divorced from the spirit of English liberty, enshrined in the constitutional law and system of government of English origin, would the outlook for ordered freedom in Scotland be promising. The share of the Scottish people in the expansion of British ideals is sufficiently glorious to render it absurd for alleged patriotic societies to resent the greatness of the English people and of England. Nor is it wise to ignore the presence of dangerous elements in the Scottish population manifested in the resolutions of the Trades Councils of Glasgow and Edinburgh demanding peace, and in the former case applauding the Russian attack on Finland.² A dangerous influx of Irish nationals has deeply affected the racial complexion of western Scotland, and maintenance of the closest relations with the English stock, which is akin to the Scots of the lowlands, is necessary for the preservation of the vital element of the Scottish race.

The position of the League of Nations in respect of the attacks on Norway and Denmark was raised in the House of Commons on 9th April, immediately after Mr. Chamberlain had reported the facts of the aggression. Mr. Alexander

¹ Their candidate in the Argyll by-election was defeated in April 1940 by 5,009 votes.

² The Scottish Peace Council is alleged to be under Communist influence, and the Celtic element of the country is temperamentally unstable. Pacifism is a real danger.

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urged that the Council of the League should be invited to consider the new aggression, in accordance with the procedure in the case of Finland. But the Premier felt unable to bind himself to any specific action, though hoping that all the members of the League would recognize their obligations to the victims of aggression, for "first things must come first. There are actions which I think will be more effective than summoning a meeting of the League of Nations." The laughter and cheers which greeted this sally are as significant as the impatience manifested by members when Sir R. Acland demanded consistency in action towards aggressors, alluding to the rumour that Britain was prepared to make concessions to Japan as regards China inconsistent with her undertakings and duty.

The attitude of the Conservatives in the Commons is entirely in harmony with that adopted by leading Conservatives in the House of Lords¹ during the Munich crisis of 1938, and proves decisively their repudiation of the doctrine of collective security. Its existence gives a decisive warning against any idea of rebuilding European order on the basis of strengthening the League. If this were done, it would merely be found again that Britain would repudiate her obligations with as scant scruple as she did in the case of Czechoslovakia. Even were a Labour Government in power, it would have to face such opposition from pacifists within its own ranks that it could not make

¹ *E.g.* Londonderry, Mottistone, Rankeillour, Stonehaven, Brocket, Chatfield, Samuel, Ponsonby, Swinton, Marchwood, and Maugham; 118 H.L. Deb. 5 s. 1336ff., 1381ff. Earl Baldwin made an amazing admission of the weakness of British defences; yet his party had been in power for seven years unchallenged; *ibid.* 1391f.

head against the mass of Conservative opposition. We may hope that specific obligations, kept in constant operation by joint consultation and action, will always be honoured, but we should deceive ourselves if we thought that general obligations will ever be honoured, if their breach does not lead to immediate damage and danger to ourselves ; statesmen seldom, and the electors never, take long views.

For our destruction of any faith in our promises we now find the Balkan States, except Turkey, reluctant to lend us support, despite the obvious advantages of their being able to rely on the alliance of the great Mediterranean Powers, Britain and France, in order to save them from vassalage to Germany or Russia. If Rumania is reminded by German propaganda of the fate of Ethiopia, Czechoslovakia, and Poland, it is easy to understand how eager she is to placate Germany by supplies of oil, in the hope of securing German aid to deter Russia from seizing Bessarabia, and Hungary and Bulgaria from demanding Transylvania and the Dobrudja ; a strong element in her own population favours Germany as a more reliable ally. Yugoslavia is likewise disturbed by internal dissent, and subject both to German and to Italian influence, which is strong also in totalitarian Greece. Britain and France, had they kept faith, might easily have commanded the support of these Powers, and a firm alliance with them after the war may secure that support and form an important safeguard for peace.

The disadvantages of the destruction of the Covenant are strikingly seen in the fact that the Allied fleets have been unable to enter the Black Sea in order to cut off

Russian supplies of oil for Germany. Under Articles 19 and 25 of the Convention regarding the Régime of the Straits of 1936, had the Covenant still had validity, the Allies could have passed the Straits, and, with Turkish aid, have intercepted the vessels carrying oil, with complete authorization under international law. Nor would Turkey have been entitled to deny passage of the Straits, even were she reluctant to co-operate herself. As matters stand, such action can take place only if Turkey decides on belligerency, when under Article 20 of the Convention she may permit the Allies unrestricted passage of the Straits, and there are obvious grounds why it should not be desirable for Turkey to commit herself forthwith to such belligerency, so long as Russia remains content to confine her hostility to the Allies to economic aid to Germany, and to denunciations of Allied imperialism whose hypocrisy is rendered ludicrous by her aggression on Finland. The hasty denial that Germany had been allowed to use Murmansk as a base and the evacuation of the Petsamo region as agreed are quite fairly adduced by the U.S.S.R. as *prima facie* evidence of her genuine intention, as announced by M. Molotov, to abstain from actual participation in the war. In her case, as in that of Italy, action will doubtless be determined by the opportunity for inexpensive aggression afforded by the course of the war. Mr. Churchill's warning of the strength of the Allied forces in the Mediterranean was intended for both of these dangerous and untrustworthy non-belligerents, whose glorification of the German coup against Norway and Denmark is significant testimony to their willingness to wound but yet fear to strike.

10. *Lord Halifax and Herr Hitler*

Few more curious or perverse evaluations of a national policy can ever have been made than that by Lord Halifax on 10th April, when he claimed that "the behaviour of Germany is really that of a homicidal lunatic or of a mad dog that runs about biting where he may, until after a time everybody who is concerned to defend themselves against that sort of thing gets their gun down in order to make an end." The inelegance of expression, unwonted in the speaker, and the substance of his statement suggest that the effect of the German stroke disturbed the balance of his judgment on a piece of carefully planned policy, reflecting great credit on the intellect, though not the morality, of Herr Hitler.

