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BLIND MAN'S
BUFF BEFORE
THE KING
Visiting Australians
in camp in Britain.
His Majesty came
upon this Digger
who, blindfolded, put
together his machine-
gun in a few minutes.
Some of these men
were later in the Siege
of Tobruk.

Frontispiece.



Anzacs Into Battle

by
Tahu Hole

تحفہ
نواب ناطنیر جنگ بہادر
ڈاکٹر ناطن الدین حسن
ایم۔ اے۔ ایل ایل ڈی۔ بیرسٹر لا

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*T*ributes



T[“]*RIBUTES to the people of Australia and of New Zealand have been specially written by the Prime Minister of Greece, who has taken the opportunity to extol the heroism of the Anzacs in Greece and in Crete; by the Prime Minister of Poland, who, as a distinguished soldier, also salutes the fighting spirit of the Anzacs ; and by the Prime Minister of Norway, who expresses the admiration of the northernmost democracy for the feats performed in war by the southernmost democracies.*

GREECE



IN the following pages the part played in the present war by the gallant men of the Australian and New Zealand forces is circumstantially described.

Like their fathers in the last war, these men have been called to defend the cause of liberty and democracy in their grim fight against the powers of tyranny and despotism, and, like their fathers, many of them have given up their lives in that small corner of the world where the light of liberty and democracy was kindled and whence it spread across the civilized world.

The record of the Anzacs in Greece and Crete, where they have fought and fallen side by side with their Greek comrades-in-arms, is a record of heroism and self-sacrifice which equals the finest achievements of the Greeks of old, passed down to us in history as examples of fortitude and manly virtue.

In Crete I had the occasion personally to follow the action of our allies under their gallant Commander-in-Chief, General Freyberg, and I can testify, with admiration, to their courage and magnificent devotion to duty. The gallantry of the Anzacs was equalled only by their modesty, which is truly the mark of brave men.

In the present so-called civilized age, which has seen the greatest wave of organized barbarism sweep over the European continent, Australians, New Zealanders, Britons and Greeks, fighting the same battles that were fought twenty-five centuries ago, have woven new legends round the slopes of Olympus, the valley of Thermopylae and upon the rugged mountains of Crete.

They, too, will go down to posterity as examples of the highest civic and military virtue, and I consider it a sacred duty—and I know every Greek shares my feeling—to pay a tribute of deep admiration and respect to those who came from the other side of the globe to fight so splendidly on the soil of Greece and to the memory of those who have bravely fallen in order that liberty may not cease to live among men.

Prime Minister.

THE ROYAL GREEK GOVERNMENT.

POLAND

I AM glad to have this opportunity to pay my tribute to the immortal name of the Anzacs.

As a soldier I can only express my highest admiration of the prowess, skill, courage and gallantry of the fighting men of Australia and New Zealand.

To us, Poles, to whom liberty is the very breath of life, there is something incomparably inspiring in the enthusiasm of the free men of those two young and virile nations with which—of their own free will—they have joined the struggle for human liberty. I am proud that the Carpathian Brigade of the Polish Army is associated with the Anzacs in the Middle East, and I am sure that this comradeship cemented on the field of battle—like that of our national hero Kosciuszko a century or so ago, on the soil of the New World—will be the foundation of a lasting friendship between Poland, Australia and New Zealand, and that in collaboration with their Allies and with the great American Democracy they will succeed in building a new and better world.

*Prime Minister**

THE REPUBLIC OF POLAND.

NORWAY

I KNOW that I am expressing the view of the Norwegian Government and of Norwegians everywhere when I say that we are intensely proud to be associated with the two young democracies of the Southern Hemisphere in this great world struggle for freedom.

We Norwegians are filled with admiration at the magnificent response, in men and material, which has come from the Antipodes. In the last war the splendid fighting qualities of the Australian and New Zealand Forces were warmly appreciated by us even as neutrals, but now that our own sailors, soldiers and airmen are fighting by their side, we can share in the heroic exploits of the Anzacs with the knowledge that we are comrades-in-arms in a great cause. During the campaigns in Libya, Greece and Crete we have watched with breathless wonder as these gallant men battled against the whole might of the German war machine. They have covered themselves with a glory that will never fade.

The day will come when the Anzacs, together with the fighting forces of the other allied democracies, will fling back the Nazi hordes and re-plant the flag of liberty in the capitals of the oppressed nations. When that great day comes we shall take up again the tasks of peaceful construction and social welfare on which we were engaged when Hitler unleashed his dogs of war upon us, and we are confident that our war-time comradeship with the southern democracies—with whose ideals and way of life we Norwegians have so much in common—will be continued in the days of peace.

Prime Minister.

THE ROYAL NORWEGIAN GOVERNMENT.

Author's Note

OF the British Imperial Forces fighting in the First Total War in the cause of freedom, the majority are from the United Kingdom. Not because of a question of spirit is this so; in spirit the peoples of Australia and New Zealand are unsurpassed—and it is the case with every one of the Dominions—just as are the fighting qualities of their serving men. With the Dominions it is a question of numbers, of population.

Australian and New Zealand forces acting together, or in combination, overseas were merged into one Anzac unit in the First Total War in May, 1941, under a proclamation gazetted by Lord Gowrie, the Governor-General of Australia, during the Battle for Crete. The proclamation provided that in these circumstances the Commander-in-Chief of the Australian Imperial Force would exercise certain powers over the New Zealand Force and *vice versa*.

German propaganda has always reproached Britain for fighting with other people's blood. In the Great War the Germans mocked Britain with the taunt that she was prepared to wage splendid battles to the last Frenchman, then to the last American. In the First Total War, the jibe was that Churchill was ready to make a stand to the last Anzac. To poison of this sort, the Germans are manifestly unaware that the free peoples of the world are immune.

The purpose of this book is not to attempt to present in any way a complete or detailed account of any of the many parts played in the field of battle or at home by the peoples of these Dominions. Within limits necessarily set by such a wide-ranging subject, it aims to do no more than to throw into relief a bold outline of the solid contribution to victory made by the Australians and the New Zealanders. This is obviously not to suggest that recognition of their contribution has not been expressed elsewhere: it has been expressed generously. But a wide range of books already published, and others on the way to the publishers, deal almost exclusively, in some cases wholly so (and rightly), with the effort of the United Kingdom. This record, then, is intended as

something in the nature of an emphasis on the part of the Democracies of the Pacific.

The fundamental theme, in effect, is produced by the spectacle of these energetic, free and young Democracies, lying roughly 13,000 miles from the Mother of Parliaments, voluntarily pouring out their blood and treasure for the annihilation of a foul tyranny. Like President Roosevelt's momentous utterance on May 27th, 1941, when he assumed dictatorial powers, it is in essence Lord Lothian's adaptation of Lincoln's historic phrase, " The world cannot live half-Nazi and half-free."

The sister Dominions, Australia and New Zealand, away " down under", believe this phrase defines the contrast between Nazism and freedom, between Hitlerian godlessness and Christian ideals, that it defines, besides, the challenge to everything in which a democracy, great or small, must put its faith. Unflinching, and for the second time in their brief, robust history, they flung their youth into alien lands, wrought willingly alterations in the routine of their daily home life, and braced their economic and political structures to help purge the universe of a sinister system of enslavement which the two conspiring dictators hoped to fasten upon millions of mankind.

T. H.

London, 1941.

Acknowledgments

WITHOUT the aid of friends, acquaintances and various officials, so generously given, this book would not have been written. It represents a considerable period of study and research. The accumulative result of a good deal of travel has also been helpful. Since it would be quite impossible to thank everyone who has helped me with information, I am obliged to content myself with a general acknowledgment.

Facts are always difficult to get. A journalist frequently finds nothing more elusive. In war-time, and especially in reporting battles, the difficulties are enormously increased. National security would be impaired if many facts were recorded; and often speed fogs those that may be. Because of this, I must specifically thank the War Office not only for certain salient facts relating to the campaigns, but also for checking the military moves. To Colonel Contoleon, Military Attache at the Royal Greek Legation, London, who was in Greece during some of the fighting, I am deeply grateful for invaluable help. I wish also to express my thanks to the Royal Institute of International Affairs for letting me reprint extracts from the thorough, accurate summaries of the position of various countries participating in the Delhi Conference, which appeared in its *News Bulletins*, Nos. 22, 23, 24 and 25 (Vol. XVII).

As a Dominion newspaper correspondent stationed in London, it is part of the routine in acquiring background for my work to read and digest a broad cross-section of the Press and of the weekly, fortnightly and monthly journals and magazines published in Great Britain and Eire. That background has been extremely helpful in writing this book. Particularly useful in supplying it were *The Times*, the *Daily Telegraph*, the *Manchester Guardian*, the *Scotsman*, the *Yorkshire Post*, the *New Statesman and Nation*, *Time and Tide*, *The Spectator*, *The Economist*, the *National Review*, the *Contemporary Review*, *The Fortnightly*, the *New York Times*, the *New York Herald Tribune*.

All the illustrations are British, Greek and Australian official photographs. The tables and facts concerning the population of Australia have appeared in the *Commonwealth Official Year Book*; and I am indebted to the Naval Affairs Department (London), for material bearing on the naval engagements in which the Australian and New Zealand Navies participated, besides being indebted to the British Ministry of Information.