The essential fact shown by the attack on Denmark and Norway is that the war has, as explained above,¹ its root in the will of Germany to attain power, which is incarnate in the person of the Führer. The intemperate violence of Lord Halifax's denunciation is doubtless due to his realization that the destructive forces now let loose on the world would never have been unchained, had he and the government of which he is a member not allowed themselves to be completely deceived by the Führer. It is not as if they were not warned. *Mein Kampf* had long been public property; it was regularly reprinted without fundamental change, and ministers can hardly have been misled by the sentimental explanations of its character put in currency and adopted, with complete lack of

¹ See Chap. I., § 1 above.

criticism, in one English translation.¹ When, therefore, the British Government acquiesced in, if it did not welcome, the remilitarization of the Rhineland, it deliberately destroyed the one effective security against the attainment by Germany of that hegemony preached as the goal by *Mein Kampf*. At the same time it made it clear that the most absolute defiance of solemn treaty obligations, deliberately and most formally renewed by Herr Hitler himself, would not evoke action.

Lord Halifax, though in close touch with foreign affairs, was not responsible for that British failure. But in November 1937 he was in personal touch with Herr Hitler and his entourage, and it is clear that he completely failed to learn what sort of a man the ruler of Germany was. Herr Hitler has been accused of using false promises to deceive his enemies, and he has done so without stint or shame. But it was the business of an experienced statesman like Lord Halifax to avoid being deceived by the Führer. Instead, Herr Hitler took full measure of his visitor, and realized that from him no effective resistance would be forthcoming. He worked, therefore, in close harmony with Signor Mussolini to remove Mr. Eden from office, for both realized that, while he had shown weakness in facing the Duce, he was nevertheless not likely to be duped easily. The success of this movement in inducing Mr. Chamberlain to deprive the country of the services of the one man in the Cabinet who saw the facts clearly has already been recorded.

The success of ejecting Mr. Eden from the Cabinet was followed forthwith by the rape of Austria, and the

¹ James Murphy (ed. Hurst and Blackett, 1939), pp. 10f.

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cruel persecution of all who had ever resisted Nazi domination. Nonetheless Lord Halifax pressed on with the accord with Italy, which Mr. Eden had refused to sponsor. He knew, unless he deliberately refused to know, that the Führer and the Duce had both deliberately violated their pledged words not to intervene in Spain, even if he did not believe, as he should have believed, that they were rivals for the honour of having instigated revolt against a democratic state, which sinned by friendship for Britain. He knew that the Duce had violated obligation after obligation towards Ethiopia and that his pledged word was worthless. Yet he devised an accord, which secured nothing from Italy and gravely weakened the position of Britain in Arabia.

In full knowledge of all the broken promises of Herr Hitler, the Prime Minister signed the Munich accord of September 29, 1938, and assured Britain of his belief in the Führer's good faith. It is difficult to find any excuse for his faith in the Führer's word, except that men believe what they wish to believe. Yet, unless that word, so often broken to the Premier's knowledge, were to be faithfully kept, Czechoslovakia was doomed.

Czechoslovakian acceptance of the dictation of the Allies was induced by a pledge of a British guarantee. It was now a question of British good faith and of the Premier's personal honour, for on 4th October he authorized a declaration by Sir T. Inskip that Britain regarded the guarantee as binding as a moral obligation.¹ But as

¹ Lord Halifax's responsibility is avowed; 110 H.L. Deb. 5 s. 1302ff. See Lord Samuel, 1387ff, though his view is vitiated by pacifism. Lord Snell, 1313, pointed out that Mr. Chamberlain's trust in Herr Hitler at Berchtesgaden had proved false at Godesberg.

early as 1st November he spoke in terms of utter vagueness on the guarantee, fully justifying the impression undoubtedly held by the Führer that his pact with him had, as pointed out in the debate on Munich by Mr. Noel-Baker, "committed us never to take part in any collective action against aggression again."

One chance remained to disabuse the Führer and to preserve British good faith. The Munich accord left ample room for intervention by Britain and France in support of Czechoslovakia in vital matters of detail. Here was Lord Halifax's opportunity to make good as far as might be the vast moral obligation of Britain to Czechoslovakia. How this duty was executed is sufficiently shown by his speech of January 20, 1940. After pointing out that the Munich settlement gave Germany all that she immediately wanted, he added,¹ "In applying that agreement I think it is true to say that every contentious point was decided in Germany's favour." Was not this a convincing reason for Herr Hitler to believe that Lord Halifax and the Premier were agreed in disinteresting themselves in the fate of Czechoslovakia, just as he believed, with equal reason, that M. Bonnet and M. Daladier had disinterested themselves?

In like manner Lord Halifax accompanied, in January 1939, Mr. Chamberlain to Rome to honour the Duce for his destruction of Ethiopian independence, although since 1937 they had before them in Marshal de Bono's *Anno XIII* the authentic record of the Duce's perfidy to Ethiopia.

¹ This vital admission is deliberately suppressed in the *Bull. Int. Aff.*, xvii. 82, doubtless because of its damaging character. The *Bulletin* can evidently no longer be relied on as an objective source.

Was that action not a direct excitement to Herr Hitler to imitate the triumphant bad faith of his colleague in the Anti-Comintern Pact, so patently hostile to Britain? At Rome again their close friend completely deceived his guests, giving them no inkling of his determination to seize Albania at the earliest possible moment. Would Mr. Eden and Mr. Churchill have been thus deceived?

Herr Hitler had thus overwhelming reason to expect that his destruction of the Czechoslovak State would meet with no resistance, and his assurance was just; on 15th March, at the moment when the guarantee was vital, it was revoked outright, without the slightest effort to put it in force.

These successes of Herr Hitler were those of admirable statesmanship, in the sense that he had definite aims, and accurately gauged the resistance to be expected from those who might oppose. His further advance against Poland was supported by many considerations. Could Mr. Chamberlain be expected to plunge Europe into war for a corrupt and tyrannical oligarchy over a German city, when he had forced Czechoslovakia to sacrifice all that was vital to her safety? That Herr Hitler did not believe Mr. Chamberlain would fight was the most natural thing in the world. Had not he and Lord Halifax acquiesced in the conquest of Albania? Was not the destruction of the freedom of a people a much more serious thing than the surrender of a city which was eager for reunion? No doubt the calculation of the Führer was wrong, but it was essentially natural. Would, in fact, Lord Halifax or his chief have fought if it had not been clear that failure to keep faith with Poland would mean loss of office?

Viewed in the light of these facts, what is there of a homicidal lunatic or a mad dog in the actions of the Führer in seizing Denmark and Norway? He had prepared the way in Denmark with full success, as the immediate acquiescence of King and Premier showed; even in Norway he won marked success at Oslo, Bergen, Trondheim, and at Narvik, where the Norwegian commandant joined the invaders. Indeed, it was probably touch and go between a complete success and a modified failure, induced in all likelihood by the Allied warning that acceptance of the German demands would not enable Norway to escape war.

It is wise to recognize how great is the skill of the régime against which the Allies are called to battle for the liberty, not of themselves alone, but of the whole of western and central Europe, and of the Balkan States. It is well also to admit that our isolated position is due in large measure to the complete failure of our statesmen to realize that to condone broken faith is suicidal, and that, as it is, our doubtless prudent attitude of cordiality to Italy, and our efforts to come to agreement with Japan, are wholly inconsistent with the high morality of our rebukes to Germany. If, after great efforts, we succeed in overcoming an enemy, unmoved by scruples and strengthened by an ideal of empire, the fact remains that no settlement arranged will have any more endurance than that of Versailles, unless we recognize that we must keep faith when once we have given a promise.

Moreover, unless we can rise to the height of Christian duty disaster is again inevitable. There is no more melancholy record than that of the speech of the Archbishop

of Canterbury ¹ on October 3, 1938, on the issue of Munich. The condemnation of yielding to evil, of saving ourselves from danger by inflicting cruel sacrifices on others, is utterly lacking. Instead, gratification prevails at the avoidance of war, and a eulogy of the Prime Minister as another Happy Warrior, one

“ Who comprehends his trust, and to the same
Keeps faithful with a singleness of aim.”

The Church of England must learn that there are things higher than material welfare, and that the callous destruction of a people is not consonant with divine purpose. It seems scarcely conceivable that the venerable prelate should have so blinded himself to patent truths as to declare : “ I find it difficult to believe that any such injustice has been inflicted as would morally tarnish the peace which we have received.” Not for the first, nor, it may be feared, for the last time, was Christian testimony lacking at a vital moment.² Can we wonder that religion is steadily tending to be no more than an idle formality for the great majority of the laity, or that they should acquiesce in their children growing up in utter ignorance of even the name of the founder of the religion which they profess to believe ?

In fairness to the Church of England it should be added that the Church of Scotland has failed to give any clearer guidance. Its Christian testimony is hampered by the

¹ 110 H.L. Deb. 5 s. 1318ff. The whole debate might be adduced as evidence of the danger of the Lords as an element of the constitution, but for the speeches of Lords Cecil, Davies, and Lloyd. Most peers were determinedly defeatist.

² Contrast President Wilson when he brought his country into the Great War : “ Right is more precious than peace.”

influx into the ministry of pacifists and conscientious objectors, whose false moral principles forbid their teaching those to whom they minister the essential Christian duty of giving succour, even at risk of life, to those oppressed. Hence it is not surprising that Scottish tribunals have had before them youths who allege that they have learned to refuse to serve their country from their pastors ; or declare that they would refuse all aid to innocent passers-by struck down in an air raid ; or assert that, if assigned to non-combatant duties, they would sabotage their work. It is indeed deplorable that Nazi youth should imbibe the false doctrines of German Christianity, but all complacency in Britain is out of place in view of the moral and intellectual worthlessness of the vast majority of the pleas adduced by conscientious objectors.

The testimony against war which might be expected from the Church of Rome has unhappily been weakened by the close connection of the Papacy and Italy. Germany cannot be impressed by rebukes from the Vatican which glorified the aggression on Ethiopia ; hailed General Franco, who brought Moors to Spain to destroy Christians, as a paladin ; turned a deaf ear to the Basque priests who laid before it the crime of Guernica ; and accepted and approved the rape of Austria and of Czechoslovakia in accord with the policy of the Duce. It is true that the Pope has condemned the cruel treatment of the Poles, of the Finns, and of Norway and Denmark, but, save in so far as his disapproval has accorded with Italy's dislike of the U.S.S.R., his declarations have evoked no support from Signor Mussolini. In Italian political circles scant doubt is felt that, if Signor Mussolini determines to aid Herr Hitler in

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the war, unless he is bought off by large concessions of territory by the Allies, he will be able to secure full support from Pius XII., despite the patent fact that the Führer has not a scintilla of right to assistance from any Christian Power. National feeling, it may be feared, will always prevail over the dictates of religion, even so noble a religion as that of Christ.

The decline of the moral earnestness of the Churches was further revealed in their failure to intervene to protect aged women and over-burdened mothers from the cruel imposition on them of the duty of caring for evacuated women and children, in many cases diseased and filthy. The bitterness of feeling aroused by this policy, worthy only of an unprincipled totalitarian régime, was revealed by the reception given in March and April 1940 to the second evacuation scheme, where an essential condition was that evacuation should take place only when severe bombing was actually imminent. Throughout Scotland, and in many places in England, the replies to official inquiries as to readiness to accept evacuated school children (even the government dare not repeat the experiment with women and children under five) showed that often less than 1 per cent. of those approached expressed willingness; the Convention of Royal Burghs of Scotland declared the scheme quite impracticable, and important counties declared that it could not be worked. The failure of the Churches was the more remarkable, because the government had definitely declared that the war was being waged for liberty, and yet the evacuation scheme violated the sanctity of the home, brought the hapless people of the countryside into contact with the lowest classes of the

towns, spread disease among their children, and inflicted grave moral injury. Moreover, the scheme violated every principle of equality of sacrifice ; Sir S. Hoare's denunciation of those who protested against compulsory billeting was worthless from a man whose personal comfort was absolutely secure, while to vast numbers of helpless women the scheme brought overstrain, physical and mental, resulting often in lasting disease. Nor are the judges who declared ¹ the regulations binding, even when refusal was dictated by a clear moral duty, subject to diminution of their ease. Happily, despite the failure of the Churches, large numbers ² of those who had been invited to evacuate their children under the new scheme have refused to be guilty of neglect of their primary duty to undertake the care of their children, in lieu of imposing the burden on others, and have explained that their action in September 1939 was virtually dictated by the Government.