T, H

The Contents

I. INTO BATTLE

CHAP.	PAGE
I. CRETE : A CLASSIC REVOLUTION IN WARFARE .	17
II. GREECE : AN EPIC OF TOO FEW AGAINST TOO MANY.	78
III. LIBYA : BRITAIN'S OWN <i>BLITZKRIEG</i> THAT DESTROYED AN EMPIRE.	145
IV. IRAQ : THE TRUTH ABOUT HITLER'S ILL-STARRED PLOT.	199
V. SYRIA : How AN AUDACIOUS NAZI COUP WAS FORESTALLED.	206
VI. WARSHIPS FROM UNDER THE SOUTHERN CROSS	228
VII. RED SUN IN THE FAR EAST	244

II. BEHIND THE BATTLE-FRONTS

VIII. THE SPIRIT OF KINSHIP: AND WHY THE DOMINIONS FIGHT	290
IX. AUSTRALIA GOES TO WAR	310
X. NEW ZEALAND GOES TO IT	370
XI. WINGS OVER THE EMPIRE	391
XII. POWER AND PROBLEMS EAST OF SUEZ	407
XIII. WOMEN IN WAR WORK	445
XIV. SKETCHES OF FOUR SOUTHERN LEADERS	453

Illustrations

	FACING PAGE
BLIND MAN'S BUFF BEFORE THE KING .	<i>Frontispiece</i>
STREET OF DISILLUSIONED MEN	32
NAZI PARACHUTISTS OVER CRETE	33
MAJOR-GENERAL FREYBERG WATCHES NAZIS . .	48
MR. MENZIES WITH THE AUSTRALIAN NAVY . .	49
To THE GLORY OF THE FUHRER	80
OUT FROM UNDER HITLER'S NOSE	81
END OF A DRAMATIC ESCAPE	96
ANZACS ON THE ACROPOLIS	97
MISTS ON THE MOUNTAINS	128
WHAT ANZACS SAW IN GREECE	129
NOT DESERT RIFFS : GREEKS IN THE SNOW . .	144
HORSEMEN OF THE HILLS	145
"WHO SAID 'HITLER'?"	176
THE WRECKED AND SILENCED GUN	177
INSIDE BELEAGUERED TOBRUK	192
YOUTH MEETS YOUTH	193
BRITISH AND ANZAC LEADERS	224
SCALING THE HEIGHTS IN SYRIA	225
"STRIKE A LIGHT, PAL I"	240
"DEMOLITIONS ARE DELAYING OUR ADVANCE" .	241
GENERAL BLAMEY AND LIEUTENANT-GENERAL MACKAY	288
THE HEALING TOUCH	289

	PACING	PAGE
SEARCHING FOR THE HIDDEN FOE	.	304
SYRIAN ARMISTICE	.	305
JOURNEY'S SMILING END	.	352
ROYAL AUSTRALIAN PILOTS	.	353
DARTS IN THE DESERT	.	368
MR. PETER FRASER	.	369
PREPARING FOR THE " DESERT DERBY "	.	416
ALERT IN THE FAR EAST	.	417
ANZACS TRAIN IN MALAYAN JUNGLE	.	432

I INTO BATTLE

Chapter I Crete: A Classic Revolution in Warfare

" You join us in the forefront of the battle."

—The King to Anzacs, in Britain, 1940.

" I do not consider we should regret the Battle of Crete."

—Winston Churchill, House of Commons, 1941.

BLOSSOMING oleanders, fragrant, like fragments of clouds resting, hung over the calm inlets of Crete.

Into these idyllic retreats the German and Austrian dead drifted on a tolerant blue tide. Hundreds, sodden bundles of field-grey, sprigs of youth from Bavaria's friendly hills, from Vienna, from Berlin's metallic slums, withered because of a megalomaniac's ambition, lay as huddled dreamers, some as restless sleepers, arms outstretched.

The day was young. The battle, bursting at dawn, was only two and three-quarter hours old. Up to 7.45 a.m., more than 2,000 German parachutists had already landed. Into the limitless bowl of the sky, at once so full of the air of spring and of terror, there flew now the noisy troop-carrying machines, huge, long, dark, some trailing light-painted gliders, full of destructive power.

Hundreds were dying. The old rusty bells in the village *campanili* rang no requiem. A light wind, rustling through the vines and the cypresses straight as lances, where startled birds were twittering, alarmed, brought no echo of a choir's *Libera*. Their deaths were unmarked.

Usually so distinct in the quiet of the early morning, the plangent voice of the sea was silenced by the roar of aeroplanes, the screech of bursting shells, the thunder of exploding bombs.

Instead of chasing each other in the sunlight, in and out of the trailing ivy and the thick, coarse brown grass, the lizards lay flat under the warming rocks, frightened. The smell of explosives and dust was there where only a little while ago sparkled an atmosphere scented with budding myrtle, fresh sprouting vines, spring flowers everywhere.

The Last Silence

White mists at night about the ravines, on the cleft, lofty peaks, over bitterly cold hills, chilled the night of May 19th-20th, 1941, into a short stillness.

It was the last untroubled stillness before the dawn of a battle that was to usher in a revolution in warfare—one of the greatest battles ever fought in martial history. Until then, from May 3rd to May 19th, the enemy had attacked the island persistently, but only with bombers, the biggest raid being on the 19th, when there were nine attacks, six on anti-aircraft gun positions and troops in the area of Maleme aerodrome, two on Peraklion, and one on Suda Bay.

Crete had been put into a state of defence so quickly that it was impossible to replace New Zealand and Australian troops there with British troops, as had been hoped. The New Zealanders included the 4th and 5th New Zealand Infantry Brigades—7,100 strong. They defended the Maleme-Canea position, bearing the brunt of the ferocious Nazi onslaught.

Only by accident were there fewer Australians—men from New South Wales, Victoria and South Australia. The bulk of the Australians evacuated from Greece a few days before had got to Egypt. A great many of the Anzacs who fought in Crete were waiting there for transports to Egypt: Crete, for them, was to have been a stepping-stone to Alexandria.

The British forces numbered, just under 13,000 men; the New Zealanders 7,100; the Australians about 6,500: in addition there were a little more than 1,000 Cypriots and Palestinians belonging to the ancillary branches. Approximately, the British and Dominion contingents were equal. Against this garrison the Nazis finally put 35,000 men,

The Famous Anzacs

Behind the rough shield of Crete, grainy with a myriad valleys, but lined too sparsely with the unlovely, passionless, mechanical defences of modern war, the Commander-in-Chief in the Middle East, General Sir Archibald Wavell, was rapidly spreading his force of half-a-million men in Syria, Palestine, Egypt, Libya, Iraq—anywhere the enemy might attempt to shatter the bastion formed by the Suez Canal. For just as Singapore, not Darwin or the Timor Sea, is one front line of Australia and New Zealand, Suez is another. Imperial security in either is of utmost importance.

There, on either side of the great Canal bastion, meeting the vicious pincer movement of the enemy, threatened from Syria in the east and from Libya in the west, were the main concentrations of the Anzacs, with British units, the flower of the

Crete: A Classic Revolution in Warfare 19

mànhood of the United Kingdom, of Australia and of New Zealand—members of the romantically styled immortal force, the Imperial Army of the Nile.

There, as here in Crete, were the fresh young men from Sydney and Wellington, Melbourne and Dunedin, from Christchurch and Brisbane, Hokitiki and Hobart, Auckland and Perth—from all the cities and provincial and country towns and hamlets in Australia and New Zealand—mingling with comrades-in-arms from London and Liverpool, Bristol and Birmingham, from Margate and Manchester, Clydeside and Cardiff, men from almost all points in the Kingdom.

These were the men of the second Australian and New Zealand Army Corps—the Anzacs. Inheritors of enviable physique, standards of training, courage, discipline and achievement—carved out for them by the men of the first famous Australian and New Zealand Expeditionary Forces who battled in the Great War in France, Greece, Turkey, in the region of the Suez Canal (shades of the adventurous Australian First Division training for eight hours a day on the desert at Mena !)—many of them were sons and nephews of those who fought in 1914-18. All were proud of their young traditions.

They had gathered from the wide, hard, sunlit spaces of Australia, from sheep and cattle-stations, away beyond hills and mountain ranges where the kangaroo leap and races; beyond the broad rivers where in sweet tranquillity fish dart like heavy shadows under hot, drooping trees; from the far north, where, in the desert belt, camel-trains move under the fleeting wings of passenger air-liners.

They had come from great bustling cities like Sydney and Melbourne, leaving their careers, cheering as they went, throwing kisses to their mothers, their sisters and their sweethearts as the transports drew them away, clasping their hands high above their famous slouch hats, in a victory handshake, letting the harbours ring with their shrill whistling, their *Coo-ee* calls, cries that cracked as do the whip bird's.

There they were from New Zealand. Its office desks, its fertile plains, its gently rolling hills so reminiscent of England's grassy Chilterns, the Cotswolds, of Scotland's rugged Grampians, all were left behind : their farms and homes, the busy routine of their business lives, their ambitions, their quiet towns, with their English atmosphere—like Christchurch, where the shallow Avon sings beneath the weeping willows in a quiet cathedral town.

Ready to sacrifice their lives, eager, they crossed half the world to fight with soldiers of Britain in defence of their *mm* country's interests, for the right of all men to enjoy individual freedom, and for the liberation of millions enslaved by the

Nazi tyranny, each ready to blast his way to victory or to drop like a felled sapling.

Scene I: Act II

Like everyone else, the men in Crete knew what the coming attack meant. This was Hitler intent on demonstrating that he had the armed power with which, at any moment, and in face of any armed protest, to occupy Spain and Portugal if he wished, and attempting to demonstrate, too, that the threat extended to French North Africa and to the western end of the Mediterranean no less than to the Atlantic fortress of Dakar and to the island outposts of the New World—the Azores and the Cape Verde Islands.

His immediate goal was Crete, for which he was prepared to pay with an unlimited number of lives and one tornado of metal after another until the island was swept clean of the Allies.

Unlike some armchair critics, the British authorities knew what Hitler and the German High Command knew : that this assault was merely a part of the exciting action in the Second Act of a great Three-Act play devoted to shaking the British Empire to its foundations, preparatory to world domination.

Two acts were allotted to the cracking of these foundations. Act I began in the West in September, 1939; the curtain fell on it with the collapse of France in May, 1940. Between Act I and Act II there was a drop-curtain political turn while the scenery was shifted about in preparation for the first Balkan and Middle Eastern scenes in Act II.