Yet more deplorable as a sign of moral decline is the fact that in the crisis of war it has been necessary for the Chancellor of the Exchequer to introduce legislation to deal with the miserable expedients by which men of great wealth avoid bearing a fair share of the national burden. This action on the part of those whose lot is so much more happily circumstanced than that of others strikes at the root of national solidarity, and provides Communists and Socialists with an almost overwhelming argument for the destruction of individualism in economics and finance.

¹ *Mee v. Toone*, 56 T.L.R. 523 ; Defence (General) Regulations, 1939, rule 22, (1), (8), and (9).

² Even in Edinburgh only 23.9 per cent. of eligible children were registered for evacuation despite its peculiarly exposed situation.

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II. *Mr. Churchill's Government*

The last pages of this work had been passed for press, when unexpectedly Mr. Chamberlain's administration fell. Though the Premier's determination to win the war was undoubted, the Ministry failed to meet the desire of the public that the utmost use should be made of man-power and the national wealth; it was felt that the spirit of appeasement was ill-adapted to conversion to the will to conquer. Moreover, the refusal of the Labour Party to co-operate in forming a truly National Government was patently a grievous hindrance to the enlisting in the work of the war of the vast driving power of organized labour. Labour's reasons for refusal were simple: it could not by accepting office under Mr. Chamberlain condone a policy, which had made war inevitable by its systematic violation of the most solemn obligations of international law, and which had attempted to secure British liberty by accepting and assisting in the destruction of the liberty of other peoples.

The superior audacity, decision, and power of concentrated action of Herr Hitler resulted in a distinct reverse for the British forces in Norway, and, despite a brilliant defence by Mr. Churchill in the House of Commons on 8th May¹ and an appeal by the Premier to the personal loyalty of his "friends,"² the Ministry avoided censure by only 281 to 200 votes (including over forty supporters),

¹ 360 H.C. Deb. 5 s. 1350ff.

² *Ibid.*, 1268, criticized by Mr. Lloyd George, 1285; Mr. Cooper, 1302f on the constitutional questions. See Keith, the *Scotsman*, May 11, 1940.

though its nominal voting strength was still 414. But, while many Conservatives voted for the Premier in resentment of the attacks made on him, there was even in their ranks a demand for reconstruction of the Ministry and a bolder policy. Reconstruction, however, was declined by Labour, which maintained its refusal to serve under Mr. Chamberlain, and the solution was found of a National Government under Mr. Churchill, who had been excluded from office largely because he opposed the surrenders of the Ministry and its failure to make proper provision for national defence.

The new Ministry took the shape of a War Cabinet, of whose five members Lord Halifax alone holds departmental office as Foreign Secretary. His retention in the Ministry in this position may be criticized in view of his share in responsibility for all that is worst in British foreign policy, and the presence in the War Cabinet of Mr. N. Chamberlain as President of the Council is also open to question on this score. But Mr. Atlee as Lord Privy Seal and Mr. Greenwood as Minister without Portfolio represent the far nobler tradition of fidelity to obligations—legal and moral. The unified control of the war is provided for by the Prime Minister's assumption of the new office of Minister of Defence. He will, of course, work with the aid of the three political heads of the services, all of which have been entrusted to new hands, Mr. A. V. Alexander representing Labour at the Admiralty, and Sir A. Sinclair the Liberals at the Air Ministry, while Mr. Eden takes the War Office. Though the Liberals have no member in the War Cabinet, the leaders of the three parties will be consulted when questions arise affecting the general character

and aims of the government, including the conditions of peace.

Of other appointments, the selection of Mr. Herbert Morrison as Minister of Supply provides that office with a man of great driving force. Sir Kingsley Wood's substitution for Sir John Simon at the Exchequer is hoped to inaugurate a more active employment of Britain's financial resources, on the score that large spending on proper objects may in the long run prove wiser than the economy which, it is asserted, has gravely hampered British diplomacy in the Balkan States. Sir J. Simon's acceptance of the Woolsack marks, no doubt, the abandonment of the legitimate ambition to attain the Premiership which had hitherto kept him in the Commons. Mr. Duff Cooper's appointment to the Ministry of Information and that of Lord Lloyd to the Colonial Office remind us of their gallant fight against the surrender of Munich.¹ It is legitimate to hope that, with the wholehearted co-operation of Labour, Britain may prove equal to the task now upon her in earnest of winning the war, however serious the odds.

Internationally the profound distrust of Mr. Chamberlain and Lord Halifax showed itself in their complete failure to induce a single neutral state to enter the war, even Portugal² failing to come to our aid despite her ancient and often renewed alliance. The search for neutrality was not unjustly rewarded by the simultaneous attacks on Belgium and Holland on 10th May, to which peculiar cruelty was added by the formal assertion of Herr Hitler that their

¹ See pp. 359, 370 above.

² She even facilitated evasion of the British control of the sending of contraband by air.

governments had acted with lack of neutrality, and were about to allow the Allies to use their territories as a base for war operations. No more absurd falsehood could have been devised, but both countries must bear serious blame for inflicting grievous losses on their own people and on the Allies by their failure to concert defence measures in advance.¹

It must be added that the utter unwisdom of the policy of Mr. Chamberlain and Lord Halifax towards Italy is demonstrated by the attitude adopted by the Duce. The use of the fleet at Trondheim, where a combined action might have saved the situation, was rendered difficult by the menaces of Italy, which necessitated the return to the Mediterranean of important British units, thus weakening our strength in northern waters, and ever since the attack by Germany on Denmark and Norway a violent anti-British propaganda has been carried on throughout Italy, and a vicious denunciation of British contraband control filled the Press in May, while the Press has magnified Allied reverses and proclaimed the certainty of a German victory, in order to induce the public to seek war. It is no doubt a sign of the new vigour of the British Government that the British Ambassador on 11th May protested against the placarding of Rome and other cities with posters denouncing the Allies, and the insults offered to the British Minister, whose car was thus pasted over. On 8th May Mr. Duff Cooper in the Commons debate denounced² the poor spirit of the Ministry which had allowed to pass without inquiry the speech of Signor Grandi, Minister of Justice, in which he declared that Italy could no longer remain an

¹ Appeals by the King and the Queen were at once answered and asylum given to the Dutch royal family. ² 360 H.C. Deb. 5 s. 1308.

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observer. The Press has continued to approve the attack of Germany on Holland and Belgium, and has suppressed all mention of the Pope's messages of sympathy to the sovereigns of these countries, and of Luxemburg, which as in the Great War has fallen a victim to German aggression, and the facts have appeared only in the Papal organ, the *Osservatore Romano*. A striking Allied reverse will plainly suffice to bring Italy into the war.

Such is the reward for Mr. Chamberlain's accord in the enslavement of Ethiopia, the destruction of all vestige of liberty and democracy in Spain, and the subjection of Albania, and his wholesale surrender of British interests in the agreement of April 16, 1938.¹ If Italy emerges from the war in full possession of these gains, it will render meaningless Lord Halifax's assurance in the House of Lords on December 5, 1939, that Britain was fighting so that peoples which had been deprived of liberty should recover their independence; but the same reasons of prudence which counsel refraining from declaring war on the U.S.S.R., unless Britain is directly attacked, apply to action against the Duce. It must, however, be noted, in confirmation of the dangerous pro-Fascism of certain official circles, that at the end of April the Censorship ruled that it was not permissible in a communication to be sent by post to an Empire paper to write of the Duce that his "political morality was non-existent." How worthless and ludicrous such censorship is may be seen from the fact that contemporaneously ² very strong, if not unjustifiable, denunciations

¹ See pp. 301-303 above.

² In the *Daily Mirror*, 11th May, p. 6, the Duce's action is alluded to as "the treachery of the fat Judas of Rome," and infinitely stronger language appears in its issue of 14th May, p. 7, in its leader.

of that politician were freely appearing in papers read by millions of people in the United Kingdom. If Sir John Reith's successor can eradicate this element in the Ministry of Information which is indifferent to British interests, he will render an important service to his country, whose morale has already suffered sufficiently from the placid smugness of the brochure *Assurance of Victory* pressed on the public, which even the *Times* condemned as out of place.

The will to victory expressed by Mr. Churchill on 13th May, on meeting the Commons and receiving a vote of 381 to nil in support of his Ministry, is patently needed, for the magnitude of the German force of attack has surprised all those who made the error of underrating the energy of the Führer, as did Mr. Chamberlain's Ministry. The Labour Party Conference at Bournemouth on 13th May by 2,413,000 votes to 170,000 confirmed the decision of the National Executive to become a "full partner" in the Government, and Mr. Ernest Bevin consented to become Minister of Labour and Minister of National Service in order to assure that trade unionists would, on just conditions eliminating private profit, afford the maximum of support to the war effort. It must be noted that, despite all good will, there is a fundamental element of difficulty in the new constitutional position, apart from the retention of the protagonists of appeasement in the War Cabinet which may seriously lessen the national effort. The position given to Labour is wholly out of proportion to the strength of the Labour Party in the House of Commons. That body is due to expire in November, and the prolongation of its life by its own

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initiative, while legal, is very difficult to defend on constitutional grounds. There will be inevitably a strong element still set on appeasement,¹ and out of harmony with the Labour determination to conquer and to restrict the profiteering already rampant, which may result in hampering the action of the War Cabinet. It must be regretted that the Ministry early in the year² did not take advantage of the lull in the war to go to the country with an appeal to be given a mandate for a great effort for victory, which would have empowered it to harness the vast resources of the man and woman power and wealth of the country to work for the war, instead of remaining acquiescent in widespread unemployment and growing raids on the public purse of those who dream of great fortunes and honours as the rewards—as in 1914-19—of exploiting a public disaster for private gain.

Peace aims must also raise differences between the members of the coalition. The atrocities³ of the German forces in their attacks, including the deliberate orders to harass, by bombing and machine-gun fire, the hapless refugees in Belgium and Holland, and the utter disregard

¹ On 13th May in the Commons there appeared voices of Conservatives in regret at the change of Ministry, which was acquiesced in only because Mr. Chamberlain was included, e.g. Sir W. Colfox and Sir I. Albery. The failure to provide adequate air strength is a very grave error of Mr. Baldwin and Mr. Chamberlain. H. Dalton, *Hitler's War*, pp. 57ff. The Munich settlement added vastly to German armament now used against us.

² For arguments in support of a dissolution see Keith, the *Scotsman*, January 30, March 29, 1940; *Reynolds News*, March 31, 1940. Sir S. Cripps, on 13th May, stressed the difficulty of working Parliamentary institutions without a normal opposition.

³ See the *Times* and *Scotsman*, May 13 and 14, 1940. The question of punishing war crimes thus arises in acute form. See pp. 24f above.

of the laws of war by the use of parachute troops, who disguise themselves in the national uniforms of those they attack, and by the threat of shooting ten French prisoners for every parachutist shot by the French if found not in German uniform on French soil, must render a peace of appeasement utterly difficult. The general election, which will certainly have to be held before peace terms are finally determined upon, will hardly be held in an atmosphere likely to achieve any satisfactory end. The idea of seeking any form of Federal Union has not been adopted by the late Ministry¹; it is very improbable that it will be adopted by any government which is not blind to the essential disaster which any real, as opposed to an imagined, federation would bring upon the British people, whose eyes must now be open to the extent to which German ideals have penetrated not merely the Scandinavian, but also the Low Countries, where traitors² have patently been only too abundant and have hampered the sound instinct of the peoples to maintain liberty. It may be hoped that Belgium and Holland will realize that a close alliance for defence and the discouragement of aggression is the sole manner in which they can avoid a renewal of the terrible contest in which they are engaged.

It is significant that at this crisis, when the Argentine Foreign Minister has been moved to suggest that the American states might consider the adoption of non-belligerency in place of neutrality, no action is considered

¹ 360 H.C. Deb. 5 s. 1202.

² The Censorship as late as 30th April deprecated "over-emphasis" of treachery in Norway; apparently it was entirely ignorant of the facts published in the British Press, and preferred to blame British soldiers and sailors rather than the authors of the Trondheim reverse.

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possible in Washington, not even the abrogation of the legislation forbidding loans to the Allied states, or the terms of the neutrality legislation which compel them to pay in cash for and transport in their own vessels the enormous amounts of munitions whence the armament makers of the United States are to reap a generous profit. With how little wisdom the world is governed ! Yet Mr. Cordell Hull and the President have both warned the Americas that they can no longer deem themselves immune from attack.