The cardinal points of this political drop-curtain scene were the acceleration of the decomposition of the political structure of Vichy France, from which, before it was on the stage very long, the stench became almost overpowering, and a beginning of the same process on the bodies politic of Rumania, Yugoslavia, Syria, Turkey and Greece, with the assistance of the satellites of Germany, Italy, Bulgaria and Hungary.

Structure

When the curtain went up on the Second Act on April 6th, 1941, it showed the Battle of Greece at that stage where the Nazis, without an ultimatum, were at dawn swarming over the Bulgarian-Greek frontier. In the interval, progress had been made in the process of "rotting" Rumania, Yugoslavia and Iraq : but none in Turkey or Greece.

Even before this, the framework of the play, as originally planned by Hitler and Mussolini, was now clear. It was based on two broad pillars.

Act I: Isolation of Britain in the West by the destruction of

Crete : A Classic Revolution in Warfare 21

France and the smaller countries and, by a process of bribery, flattery and threats, the securing of as much assistance as possible for the Axis from these subjugated countries for the preparation of the final hammer-blow against Britain, Asia and Africa.

Act II: Complete expulsion of the British and the Russians from the Continent and the absorption of the rest of the Balkans by Italy and Germany. An advance upon the Suez Canal by Germany and Italy through Libya, coinciding with an advance by Germany round (or across) Turkey and Syria to Suez, with a forked attack on Iraq to secure oil fuel, and with a plan ready for an assault to be delivered at the right time against Russia—through the Ukraine and on the Caucasian front, with the object of driving the Russians back beyond the Ural Mountains. From the standpoint of military science a feasible plan : and the small number of British Imperial troops in Egypt may well have let the Nazis think that it had more than a likelihood of success, especially with their employment of the surprising *blitzkrieg* method of warfare. It was destined that the Anzacs were to play a major rôle in this Act.

Act III: The final assault on the British Isles, with Germany and Italy in complete control, if not possession, in Asia Minor and Africa and joint masters of Europe, which, in a military sense, they were already. Support would come from Japan in the Far East because, with the Suez Canal bastion down, the influence of the Nazi-Fascist tide would be able to roll encouragingly, unhampered from Suez to Singapore, thence, linked with the Japanese, to Sumatra, right on down through the Dutch East Indies, Australia and New Zealand. It was calculated that this would shatter British Imperial power for all time. The heart of the Empire would be laid in ruins, and its components oversea left without leadership or armed support.

Alteration

A glance at the position in Egypt when the curtain went up on the Second Act with the attack on Greece, however, will show how much the action of the small British Imperial Force in Egypt had mauled the original Italian-German plan. Undoubtedly, the whole structure of the play was flung out of centre by the unexpected, stubborn defence put up by Greece, of which Wavell, in a brilliant campaign ending in Cyrenaica, took prompt and full advantage. Wavell had liquidated the entire Italian army in North Africa: the Greeks had fought the Italians to a standstill on Albanian territory, where they had been fighting since late 1940.

It had been the *Duce's* intention to clean up that pocket of

resistance to the German-Italian will which they encountered in Greece, while Germany was busy, with the co-operation of Italy and Bulgaria, "rotting" away the political structures of the other Balkan countries lying between Greece and Germany. The "rotting" process had not been as rapid as could have been wished by the dictators; and this, coupled with the vital fact that the German High Command was unprepared to sanction a Balkan war involving German troops at the worst possible time of the year—the winter—prevented Hitler from giving Mussolini the aid which would have shortened the Greek campaign.

So now, the spring of 1941 having arrived, the "rotting" process having secured all the results that could be expected of it in view of the obvious obstinacy of Greece and the *volte face* of Yugoslavia—whose people, on March 27th, within forty-eight hours, rejected the signature of a government which signed it into vassalage—Germany had invaded Greece and Yugoslavia, thrown out the British from Greece and was about to start trying to throw them out of Crete.

With Crete in his hands, Hitler could drive away the Royal Navy from that area of the Mediterranean, control the Dardanelles, put renewed pressure on Turkey (then a little heartened by the magnificence of Greek resistance), and be in a far better position to persuade her of the value of a German-Turkish pact. Subsequent events legitimatise the surmise that Hitler was then reckoning that if he could achieve all these things, he would have his hands free to take further stock of the position and to decide whether or not the Second Act should be re-written to provide for a scene involving an attack on, and the annihilation of, the menace of Russian military power: that it might be necessary to do this before risking a concentrated drive against the Suez Canal zone, in view of the fact that in the meantime the political plot for the grabbing of Iraq had misfired, and because it would be essential to have no possible threat at his back when he finally risked everything in an attempt to close on the British Isles, from west and east.

To the British authorities, and to the British officers in Crete, also, it was obvious that the Battle of Crete would prove to be an historical battle.

Historical—for this was to be the first battle ever fought for the control of an important island with air-borne soldiers as invaders who could not count on support from the sea. An important delaying battle, too, in a whole scheme of large-scale delaying actions, a vital piece in the Allied military jigsaw puzzle.

While Major-General Freyberg's men were preparing to win new laurels gloriously for the Empire's arms, Sir Archibald

Crete: A Classic Revolution in Warfare 23

Wavell, taking advantage of the holding battle that was at that hour beginning, was busy cleaning up the Iraq revolt, even then was distributing his forces to fresh strategic points on either side of the Suez Canal.

It is reasonable to consider it highly probable that the promise of powerful, armed resistance which Hitler undoubtedly gave Raschid Ali was not fulfilled because the prowess and determination of the Allied Forces in Crete compelled Hitler to divert to Crete men and supplies intended for Syria and Iraq.

Man of Adventure

Braced to meet the attack at dawn on May 20th, head of the Allied Forces, with scanty material but with the support of lion-hearted men, was Freyberg, a man who has crowded into his fifty years more real flesh-and-blood adventures than many a romantic schoolboy dreams about.

An interesting point is that while he is New Zealand's foremost soldier, he was not born there : he was born in London. But from the age of two, he grew up in New Zealand, was educated at Wellington College. He trained as a dentist, tired of that almost as soon as he graduated, and decided to roam in search of excitement. He found it.

The tale of his wanderings is rather like a legend : boisterous newspapers greet him as a legendary figure. His reputation is unsurpassed for desperate courage.

In Mexico, he got a commission in General Villa's forces in the Civil War against General Huerta, to whom he had previously offered his services ! He had reached Mexico partly by selling trophies he won at swimming carnivals in New Zealand and Australia.

Soon afterwards, the Great War broke out, and he crossed the Mexican border into America, getting to New York as cheaply as he could, saving what money he had to buy a passage to Britain. An admirer, even in those early days, of Winston Churchill, the story goes that he waylaid Mr. Churchill in Whitehall, walking suddenly in front of him, saying, "I've come from New Zealand to fight for Britain and I want a job—a fighting job," and that Mr. Churchill, eyeing the tall, fair, strong young man with trap-jaw and cold blue eyes, summed him up there said then, on the pavement, as a leader of men. He got a commission, and after a few weeks' training was in the defence of Antwerp. Fighting there, he received the first of his nine wounds.

Not for long was he knocked out. He next appeared in Gallipoli, to do battle with the Turks who commanded all the beaches. The problem facing his division was how to get

ashore under cover of darkness without being met by a fusillade of shots. Freyberg's idea was adopted. It was one of the riskiest feats of his career. Stripping, he painted himself black, dived overboard from his ship and pushed and towed rafts of calcium flares two miles towards the beaches. Ashore, he wormed his way forward until he could hear Turkish sentries; then, distributing the flares, lit them, diverting the attention of the defenders while his comrades were quietly landing farther up. Bullets whined all around him. Miraculously, he was not hit. Two hours later, he climbed aboard. They gave him the D.S.O. for his action.

But it was only the prelude to the award of the V.C. In the Battle of the Somme, where he was in the thick of the fighting, he was with the Naval Division outside Beaucourt. Here the village was riddled with German snipers and machine-gun nests, blocking the Allied advance. He had been wounded three times, blood was oozing from each wound, when he led a handful of men in a smashing charge on the main positions, capturing 500 prisoners and driving a wedge into the enemy.

With courage and initiative of this sort, small wonder he was mentioned in dispatches six times and was the only general of the Great War to rise from the rank of temporary officer: when at 27 he was promoted brigadier-general, he was the youngest man to hold the rank. After the Great War, he became a colonel in the Grenadier Guards, finally a General Staff Officer at the War Office.

Australians knew him well as a swimmer, when he was younger, back in the days of the late Barney Kieran, against whom he used to swim in carnivals. He is over six feet tall. "Good old Tiny!" the crowd would roar good-humouredly as he streaked by, thrashing the sea. It didn't surprise them when he got his name into the headlines as a result of his attempt to swim the English Channel. That was in 1925. It was an astonishing feat for a man who had been so heavily battered in the Great War, but he nearly succeeded. He was within 200 yards of Dover against an ebb tide when he was taken forcibly from the water in a state of exhaustion.

When Freyberg arrived in Wellington in December of 1939 to take charge of the New Zealand Expeditionary Force he was given a great welcome home. Labour Ministers, in an address of welcome, described him as "a leader incorporating all the virtues of physical courage, military ability, and consideration for his troops".

Perhaps the most odd-sounding thing in his career is that Sir James Barrie, as his friend, was his best man at his wedding. True, Barrie loved to deal with the fantastic, and *Mary Rose* is a play about an island which loved to be visited

Crete : A Classic Revolution in Warfare 25

But Barrie, standing beside him that day, could never have imagined that it would be his soldier friend who would hold Crete for days with audacious heroism against hordes of crack Nazi troops and airmen.

Waiting for the Storm

So there he stood that morning, his tin hat rammed down on his aggressive head, Major-General Bernard Freyberg, Commander-in-Chief of the Allied Forces in Crete, one of the most picturesque soldier characters in the Empire. When M. Tsouderos, the Greek Prime Minister and War Minister, announced in an Order of the Day addressed to all officers and other ranks in Crete that Major-General Freyberg was to be the Chief, he said to the men : " Let unity be our watchword and the basis of our strength."