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THE action of King Leopold on May 27-28 in ordering the surrender of his army "without warning General Blanchard, without one thought, without one word for the British and French soldiers who came to the help of his country on his anguished appeal," marks him, in the phrase of Lord Derby, as "a master mind of perfidy and treachery," and a worthy successor of the Leopold whose infamous treatment of the natives of the Congo could be excused only on the theory of insanity. His action was taken in defiance of the advice of Ministers, thus violating the constitution, and, in accordance with it, the King having submitted himself to foreign control, the Ministry has proclaimed him, with the accord of Parliament, incapable of reigning, and has assumed the full royal powers. The obvious action of the British Government should be to declare that Britain no longer recognizes Leopold as King of the Belgians, or of royal blood, in view of his violation of the constitutional monarchy in Belgium established with British aid, and of his betrayal to the enemy of the British and French forces. It is clear that Belgium under the present dynasty is a menace to British security and to France.

The ruin planned by royal treachery for Britain and France has been narrowly averted by British and French

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courage and leadership, General Gamelin, as an architect of defeat, having yielded place to General Weygand. But his treachery has rendered assured the entry of Italy into the war, the almost reckless offers of Britain and France to meet the Duce's blackmail failing to achieve success, and the royal House of Savoy showing joy at the prospect of co-operating with Leopold in the destruction of Britain, which thus reaps the due reward for its violation of its obligations to Ethiopia, its share in the destruction of the Spanish Republic, and its abandonment of Albania. The Government is now faced with an acid test of its sincerity in its war aims. It is clearly incumbent upon it, the moment Italy enters into the war, to notify that the agreements of 1938 are utterly void : that the recognition of the King of Italy as Emperor of Ethiopia and King of Albania is cancelled ; that the equality of rights of Italy in Arabia and the Red Sea is cancelled ; and that the right of passage in time of war of the Suez Canal by Italian war vessels and merchant shipping is absolutely cancelled.

Participation in this essential step by Mr. Chamberlain and Lord Halifax, who were the dupes of the Duce, as of Herr Hitler, and thus brought on us the disasters of this war and the grave losses of our youth, would prove that Britain at last realizes the true nature of her danger and is prepared to meet it in earnest. Failure to do so will show that pro-Italian sympathies still persist, and will ultimately entail our complete destruction. The new Government has by its action repudiated the grave and disastrous folly embodied in the pamphlet *Assurance of Victory* which paralysed our action, and has negatived the deplorable doctrine of Sir John Simon that firms might retain 40 per

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cent. of additional war profits, made at such a crisis in British affairs. It must be added that reports from Flanders show that of the German tanks which broke the Allied lines, the best in construction, and the least vulnerable to Allied artillery, were built in Czechoslovakia,¹ in part no doubt with the aid of the gold which the Bank for International Settlements was permitted to hand over to Germany. That our soldiers should pay so dearly for the faults of their rulers is a matter for unutterable regret. There must be at some later date a Royal Commission to establish for purposes of future guidance the causes of the most deplorable decade of British foreign policy on record, and to assign to those politicians, who were responsible for our disasters and dishonour, their due shares of blame. That the manhood of a country must pay for the errors of their leaders is inevitable, but the voters in 1935 can say with absolute truth that their mandate to the Government was utterly disregarded and treated as a scrap of paper. There must also be a searching inquisition into the policy which refused to bomb land objectives, and allowed Herr Hitler to carry out uninterrupted his preparations for his campaign on the Allies via Holland and Belgium, and to preserve his supplies of petrol for a supreme effort, and into the amazing incapacity of the British Intelligence Service during the decade or the refusal of Ministers to avail themselves of the information supplied.

It may be added that the indifference displayed by Britain to the Italian deliberate bombing of hospitals under

¹ The untrustworthy character of Sir N. Henderson's attitude in *The Failure of a Mission* is proved in the *Central European Observer*, May 16, 1940, pp. 64 ff. Such publications are bad propaganda.

the protection of the Red Cross has been duly rewarded by the wholesale bombing of British wounded on land and sea by Germany. Those who acquiesce for selfish reasons in wrongs inflicted on others have scant ground for indignation when like treatment falls to their lot. But as usual those who pay the penalty are not those who were guilty of the crime of acquiescence.

Sir Stafford Cripps's appointment to Moscow as Ambassador raises a faint hope that Russia may be induced to refrain from active hostility. Italy now declares that her intervention in Spain was motivated by the desire to secure Spanish aid in depriving Britain of Gibraltar, which she hopes will be attacked with the aid of the war material which Mr. Chamberlain and Lord Halifax permitted to be handed over to General Franco by Italy. There can be no precedent for a British Ministry so generously supplying its enemies with munitions to be used to British detriment.

Italy's intervention was soon proved to have been based on knowledge that France would abandon the struggle, and seek to make terms with the Axis Powers. M. Reynaud struggled in vain against the defeatism of a majority of his colleagues, although to secure French adherence to her obligations the British Government took the unprecedented step of offering to create forthwith a Franco-British Union with joint organs of defence, foreign, financial, and economic policies, French citizens to be citizens of Great Britain, and British subjects citizens of France. This offer was possible, because it fell within the scope of the treaty prerogative, and Parliament could be relied upon to homologate it. Acceptance by France presented constitutional difficulties, but was declined because France had decided to break her

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accord with Britain, and under the influence of M. Laval, the betrayer of Ethiopia, to betray Britain to Germany and Italy. M. Reynaud resigned on 16th June, and Marshal Pétain formed a ministry which begged for armistices, which were accorded on June 21 and 24, placing France at the disposal of Germany and Italy for the prosecution of the war against Britain. The action of France was a deliberate breach of repeated undertakings not to ask separately for an armistice ; Britain had consented to waive the obligation if the French fleet were first sent to British ports, and M. Reynaud had agreed, but Marshal Pétain totally disregarded the undertaking and in the armistice terms the French fleet—except a part to be left free for the safeguard of French interests in the colonial Empire—was to be collected in ports specified by Germany and Italy and demobilized and disarmed under their control. Germany declared that such units would only be used for coast surveillance and minesweeping, but, apart from the worthlessness of all German promises, Germany was given an absolute right to denounce the armistice at any moment if France did not fulfil her obligations, one of which was that no Frenchman should serve against Germany in the service of other Powers ; this obligation manifestly could not be fulfilled, for many Frenchmen were ready to serve under Britain, and were being organized for that purpose by General de Gaulle,¹ military adviser to M. Reynaud until his fall. The malevolence of the Pétain Government was

¹ His position is anomalous ; he is recognized as head of the Frenchmen who seek to restore the freedom of their country. Britain has also declared that Syria and the Lebanon will not be allowed to fall into enemy hands. But most of the French Empire is unwilling to fight, sharing the defeatism which caused the ignominious collapse of French resistance.