Ironically enough, in the chronic absence of tanks, aeroplanes, guns, this was soon to prove as valuable an injunction as any given in the war.

For not only had this tired, brave, immortal band of Imperial troops for the most part gone through the Greek campaign and had been evacuated only some three weeks previously; they were generally below establishment. The Greek Army contained many new recruits and other men who had belonged to administrative services, but it was even shorter of equipment than the men from Britain, Australia, New Zealand.

Major-General Freyberg, with his staff, had studied the ground. He was accurate in anticipating that the main battle would centre on the area including the Maleme aerodrome and Suda. Here he had British, New Zealand, Australian and Greek forces. At Retimo, the garrison was formed of Australians and Greeks; at Heraklion, of British, Australians and Greeks.

Nazis Prepare to Pounce

The prelude to this vast drama in the mountains and the flats of Crete, where a famous page in the illustrious military history of the Empire was written in violent days, is impressive as a piece of military art.

No sooner had the last Britisher been driven out of Greece on May 2nd than the German High Command were concentrating large sections of their forces in southern Greece. Men, machines, guns, ammunition, supplies—everything necessary for a sudden, terrific *blitzkrieg* poured in here from every available point.

The Germans knew the advantages they had over the British in matters of transport. By comparison it was for

them with pendulum-like ease that they could swing a vast section of their air force from one side of Europe to another. Wherever they needed to alight there was always an aerodrome, a ground staff, ample fuel, facilities of all kinds.

Nothing had to be packed. It was just a case of getting up and getting down again. Nothing more. Simple, troubleless, easy, non-fatiguing, stimulating even. There was no hitch.

"Go to Athens and report to the staff command there," was the order on the airfields of Berlin.

Up went the young pilots, drilling their way like steel bits through the blue vault of heaven, exultant, confident. Down they came in a few hours in Athens, a ground staff efficiently busy, a canteen steaming, a hive of purposeful activity about them.

Where demolitions did not hinder them, as they did in Greece and Yugoslavia, trains carried at top speed and as far as they could all necessary stores to reinforce them. Where trains could not run, motor transports got through.

It was war on wheels to perfection, a large-scale meccano tableau of mechanical war transformed into a superb, terrifying reality; a colossal war-machine moving with the high speed of a polished ball-bearing rolled on glistening linoleum.

And the British problem?

Time. Time was, as it was from September 3rd, 1939, the crux. Time to manufacture, deliver, organise. Time occupied in transporting everything to the Middle East theatre. The packing of aircraft into crates, the swinging of them aboard ships, the convoying of them across treacherous ocean spaces, the unloading, the de-crating, the assembly of the craft, the truing, the test flights—all this involves much time.

Plainly the Germans were doing in days what Britain could not do in weeks, even months. Another brake on the British Government: if the Nazis had suspected that the home base was being unwisely denuded to strengthen an oversea position, they could have made the switch from east to west for an elaborate attack on Britain with similar ease and rapidity.

Apart from this, the British authorities had foreseen the inevitability of an attack from the time the Germans overcame resistance in Greece. Whether he wanted to strike at Turkey, Alexandria or Syria, it was important that Hitler should hold Crete. The quickness with which German-Italian forces grabbed the Aegean Islands under the protection of dive-bombers was clear enough sign in itself—Lemnos, Mitylene, Chios, Samos, the Cyclades, Antikythera and Kythera all fell like ninepins.

Night after night the K.A.F. attacked concentrations of

Crete: A Classic Revolution in Warfare 27

German aircraft of all kinds on the aerodromes of southern Greece. Great damage was inflicted, but it did not deter them. The concentrations were developed. Reconnoitring R.A.F. aeroplanes watched them growing for days before German air-borne troops landed in Crete.

When they attacked they came in a cloud, like hornets. They struck with a strength intended to stun the defenders immediately. Instead, it stung. What was planned as a five-day campaign lasted almost a fortnight.

With heavy bombing and thorough ground-straffing the attack actually started in areas round Suda Bay which the Royal Navy was using to land reinforcements and stores, Canea and Candia.

The Nazi technique was perfect: their conduct was unhampered by the ordinary rules of warfare. Their single aim was to destroy. Their single code : " Anything goes."

Official History

An official part of the heart of what the British Government declares to be one of the most heroic battles ever fought, and of what the War Office believes to be the fiercest fighting of the first two years of the war, is laid bare in twelve laconic, historical, colourless Official *communiqués*, issued by British G.H.Q., Cairo.

May 20th:

Early this morning German parachutists and air-borne troops made an attempt to secure a footing on the island. A number have already been accounted for.

May 21st:

Throughout yesterday the island was subjected to a series of intensive air attacks, in the intervals of which fresh waves of German parachute air-borne troops were landed at various points.

Heavy fighting continued throughout the day, in which the enemy sustained serious losses, while ours were comparatively light. At one point a German detachment which succeeded in penetrating into the outskirts of Canea was quickly surrounded and accounted for. Operations are continuing.

May 22nd:

Yesterday further waves of German parachutists and air-borne troops continued to land at various points on the island throughout the day.

British and New Zealand troops, assisted by Greeks and Cretans, all rendered a magnificent account of them-

selves. Fighting with splendid courage and dash, our Empire forces, with their gallant Allies, delivered three successful counter-attacks.

Enemy losses yesterday were even heavier, and by nightfall the situation was satisfactory in every area except at Maleme, where the enemy had secured a temporary foothold. Operations to deal with the situation are now in progress.

Enemy landings by air are continuing; but as the result of determined action by the Royal Navy, attempts by Germans to support their air-borne troops by landings from the sea have so far been unsuccessful, as their convoys have been dispersed or sunk. The spirit of the defenders of Crete is higher than ever.

May 23rd:

Throughout yesterday the island was again subjected to intensive attacks interspersed with determined efforts by the Germans to land further troops, both parachutist and air-borne.

The enemy succeeded in obtaining temporary lodgment at both Heraklion and Retimo, but after severe hand-to-hand fighting the German detachments were accounted for, and the situation in both places is now satisfactory.

In the Maleme area our counter-attack was partially successful, but later in the day it was held up, as the enemy have been able to land considerable reinforcements by air in this sector. Operations are continuing.

As the German losses will show, both British and Empire forces have never rendered a better account of themselves. In the Heraklion sector, Greek troops also fought with greatest gallantry.

May 24th:

During May 23rd further determined efforts were made by the Germans to reinforce their troops already in the island. At Heraklion and Retimo detachments landed by air were decisively dealt with. Other parties landed farther afield are being mopped up by Empire forces, ably assisted by Greek troops.

In and around Maleme intense fighting is continuing. The Germans have launched their main effort in this area to extend their original foothold.

Fighting with resolute courage and despite intense dive-bombing throughout the day, our troops have again inflicted heavy casualties on the enemy, who has also lost a high proportion of his troop-carrying aircraft.

Crete: A Classic Revolution in Warfare 29

The spirit of our Empire forces remains as high as ever.

May 25th:

Yesterday the Germans succeeded in landing further air-borne troops, but on a substantially reduced scale as compared with the previous two days.

Enemy concentrations in the vicinity of Heraklion and Retimo were counter-attacked, and operations are continuing. Between Maleme and Canea sharp hand-to-hand fighting continued throughout the day.

Intensive dive-bombing attacks were again made. As on the previous days, our forces in this area have inflicted very heavy losses on the enemy, including the continued destruction by shell-fire of his aircraft on the ground.

May 26th:

At Heraklion and Retimo there is no change in the situation.

In the Maleme area, following the arrival of additional air-borne reinforcements, the Germans, under cover of an intensive air bombardment, delivered a strong attack against our troops west of Canea. Although the enemy again sustained heavy casualties, a penetration of our position was made.

New Zealand forces delivered a counter-attack, and severe fighting is continuing.

May 27th:

Supported by further intensive bombing, German troops in the area west of Canea launched another attack yesterday evening which enlarged their penetration into our defences, necessitating the withdrawal of our troops to positions in the rear.

German reinforcements continue to reach the island by air, and heavy fighting is continuing.

May 28th:

Reinforced by further air-borne troops and assisted by an even more intensive air bombardment, the Germans again delivered heavy attacks against our forces in the Canea area.

Although continuing to fight with the greatest determination, our troops were obliged to make a further withdrawal to a more favourable position in the rear. Severe fighting continues.

May 29th:

In the face of further attacks by German **forces**,

which have again been heavily reinforced, our troops have withdrawn to positions east of Suda Bay.

Dive-bombing was again continued on an extensive scale.

In hand-to-hand fighting yesterday both the enemy and our own troops suffered heavily.

May 30-31st

Aerodromes at Maleme and Heraklion were again heavily bombed during the night of May 30-31. Three enemy aircraft were set on fire at Maleme and Heraklion. A number of fires accompanied by heavy explosions were started near the runways and among the aerodrome buildings. Six Ju. 22's on the ground were machine-gunned and damaged.

June 1st:

After twelve days of what has undoubtedly been the fiercest fighting in this war, it was decided to withdraw our forces from Crete.

Although the losses we inflicted on the enemy's troops and aircraft have been enormous, it became clear that our naval and military forces could not be expected to operate indefinitely in and near Crete without more air support than could be provided from our bases in Africa.

Some 15,000 of our troops have been withdrawn to Egypt, but it must be admitted that our losses have been severe.

When halcyon days return, an essay will probably be written about these dozen *communiqués*, so arresting will their appearance be to those who will desire no more than the bare bones of the story. Unlike the Lord's Prayer, their version of the Battle of Crete could not be written on a single piece of rice: but quite clearly the unmatched epic could be inscribed on a dozen grains.

Prelude by Bombers

Fighting was violent from the moment a huge force of German aircraft came roaring in from the sea.

Bombers were expected because it had become the rule for some days past: and reconnaissance flights by R.A.F. had prepared Major-General Freyberg for an assault. It was a question only of the hour.

On that Tuesday, May 20th, when the Nazis hurled their thunderbolt, some of our men thought it might be that morning that they would do it, because by a stroke of luck,

Crete: A Classic Revolution in Warfare 31

the sort that sometimes marks great battles, an announcement was given by two Nazi airmen on the previous day that the attack would be launched within forty-eight hours. They were hauled out of the sea by Greek fishermen whom they took for friends, since they had been told at their base that all Greeks were friendly, glad to be "liberated".

A Madman's Murders

Light barely flared in the east before the Stuka dive-bombers and the Junkers (Ju. 52) troop-carriers roared into life, shattering the quiet, coming from Greece in a metal cloud. At the first ray every day after that you could watch clouds of these machines interweave over a bay, a hillside, a flat piece of ground, watch the parachute troops conglomerate, dropping from such low levels that the french chalk on their parachutes could be seen to pop in tinier clouds.

Insanely squandering German lives, Hitler allowed German blood to pour hourly, literally by the pint, from the riddled bodies of parachute troops dangling in the sky, grotesque, punctured, leaking shapes, dark against the early summer sky.

Flung there, pulped and bleeding, from the crammed decks of bomb-blasted, shell-torn transports, hundreds of other German soldiers, secure in the safety of death from the flail of a perverted loyalty, stained the envious, thirsty sea. Yet as they drifted easily, peacefully, unreluctant among the litter and the débris of wrecked ships—the aimlessly floating splintered plank, the twisted rope, the ragged life-belt, the reeking oil, the sullied flag—others speared, comrades falling thickly as white petals in a vast wind among the smoky hills of Maleme, along the curving beaches of Suda Bay, where the British and the Anzacs battled with them in the dawn, at noontide, and in the moonlight.

Shooting them down, denying them the glory that they sought in a greater harvest of Britishers, did the Tommy and the Anzac smile grimly at the memory of the American poet?

**When a deed is done for freedom
Through the broad earth's aching breast
Runs a thrill of joy prophetic.**

The huge force of German aircraft that came roaring in from the sea on May 20th were mostly Messerschmitts, Heinkels, Stukas and Junkers. They came in swarms, thicker than had been seen before. There was virtually no R.A.F. opposition. Almost as soon as the great yellow-nosed Junkers swept in over the headlands, the beaches, the aerodromes, dropping heavy bombs, they were forming up and off again, back to Greece for more. It was chain-bombing.

A couple or so R.A.F. machines on the Maleme aerodrome, caught within a few seconds of the bombing, were blown to pieces. Now and again an R.A.F. machine went up, but was practically useless in the face of hundreds. The main British air force was based at Egypt. The distance was too great for any worth-while help to be sent—it was too far for fighters to travel and make the return journey; without fighter protection, bombers were as vulnerable to the Nazi fighters as wood-pigeons to a shotgun.

In view of the obvious disadvantages under which the few R.A.F. fighters on Cretan aerodromes were operating when the great attack was firmly mounted, the commanders on the spot decided that the few remaining should be withdrawn. It was the only thing left to do. Even so, they operated from Egypt, bombers as well as fighters, with some good effect occasionally, despite their small numbers.

The Plan

Crete is a large, mountainous island—the unfriendly White Mountains rise to 8,000 feet—about 165 miles long, varying in width from, say, 20 to 32 miles. It is 660 miles from Tripoli, 550 from Malta, 500 from Italy, 350 from Alexandria and Benghazi, 215 from Tobruk, 140 from Piraeus (Greece), and 120 from Rhodes.

There were three main points of attack : around Canea, Retimo and Heraklion—all on the north side of the island. Canea lies between Maleme aerodrome (which is inland, roughly ten miles south-west) and the naval anchorage at Suda Bay. The principal seaports are Canea and Heraklion. The familiar roadstead of Suda Bay lies a few miles from Canea, separated from it by Akrotiri Peninsula, a sun-baked brown hump jutting up and out like a Gibraltar. Suda Bay is the only Cretan harbour that offers deep water for ships, but its magnificent anchorage is handicapped by too great a depth of water. It is the only available British naval base nearer than Alexandria or Malta.

The campaign was to resolve itself quickly into three savage battles, Canea, Retimo and Heraklion; the only three aerodromes on the island are close to these three towns. The coastal road connecting the towns is so narrow, with hairpin bends, that a three-ton lorry has to be backed three times in rounding the bends.

The plan was self-evident. It was to gain control of the main towns, the aerodromes and the Suda Bay anchorage.

After more than an hour's intense bombing, ear-splitting and intense everywhere, but effective only in the Maleme-

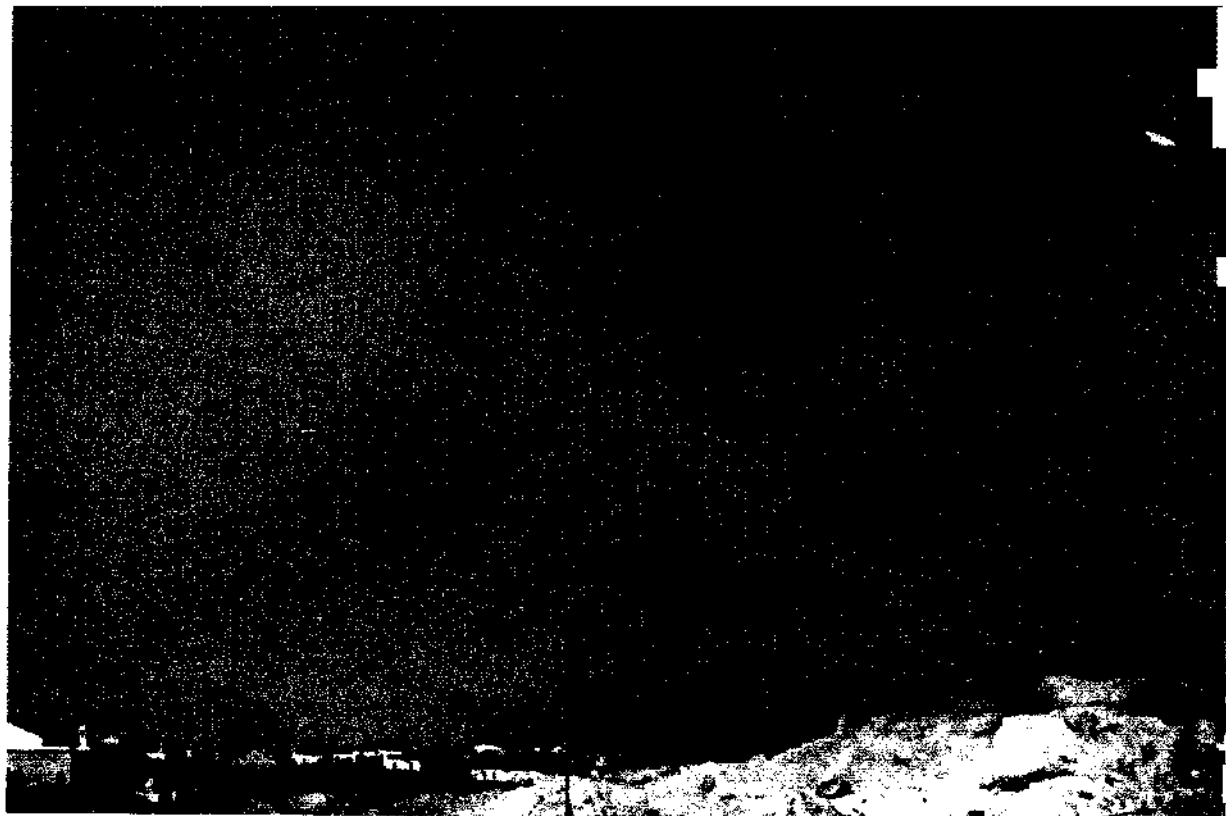
STREET OF DIS-
ILLUSFONED
MEN

Beaten by British
Imperial troops,
bandaged by British
Imperial fingers,
these young Nazis
reflect on their fate
in a Cretan street
under a British Im-
perial guard.



NAZI PARA-
CHUTISTS OVER
CRETE

A remarkable photo-
graph taken during
the revolutionary
warfare introduced
by the Nazis in their
terrific assault on
Crete. Air-borne
troops and equip-
ment are falling. The
cluster of four para-
chutes in the left are
attached to a gun.
A plane is aflame.



Suda Bay area, the bombers and the fighters ceased coming over. They had gone up and down the island, sowing bombs more or less precisely where they wanted to, while the fighter pilots, as soon as they found there was no need to worry about serious attacks on the bombers they were escorting, peeled off in waves and employed their aeroplanes as mobile machine-gun batteries, swooping down to as low as fifty feet, raking the ground, killing and wounding where they could, trying to reap as rich a harvest of lives as possible. Together, the bombers and the fighters were being used by the German High Command as long-range artillery and advance machine-gun posts.

Troops from the Sky

All the time this great aerial barrage was on, only a few minutes separated each wave of machines. Long bursts of bullets, delivered in stinging hailstorms, chopped down olive trees, incendiary bullets set some alight; the towns battered the towns, the roads, the waterfronts, blew up houses, buildings. Chocolate-coloured columns of earth rose and plumed, as if magically, into the sunny air; then the roar of the explosion rushed towards you, deafeningly.

A slight lull followed the departure of the bombers and fighters. Anzacs in slit-trenches, dotted all about the vulnerable areas, watched them disappear, small as wasps in the distance. Intelligence officers stood at the mouths of their dug-outs, watching. Would they come back?