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further revealed by the deliberate surrender to Germany of some four hundred air pilots, of whom the majority had been shot down by British aircraft in defence of France ; the transfer of the prisoners to Britain had been promised and ordered by M. Reynaud ; they were now released in order to aid Germany in her attack on Britain.

The treachery of Marshal Pétain and his government, including M. Laval, General Weygand, and Admiral Darlan, left Britain no option but to take measures to secure that the French fleet did not pass into the service of Germany and Italy. A considerable number of ships were secured without fighting, but armed action was necessary, especially at Oran, where severe losses were suffered as a result of the refusal of the Admiral in command under orders dictated by Germany to accept any of the alternatives offered, to join the British fleet, to sink the ships, or to sail to the French West Indies for demobilization.¹ The French Government retaliated by ordering its ships to seize British merchant vessels and by an air attack on Gibraltar, and by intimating its intention to sever diplomatic relations ; in fact, the British Government should at once, on the formation of the Pétain Government, have declared its refusal to recognize it, as merely the instrument of Herr Hitler for the enslavement of France, the destruction of its democratic constitution, and the overthrow of Britain. Already, in part by terrorism, the ministry has arranged for the establishment of a Fascist constitution. Time will show whether France is sound at heart and can with British aid be restored. The monumental incompetence of General Gamelin and

¹ The facts have been completely misrepresented to France ; see the *Times*, July 9, 1940.

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the French generals, the treachery which alone can explain the German passage of the Meuse, and the deplorable lack of fighting qualities in many units, when not supported by British forces, as well as the treachery of the Pétain Government, lend some colour to the theory that France is degenerate.¹

It is doubtful whether the destruction by M. Laval of French liberty will secure France the terms desired; it seems clear that Italy will insist on cession of parts of metropolitan France and Corsica, as well as of African territory, while Germany will retake Alsace-Lorraine and her oversea territories. In any case France will be required to fit into the new pattern of Europe, Germany and Italy exercising a political and economic hegemony over the lesser Powers. As a preliminary step, foreign diplomatic representatives have been recalled from Holland, Belgium, Luxemburg, and Norway at the Nazi command, and in Norway efforts have been made to secure the abdication of King Haakon,² which has been refused by that sovereign. Sweden has hastily accommodated herself to the new régime by a flagrant and shameless breach of neutrality, permitting the transit across her territory of German troops and munitions on the plea that the war in Norway is over. It will be remembered that in the Great War Sweden, with like disregard for neutrality, aided Germany to control the Baltic by denying use of the Kogrund Channel to the Allied forces.³

The Norwegian, Dutch, and Polish Governments have

¹ The acceptance by 395 votes to 3 by the Chamber of constitutional change suggests that France is now fundamentally unsound.

² The *Times*, July 9, 1940.

³ See Keith, the *Scotsman*, July 10, 1940.

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established their headquarters in Britain whence to continue the war ; if Belgium does not finally take this step, Britain will no doubt take control over the Belgian Congo to prevent its domination by Germany.

The U.S.S.R. has naturally taken the opportunity to compel the creation of Left wing governments in Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania which are now completely under Bolshevist control,¹ and to force the cession by Rumania of Bessarabia, to which Russia has a claim, and of part of Bukovina ; M. Stalin may also desire to control the chief mouth of the Danube, while Bulgaria seeks with Russian aid to recover the Dobrudja and Hungary asks German help to regain Transylvania. In face of these facts Rumania has adhered to a policy of close association with Germany and Italy, and has renounced formally the British and French guarantee. Whether the contemporaneous transformation of the country into a totalitarian state dominated by pro-Nazis will save it from dismemberment remains uncertain.

Turkey has reiterated its fidelity to its alliance with Britain, but in accordance with protocol 2 of the treaty of 1939² has not declared war on Italy, lest this would involve hostilities with Russia. That Power is naturally deemed to be desirous of securing control in some degree of the Straits.

Egypt has not declared war on Italy, though terminating diplomatic relations, despite air attacks on Alexandria. This is deemed compatible with the strict wording of the treaty of 1936,³ but it is not really consistent with the spirit of the alliance. Egyptian action is largely dictated by

¹ They have been required to denounce their treaties (pp. 225f.).

² Page 445, above.

³ Cmd. 5270, Art. 7.

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fear, and by the influence of the very strong Italian community, which has done its best to excite dislike of Britain. It is clear that the grant of independence to Egypt is far from having justified itself. In like manner Mr. Chamberlain's complete surrender, without any return, to Mr. de Valera by the agreement of 1938¹ of the essential British rights to use Irish ports and territory for defence has been rewarded by the absolute refusal of Mr. de Valera to depart from neutrality and his threat to resist any British attempt to provide for the security of the United Kingdom by landing forces.² He has further endeavoured to weaken the United Kingdom by forcing the incorporation of Northern Ireland in Eire and its inclusion in neutrality in the war. Eire, of course, is utterly unable to defend her neutrality for a day against German attack, and in effect Mr. de Valera's attitude is one of deliberate hostility to Britain; he has already helped the enemy by maintaining the German and Italian legations in Dublin. In any post-war investigation it will be imperative to discover on whom lies the responsibility of advising Mr. Chamberlain that he could properly surrender safeguards which Mr. Lloyd George deemed absolutely essential in 1921. It may be that the fatal desire for appeasement resulted in overruling expert advice with disastrous results.

One obvious conclusion presents itself from the latest events, the fatal results of the disregard of solemn treaty obligations by France and Britain in 1935 and subsequent years. From that action has arisen the present gravity of

¹ Cmd. 5728; 1 & 2 Geo. VI. c. 25.

² Keith, the *Scotsman*, July 6 and 10, 1940. There is nothing more contemptible than a neutrality which cannot defend itself.