There was not much time for questioning. Out of the west, coming in V formation, in threes and fives, here and there sevens, slower machines were approaching—ponderous Junkers (Ju. 52) troop-carriers, escorted by Messerschmitt fighters. Over the island they came. Nazi photographic reconnaissance planes had taken yards of film of Crete. Nooks and crannies that the Nazis did not know about in the areas in which they were concentrating were so few that you could probably have counted them on your fingers.

Then suddenly the thing happened over Akrotiri Peninsula, over Canea, Maleme. It was at once expected, yet unreal. It was like a page from a drama by H. G. Wells, part of a fantastic tale.

White puffs appeared beneath the bigger machines, white patches with dark figures dangling. Men and materials of all kinds, including two-pounder guns, were falling from the skies. Parachutists!

"They're the real thing!" yelled a New Zealander, almost unbelieving.

"**Hell!**" said an Australian, working his machine-gun.

The dry, business-like rattle of its firing echoed, snapping the spell of surprise.

Parachutes floated down, first above the Maleme-Canea-Suda Bay area. Later they were sailing down over the Heraklion region. As they had anticipated, it was clear to our Headquarters that what the Nazi High Command intended their troops to do was to control the whole vital strip of the north coast stretching from Canea eastward to Heraklion and beyond. The real danger was that the troops now fluttering down might consolidate themselves and advance from the western end of the island, through Canea, at the same time pushing westward from Heraklion, and, welding their front with the aid of bombers, fighters and parachutists attacking from all sides, oust the Allied forces from fortified positions, push them back into the hills, or into the sea.

What heightened the sense of unreality which our troops experienced was the comparative quietness. Except for our own fire, there was practically no noise of heavy firing in some areas. The Nazis could not risk bombing and machine-gunning on a wholesale scale once they had launched their parachutists. They must let them have a chance to land, to survive, to gather themselves, and to prepare their own attacks on the ground. Then, using their own portable wireless sets, the parachutists would direct the Nazi bombers and fighters.

Trap

The reason why the Nazis first congregated in the western end of the island was plain enough : the object was to establish a first bridgehead by seizing Canea and Akrotiri Peninsula. Possession of these would enable the Nazis, with the aid of airborne artillery, to deny us the use of Suda Bay, already bombed fairly severely, thereby denying the Royal Navy its main base for unloading reinforcements in men and material.

In other words, by securing Suda Bay, and with the unhampered aid of the *Luftwaffe*, the German High Command calculated to isolate completely the garrisons on the island, to cut them off not only from supplies, but from escape. If they could do this, they reckoned, the Allied Forces there were irretrievably trapped.

They knew, as well as the Royal Navy and Major-General Freyberg knew, that there were no ports on the southern side of the island, and that the air armada they were planning to fling against the island would make an evacuation a thousand times worse than the evacuation from Dunkirk, even on a conservative, sober calculation of the number of machines they were able to use above the beach at Dunkirk compared with the number they would be able to use above the beaches of Crete*

And this, of course, presupposed that survivors of the Allied forces after days and nights of incomparable bombing would be able to fight their way across the island, from sea to sea, crossing the inhospitable mountains : presupposing, too, that the Royal Navy could load men at a few other points than Suda Bay on the north coast, such as off Retimo or Heraklion, and that it would be able to survive the torrent of explosives that would be jettisoned on its units on their daytime voyage to Alexandria, or anchored off the southern villages—such as Sphakia, which is a little village and cannot by any stretch of imagination be called a port.

Allied Lines of Defence

Along the coast, in and around the chief towns and sea-ports on the northern side of the island, were the Allied lines of defences, in depth in some places. Clearly there were not enough fighting men to defend strongly the entire northern coast (landing well west of Canea, for example, the Nazi parachutists found themselves out of range of the Allied defences), but they were disposed at strategic points.

Mobile defences included Bren-gun carriers and tanks, but there were not over many of either. A rifle and a bayonet were the Allied soldier's arms. Some of the concrete and barbed-wire strong-points were very strong, as the Nazis found to their cost when they came to storm them.

A significant handicap was that when, after the landing of parachutists, the Nazi bombers and fighters recommenced their blasting, the defenders, virtually unaided by the R.A.F., became in a sense earth-bound and, compared with the Nazis, partially blinded. Pinned down as they were, the difficulty of communications was tremendous, just as were the tasks of trying to co-ordinate the action of the forces once the Nazis had pushed through a line here and there.

Bearing this in mind, it is amply manifest that the highest praise is due to the Allied staff work, which, in circumstances unique in military history, contrived to achieve all these things, to preserve cohesion, flexibility and co-ordination, inflicting, proportionate to the overwhelming odds against them, terrific casualties and damage on a determined, energetic enemy and saving so large a proportion of our men.

Major-General Freyberg's headquarters reacted as it had planned to react. While the inadequate number of Bofors guns around Maleme aerodrome hurled shells at the aircraft trying to land parachutists there, machine-gunners, pointing their guns skyward wherever they could, shot up a curtain of cross-fire to trap the parachutists as they fell. Not that there was much time for this. Many of the Junkers emptied their

human cargoes from heights of 300 feet, which meant the invaders were in the air little more than half a minute. It was almost windless; they dropped nearly straight onto their target.

Units of Allied troops went into action immediately. The Germans lay low when they fell. Unless you could see their parachutes, or had marked where they had landed in the thick sage-green olive groves and brown-green wooded valleys, they were difficult to spot. They lay low to get mental balance, to study the land, to make contact with each other, to find out how many were alive, how many hurt, how many scatheless, to collect their armament, to wait to put their own plan of attack into operation. They had to be both daring and careful. They knew they were isolated from their armies, and that they dare not summon the Stukas and the Messerschmitts to their aid until they were organised. A good deal of the land was different from that suggested by the photographs they had studied.

Bayonet versus Parachutist

As soon as the first Nazis swayed to earth, the spell of wonderment was broken. The novelty evaporated. Here were men walking about who could be killed, shot or bayoneted, more easily than troops entrenched and ready for an assault.

Australian and New Zealand patrols in the Maleme-Canea zone were among the first to close in on Nazis dropped there.

Gliders were coming in all the time, trailed by the slow Junkers, perfect sitting targets for Spitfires and Hurricanes had they been there. For the wonderful R.A.F. it would have been as easy a day's shooting as snap-shooting at a carnival side-show would be with a machine-gun. There was a theatrical quality about it: it was like an act in a drama you have read, but never imagined you could take a part in anything resembling it.

"Hell I" yelled an Australian. "They're gliders. They're not planes! If we only had the stuff to sock those babies where they are I"

Swerving, swooping smartly, showing considerable manoeuvrability, the gliders sailed quickly to the ground. They were full of highly-armed Germans, the pick of Hitler's shock troops, physically fit, intelligent, hard fighters. The Anzacs were not meeting immature youths (though some were mere boys) picked only for their effervescing enthusiasm for the Fuehrer, but men who knew how to kill without a shudder. They came down as near the parachutists as they could guide their machines. They showed doggedness in a hail of fire.

An astonishing feature of the whole operation was the speed

Crete : A Classic Revolution in Warfare 37

with which it was carried out. Once a wave of parachutes had dropped over the valleys, you could see no sign, except here and there a white splash where some were caught in trees. Aeroplanes, with a bird's-eye view, could spot the grounded gliders easily, as the following waves did, using them as markers; but the Anzac and Allied spotters on hillsides, in trees, had great difficulty. As a brilliantly executed opening to what was to prove a successful and daring operation, it reflected credit on the Nazi staff work.

Coming up to a party of Nazis, arming themselves with tommy-guns, Anzac patrols, like British and Greek patrols, charged with the bayonet. Nobody liked it: it was a case of kill promptly or be killed. They killed scores with the bayonet. The Germans were in terror of the cold steel blade.

It was difficult to hit the Germans in the air when they were dropping from low altitudes: nevertheless the machine-guns riddled hundreds. Frantically the Nazis, watching the spurts of fire directed at them, swayed, trying to swing their parachutes out of the range with their desperate kicking.

"Suddenly you'd see one go limp, then give a kick and kind of straighten up with a jerk, then go limp again, and you knew he was done for," soldiers said afterwards.

Speed

Speed. Speed was the thing. You had to be on their trails as soon as they touched the ground. Once you had ringed off the patch where they had landed, rounding up parachutists became easy. Where the bayonet could not be used, they fell fairly easy victims to the rifle.

Telephonists from units of our troops scattered strategically in the vital areas were working all the time, informing headquarters. As soon as a landing was reported, headquarters marked it on the map. An officer in a dug-out put a cross on the spot, or ran a circle round it.

Invariably he would ask if the unit needed help.

And invariably the reply was, "No; we've spotted them. They'll be dead meat by the time you could get help here."

They shot and bayoneted them by the hundreds as that first mad day wore on. Coming over in regulated relays, between 3,000 and 4,000 Nazis were spilled over a wide section of the island—from Canea to Heraklion—by the afternoon. A few carried strings of hand-grenades, tommy-guns, a full **kit** of accessories, food, water; mostly, however, they landed **only** very lightly armed, some not at all, collecting their equipment, which was landed by special parachutes. Their leaders' para-

chutes were differently coloured, so that those who survived the salute of whining bullets would know where to run or crawl to assemble for orders.

A striking detail of German thoroughness in organising the attack : doctors, shot dead in the air, were found to be loaded with complete sets of instruments for amputations, specially prepared kits of bandages, whole sets of fully charged hypodermic syringes.

In the pockets of the young dead Germans and Austrians washed up on the beaches, bayoneted in the field, were love-letters to sweethearts, letters to mothers and relatives, unfinished messages; photographs of parents, friends, babies.

Up to 7.45 a.m. on May 20th more than 2,000 parachutists landed in the island. Gliders were already landing troops on Akrotiri Peninsula, north of Suda, and at 8 a.m. air-borne troops were landed south and south-west of Canea. By eleven o'clock about 1,500 enemy troops had landed by gliders, parachutes and troop-carriers in Canea and Maleme areas. Small parties of parachute troops had also landed in the Retimo area, and by the early afternoon a fairly strong enemy party south of the Canea and Maleme road was getting itself established.

An indication of the swiftness with which Major-General Freyberg's men worked in rounding up the enemy is that by about 4 p.m. most of the invaders were accounted for.

During the afternoon, after heavy raids, parachute troops landed in Heraklion, while the Germans made their first attempts to land troops by sea.

Toe-hold

Attacks on the town and harbour of Heraklion on May 20th were determined, exceptionally heavy, and partly successful, despite stiff resistance by the British, Australian and Greek garrison. At Retimo it was heavy, too, but the Australians and the Greeks defending there threw back the invaders. Meantime, later in the afternoon, the persistent attacks on Maleme sector, where there were Australians, New Zealanders, British and Greeks, were securing some results.

We had Maleme aerodrome as heavily defended as was possible with what men and material we had. A curtain of fighters was needed, but we did not have the fighters. So the Anzacs and the British and the Greeks, in slit-trenches—trenches with a roof barely a foot above the level of the ground giving a slit of an opening at eye level through which machine-guns and rifles were poked—covered by artillery pieces in positions farther back, raked the airfield with fire.

" But they came down in wave after wave," the Anzacs

Crete : A Classic Revolution in Warfare 39

said. "The sky was full of them. The old Ju. 52's were dropping them in clouds—sowing the sky with them. Three, sometimes four, parachutes were attached to heavy stuff like two-pounder guns, machine-guns, cases of ammunition, cases of food."

Drone, drone. . . . Overhead flew the Ju. 52's. Under a brilliant sun and a blue sky, the Nazis jettisoned from the bellies of the planes swarms of parachutists, while from olive groves, crags, on the flats and the beaches, in the hills, the Anzacs and the Tommies, the Greeks and the Cretans, hurled thousands of bullets and shells into the air at the enemy. But it soon became pretty clear that the German High Command was about as ready to spend as many men on gaining the island as the defenders were capable of spending bullets and shells.

The defenders of Maleme aerodrome wiped out the first few waves, despite their terrific handicaps, including the dropping of smoke-bombs by German bombers to screen the parachutists' landings. But over to the west, in a spot where the ground afforded some better protection than in other places, and where they were out of range, the Germans were dropping scores of men, plenty of gear. When they saw that we could not deal with this pocket so effectively, they began crash-landing troop-carriers there. By the afternoon they had the hard core of a striking force assembled. They also had enough material of the right kind to open fire on our gun positions.

The noise was a tyranny as the waves of parachutists landed over fairly heavily defended areas, such as Maleme. Again, there were long patches of silence, shot through with the dry, busy gossip of machine-guns. The rattle came from various quarters as our Bren-gun carriers moved about mopping up; or the few Bofors roared. Sweat-furrowed faces, grimy with dust, some caked with blood from wounds caused by hits or by splinters kicked up by the Messerschmitts' machine-gun batteries. Because the position had not sorted itself out into fronts, the Germans could not employ their bombers, but frequently the Messerschmitts swooped on a gun position.

Headquarters, in summing up the day's operation that night, reported that the situation was in hand, that most of the pockets had been accounted for; even the area west of Maleme had been weakened. We were in control of all vital spots. Heraklion, Retimo, Canea, Suda Bay were clear of the enemy's troops. Our losses had been slight, the Germans' terrific. In short, the attempt to seize the island's key points by parachute had failed.

The Hammer-blow

So the German High Command thought, too, apparently. For next day they rather changed their tactics, putting more emphasis on the value of air-borne troops, as distinct from parachutists.

Ju. 52's, which they had been turning out of their factories for years by the thousand, came in greater numbers. They crash-landed them in dozens. Dropping them more or less where they wanted to, they did not seek an airfield, using instead any clearing strategically placed, even crashing them among groves of olives. The Nazi High Command scattered life with a prodigious hand, as lightly as the sand was scattered by the falling bodies of Germans as they fell to the Allies' bullets.

Look at the Nazi method of concentration at Maleme aerodrome. Scores of Ju. 52's hovered over it, braving Allied fire, circling, waiting, as if hesitant about landing. Then in dashed the first lot. Struck by shell-fire, they went up in smoke. A pause: then others swooped. Hammered by bullets as they were, some of the troops survived. But the dead lay in piles, too numerous to count.

As our guns fired they betrayed their positions, which the Nazi invaders had indicated roughly with their wireless apparatus, anyhow. Up came waves of German bombers and fighters now, straffing every inch of the ground, pounding it with all they were carrying, swooping low, raking machine-gun nests, blasting our artillery posts, thudding at the Bofors.

These dive-bombing and low-level machine-gun attacks gave the Ju. 52's hovering over the aerodrome a greater chance. Now and again one of the big carriers would swoop in. Out would spring twenty or more German troops, to scurry for shelter or to drop dead on the shell-torn earth. Away the aeroplane would roar. It was on the ground only two or three minutes before it was flying to Greece again for more men and material.

An hour went by. A regular ferry service had been established between Sparta and Cythera in Greece and the Maleme aerodrome. Gradually the numbers of the Nazis swelled. The Ju. 52's kept coming in as if working to a one-a-minute time-table. The German pilots and troops showed great "bravery. It required nerve to climb into a transport, sit there huddled up while it roared to the target, to look down over the spot as into the mouth of a pit bursting with fire, and to drive straight into the centre of it. But they did: it was because hundreds did it that the Nazis secured what the British *communiqués* described as "a temporary foothold" at Maleme, but which was later to amount to the capture of the aerodrome.

Agony

A pall of dust hung over the aerodrome. Smoke curled lazily from burning Junkers. Bodies lay strewn carelessly. Wreckage was in tangled, smouldering piles. Cries of the wounded, the moaning of the dying were drowned in uncomprehending, fast mechanical roars. Hands stretched helplessly. Restless, fiery blood congealed. Fading eyes gazed at the blue, ecstatic sky. Troop-carriers were burning with their human cargoes. The fantastic scene put on the witchery of a nightmare. A scene of horror enacted in a theatre as hot as pepper on a speck of an island, a fragment in the palm of the world, it teemed with life and death, hideous, grotesquely intricate.

No quarter was asked : none was given. In the afternoon the Allies had to withdraw some machine-gun units, although their artillery kept up its devastating fire. Just as, early in the morning, those German survivors of the first day gave signals to the German bombers and fighters as to where to deliver their blows, so they did again at night. Red, yellow, green Verrey lights streaked the sky. The bombing was thunderous.

Suda Bay was still held, attempts to land sea-borne troops having been thwarted. At Heraklion and Retimo the situation was fairly satisfactory.

Next day was a repetition of what happened on Wednesday. The Nazis, finding their faith in troop-carriers justified, poured in more and more reinforcements, irrespective of the losses. They were settling into a steady stride.

Once this was realised by our Headquarters, a choice had to be taken, bearing in mind the cardinal fact that to expect constant, adequate help either from the R.A.F. or from the Royal Navy was out of the question. To fight blindly a losing battle, or take action to save as many men as possible to fight another day ? That was the question.

It was decided to withdraw ; it was a deliberate choice.

Revolution in Slaughter

For now there was no mystery about the method. The rhythm of the attack was symphonic. The method was by Stukas—that is, dive-bombers—and Messerschmitts, followed by gliders and parachutists.

The mad, wanton wastage was only apparently mad. There was behind it a demoniac determination to get a toe-hold on the island anyhow, somehow, at any cost. To the orthodox military mind there could be something momentarily paralysing about this deliberate, coldly calculated, super-cynical disregard of life in a savage gamble for a stake.

Here was a policy put into operation which had as its core

this stark-naked fact: a life is purely a cog in a war machine. For thousands of men from the Dominions who had never before been out of their country, and who, even in the midst of war, thought of Europe as a fount of culture rather than as an historic battleground, there was something stupefying in this revelation: an ironic mockery.

The technique necessitating this cynicism marked a sensational/evolution in warfare.

Aeroplanes were introduced—on a full-size, island-invasion scale—for the first time in history as ships, long- and short-range artillery, mobile machine-gun batteries, advance patrols, supply waggon, wireless stations, observation posts, signalling corps, spotters working in such close harmony with the ground forces that when the ground forces were waiting and ready to strike at the enemy and could not locate him, the airmen were summoned by the commander of the ground forces to find him, to lead them to him.

As if they were as valueless as paper hats after a party, aeroplanes were just thrown away. Strung up on mountain-sides, in olive-groves, crumpled on the ground, lying torn on their sides, their noses, sprawled on the beaches, in the shallows, wings ripped off, propellers smashed, tails gone, they festooned the areas round Maleme, Suda Bay, Canea, like toys from a gigantic Christmas tree.

They were big, sturdy Ju. 52 transports, comparatively slow, but safe where the percentage of defending fighters was known to be negligible. Stripped of every unessential, they could carry between thirty and forty fully-laden human arsenals. For years the Nazis have been building thousands of them. They were here proving they had them to burn, to toss away.

Spectacle

The sole purpose of these transports was to ferry the shock troops, to ground them. They did this in the majority of cases by the simple expedient of crash-landings. An usually spectacular affair was reduced to a commonplace, a planned tactic of war. Few of them, considering the numbers used, were totally destroyed, although it is obvious that it would not have mattered at all if every single Ju. 52 had been written off as a total wreck. It can be assumed that, for the purposes of the campaign, ninety per cent, of them were written off as a loss before they set out from Greece, and those that were not were counted as a profit. As it was, the Nazis salvaged them in dozens. Within a few days of the first struggle, after they had dislodged the British from Maleme, gangs of Germans were marshalling the wrecks, lining them up on the beaches, methodically sorting them.