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British danger ; Mr. Chamberlain should have realized that, if M. Laval could betray the Emperor of Ethiopia, he might as easily betray Britain. Yet another warning is the danger of an unrepresentative House of Commons such as that elected in 1935, which applauded the betrayal of Ethiopia, the aggrandizement of General Franco, and the surrender at Munich, accepted the guarantee of Poland, and yet ignored the necessity of securing Russian aid, which Sir Stafford Cripps is now, far too late, seeking to secure. The advocates of proportional representation have a strong argument for their cause ; that system must have given a less one-sided house. Even now the election of a new Commons is desirable to prevent the war effort of the country being weakened by the presence in that body, as in the Ministry, of devotees of appeasement, who wholly ignored the mandate which secured them victory at the polls of 1935. It is essential that the people should be carefully on their guard against any suppression of activity of the Commons, or of fair criticism under the plea of military necessity.

It must be recorded that the Vatican has bestowed its blessing on the project of Marshal Pétain for the destruction of democracy in France. This attitude stands in curious contrast with its impotence to withhold Italy from the war, but it agrees precisely with its support of the destruction of such little liberty as there was in Spain. Totalitarianism in religion inevitably tends to support the like principle in political life. The influence of the Vatican may also be traced in the curious hesitation of the British Government to declare explicitly its withdrawal of recognition of the King of Italy as Emperor of Ethiopia and its

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readiness to support Haile Selassie in the recovery of his realm. Mr. H. Dalton's suggestion that Italy may be detached from the axis is an unfortunate departure from reality. Nor is it satisfactory that, despite the bravery¹ and loyalty of the Czechs, no recognition of a Czech administration in Britain as a government has been accorded, nor have the Czechs been formally treated as an allied state, a fact duly used by German propaganda.

It may be added that the action of France must end for a prolonged time any idea of Anglo-French unity or federation. There are too many reactionary and untrustworthy elements in Britain to risk reinforcing them by any federal scheme.

In the Far East Japan has naturally seized the opportunity to seek to induce the British Government to terminate the supply of munitions of war to China, not merely via Hong Kong, but also via Burma, and British hesitation to interfere with a perfectly legitimate trade in the case of Burma has evoked threats in the Japanese Press. It may be noted that no like demand has been made so far to the U.S.S.R. Trade from Indo-China, on the other hand, has been suspended. Japan still continues to receive from the United States large quantities of essential materials for use in war, but China shows no sign of readiness to accept Japanese hegemony.

The attitude of the United States remains one of determination to avoid entry into the war, while remaining willing to facilitate supplies of munitions to Britain; the British seizure of the French fleet was widely approved. A

¹ For the formation of units in Britain on escape from France see the *Times*. July 10, 1940. Recognition is now hoped for.

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reiteration of the Monroe Doctrine in regard to the French possessions in America was attacked by Germany, but not withdrawn, and American interests in the Netherlands East Indies has been affirmed. But it has also been suggested by the President¹ that the United States would approve the application of a Monroe Doctrine to Europe and to Asia, a principle of dubious meaning. What is clear is that it is a disaster of the first magnitude that at this crisis of liberty the action of the United States should largely be dominated by manœuvres regarding the Presidential election.

One fundamental error remains to be noted, the suggestion² that the war could be successfully carried on from oversea bases, if the United Kingdom fell under enemy occupation. It is clear that only by the maintenance of Britain can victory be achieved. In the case of France the offer to aid a French Government to establish itself on French African territory, and thence to carry on the war, was decisively rejected, though full British help would have been forthcoming. It is from the heart of the British Empire alone that the Empire can be defended, and it is to the credit of Mr. Chamberlain³ that he has accepted in the fullest manner the necessity of the utmost resistance

¹ Press statement, July 6, 1940.

² Based on a peroration of Mr. Churchill on June 4, 1940, no doubt not very seriously meant but open to misinterpretation, and apparently resulting in certain persons transporting themselves overseas.

³ In a broadcast for the United States, intended to repudiate the rumour there current that he and his Conservative colleagues in the Ministry were not wholeheartedly in support of the war and inclined to a peace of appeasement. The rumour was naturally propagated by isolationists to deprecate the grant of help to Britain on the score that a second Munich was contemplated.

in Britain, which alone can save by her exertions liberty for herself and for such Europeans as value it.¹ The destruction of Britain would involve that of the whole Commonwealth, and of the United States, whose action would then be paralysed by the strong masses of totalitarian, isolationist, and pacifist opinion which have permeated the body politic and would negative resistance. Yet at the Democratic Convention on 15th July it was made clear that "the Democratic members of Congress are unanimously opposed to sending an American army to the European or Asiatic battlefields." The Republican nominee for the Presidency had adopted a like attitude.

On 11th July, Colonel Wedgwood asked the Foreign Office "whether contact has been made between the British Government and the Emperor of Ethiopia ; whether the Emperor's government will be recognized as the lawful government of Ethiopia and admitted to the full status of an ally in the present war, with assurances that Ethiopia's independence will be assured when the war is won," and asked for information as to co-ordination of British and Ethiopian activities. Mr. Butler replied : " Yes, sir," and, while unable to enter into detail in answering his question, gave an assurance of realization of the importance of co-ordination of activities. Despite the curious manner of its announcement, it would seem that Britain is now pledged to undo the grievous wrong which she inflicted on Ethiopia and the Emperor, and to terminate recognition of the King

¹ The danger to Russia from a German victory is clear, but it is far from probable that Russia will intervene in favour of Britain, seeming rather to reckon that Germany will be too exhausted by her struggle with Britain to be able to attack.

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of Italy as Emperor.¹ Nothing less can justify the retention of Mr. Chamberlain and Lord Halifax in office, or prove their sincerity in opposing Italy. Nor will the bitterness felt by great masses of organized Labour against the men of Munich be assuaged if Britain really surrenders, as Japan claims she will, to the demand that she shall abandon China at this crisis.²

¹ Keith, the *Scotsman*, July 15, 1940, and *Scotsman* leader, July 13. The *Times* ignores the issue.

² The *Scotsman*, July 16, condemns any such surrender, apparently favoured by the *Times*. It will be deplorable if China is made the subject of a second Munich, but the United States has clearly done little for China, despite her greater resources.

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PRINTED IN GREAT BRITAIN AT
THE PRESS OF THE PUBLISHERS