Crete : A Classic Revolution in Warfare 43

Land-gliders in pale-painted strings of ten or six, sometimes less, were towed over, carrying other troops. The gliders were released at heights varying from 1,000 to 300 feet. They were spaced about 150 to 250 feet apart, and were towed by big four-engined Focke-Wulf machines. Once they were released from the aeroplane, they automatically released themselves from each other. Not much was gleaned about them by the Anzacs, except that they held between ten and twenty fully-armed soldiers, were lightly, almost flimsily built, although clearly strong. Their bottoms seemed to be strengthened especially to take the shock of landing.

"You seldom saw them with the bottoms torn out," a soldier from Wellington said. "Mostly their wings were ripped, the tail busted. The soldiers popped out of the side, which seemed to zip away, and the top peel back after they'd landed."

New Technique

Seaplane gliders came down in the shallows, nosed up close to the beach, slithering in showers of spray. Like the gliders that came down on land, numbers of them lay where they were, as signals to oncoming trains of gliders, telling where German troops were already concentrating.

So there it was, the new technique for capturing an island without command of the sea, without a solitary friend on an island bristling with 30,000 entrenched troops—but inadequately armed. The whole basis of the bold conception was a belief in the revolutionary power of aviation as applied to military science. It was unique.

First: the thorough preliminary bombing; the heavy, persistent straffing—terrific sudden concentrations of bursts by swift air-borne batteries of machine-guns; the regular sowing of death by jettisoning high explosives alternating with the lightning, chopper effect of thousands of rounds of bullets poured into trenches in low diving attacks inland, along the beaches; the pummelling of all the Fleet units in sight.

Second: the crash-landing of big troop-carrying transports on a selected beach; the curtaining of this with fighters which become advance machine-gun batteries mowing down the defenders if they dare counter-attack. Simultaneously, drop parachute troops over widely divergent strategic points in various areas.

Third: reinforce the transports on the beaches with seaplane gliders; reinforce the parachute troops with troops from swarms of land-gliders.

Fourth: use specially constructed machines for carrying small tanks for those consolidating their position on the beaches;

use them, too, for landing light and medium artillery, crates of supplies, food, ammunition, water, some of which can also be dropped to parachute troops by other parachutes.

Fifth : have reconnaissance planes standing over the island all the time—throughout the twenty-four hours. Keep a constant wireless report flowing back to headquarters, in this case Greece. Let these reconnaissance machines be the crow's-nest of the Army. If a ground commander wants to know where other German units are landing, how they are faring, or if he wants to know where the enemy is, he should speak with the men in the crow's-nest by wireless and they should tell him instantly, having a panoramic view of the scene from a great height.

Sixth : at headquarters have standing by, engines warmed up, hundreds of machines, all with full bomb-racks, grouped in rows, each detailed to support an invading unit.

So there it was : a fresh handbook entitled *Air Power and its Vital Place in a New Phase of Modern Warfare* was being presented to a bewildered world by the Nazis, complete with a practical demonstration.

Persistence

The method never varied. It rose to full force, according to officers who were fighting there, over Friday, Saturday, Sunday and Monday (May 23rd, 24th, 25th, 26th), when German aeroplanes—Junkers 87B (Stukas), dive-bombers, Ju. 88's, Heinkel 111's, and Messerschmitt fighters—operated in great strength in conjunction with the Nazis' land forces, pressing home and developing advantages gained during the second day of the lightning assault. Pace, persistence and plenty were their watchwords.

Stuka dive-bombers screamed down over our men, almost perpendicularly, unleashing their bombs at point-blank range. Only R.A.F. fighters in great numbers could have given them protection. On Saturday the Germans reduced most of the bigger towns to rubble, wrapping them in clouds of dust and smoke. Fires were everywhere.

The Germans bombed the towns viciously, even when it was clear there was no military need. They showered high explosives and incendiaries indiscriminately. Two hospitals were razed in Canea, most of the patients being burnt alive. Sticks of bombs were planted in the middle of the town by dive-bombers. Civilians were machine-gunned.

As usual, the Nazis never displayed any squeamishness in what they did. Take one striking example. A hospital, its Red Cross plain enough, was in an area heavily bombed. Para-troops drifted down. A section of them rounded up a

considerable number of New Zealand wounded, left the more seriously wounded lying in the fields, and forced those who could walk, some in their pyjamas but most of them in their uniforms, ahead of them. Others they compelled to walk side by side with them. So they advanced to the attack, shielded by the sick, believing the snipers would hold their fire rather than risk killing an Anzac comrade.

It was this fact which led to the false report that the Nazi High Command had clothed their soldiers in New Zealand uniform. It *looked* as if it were a crowd of Germans in disguise, for they were shooting as they advanced.

Yet there was no panic as the Allied troops fought against Nazis who were continually being strengthened, although after the first three days the troops knew there was no hope of further reinforcements reaching them.

Counter-attacks were extraordinarily daring, and time and again effective. A New Zealand officer said that a platoon of eighteen men, led by an officer, in one of the many daring counter-attacks at Maleme, killed 140 Germans and took twenty-seven prisoners.

Near Canea is the little village of Galatas. It amounts to no more than a group of small stone cottages within stone walls. Two Allied companies drove out a strong force of Germans at the point of the bayonet.

"You never heard such a row in your life," a New Zealander recounted. "The Germans ran screaming."

Again: while evacuation was in progress and stubborn rearguard actions were being fought, one company, which had been fighting ceaselessly for seven days and was short of water, was ordered up a mountain peak to face a German attack developing round the flank. A climb which ordinarily would have taken about two hours lay in front of them; but on that day they accomplished it in half-an-hour.

And take the incident of the arrival of thirty parachutists 300 yards from a battalion headquarters. With his batman, the regimental sergeant-major and three intelligence officers, the Commanding Officer went out and shot all thirty.

Episodes of endurance, ingenuity, reckless daring and unsurpassed courage were innumerable. Only a handful of them will ever be recorded.

At Canea, for example, they even brought out the soldiers' newspaper on the Saturday of the big *blitz*. To the Cretans, magnificently courageous themselves, the Anzacs were a tonic at Canea. In between the waves of bombing, some of them wandered among the debris spilled in the quaint streets, picking up bottles of wine, bread, cheese, tinned food, wise-cracking and laughing, utterly indifferent to

danger. They jumped into cellars when bombs fell, dropped flat where they were. They got the paper out that night, the New Zealanders being determined to print it once the type-setting had been started. While they were on the job, the building next to the shop in which it was printed went up in flames, forcing them to abandon it when they had printed about half what they wanted.

Evacuation

As this was happening at Canea, a thousand German parachutists were landed west of Heraklion, while the enemy garrison west of Retimo aerodrome was being consolidated. By then, too, the Nazis had the road to Canea in their hands. Enemy tanks came down in the Canea area, landed by aeroplane. Still we held on at Canea until Sunday, our men in the slit-trenches, defying the dive-bombers and the air-borne machine-gun batteries as they had done for days.

Then, Nazi aircraft launched a tremendous, highly concentrated aerial bombardment on our forward troops west of Canea, more than half of whom were Anzacs. After that preparation the Nazis launched a ground attack. Our line yielded; for the first time there the situation began to cause anxiety.

Water was difficult to find in some places, since there were few streams, wells being the main supply. Many of the men, bearded now, were dog-tired. All this time the enemy was getting stronger hourly. Emboldened, he began launching heavy attacks. At Heraklion we suffered heavy casualties on May 26th (Monday), when Germans smashed through our line.

Fighter aircraft of the Royal Air Force carried out a highly successful attack at Maleme that day, shooting down several Ju. 52's laden with troops, for the loss of three of our machines. Despite the great distances they had to fly from their bases in Egypt, it was typical of their audacity that a band of R.A.F. fighters, including some Australian and New Zealand airmen, facing literally scores of Messerschmitt fighters, broke through in another attack on Maleme to inflict heavy damage among a hundred Ju. 52's concentrated on the ground. Back again at dusk came R.A.F. heavy bombers to renew the attack in the same area, setting many aircraft ablaze on the aerodrome. During the previous evening they had scored considerably in a heavy attack on the beaches and on the three aerodromes.

By May 27th the Nazis had established a foothold north-west of Suda and our forward troops were pitilessly pressed and attacked from the air. Just east of Suda our rearguard

Crete : A Classic Revolution in Warfare 47

was still in position, but the enemy, landing troops by sea-planes behind, cut them off. In Retimo we were still attacking, and enemy positions east of the aerodrome were captured with the aid of infantry tanks. Indeed, the only enemy remaining in this section then were some 150 west of the aerodrome. In Heraklion the Nazis were continuing to build up concentrations east of the aerodrome and south and west of the town.

Next day Nazi parachutists and supplies were dropped in the Heraklion area, and that night, with the aid of the Royal Navy, evacuation of our troops began from Sphakia and Heraklion. A great retiring movement was well under way by now; our troops in western Crete were heading towards the south coast.

Nazi aircraft, making heavy dive-bombing attacks on Sphakia on May 29th, caused slight damage and small casualties. A few scattered bombs killed men who had fought throughout the Grecian campaign, withstood the worst bombing of the war, and were virtually at that moment going aboard a ship that would carry them to safety.

All the time our men knew, even as they reached the beaches, that Nazi reinforcements in fresh men and plenty of material were arriving practically every minute. In the Ju. 52's, which have a carrying capacity roughly that of a thirty-ton lorry, the Nazis conveyed, among other types of field-pieces, a quick-firing four-inch mortar, like they used in Greece, with a long barrel set bluntly on a flat metal plate. Three men can carry it, since it can be taken to pieces quickly. They ram the charge down the muzzle, then the shell; it fires nearly twenty shells into the air at a time. Bursting with deafening cracks, the shells explode laterally, the object being to wound as many people as possible within the radius of the explosion. Equally light, effective and quick-firing is the mortar we used.

Terror at Night

Sphakia is on the southern side of Crete. It was only one of the embarkation points towards which thousands of troops shifted through the timber, over rocky goat-tracks, from the northern side, where the main positions had been. From the Canea region men began moving south on Tuesday, May 27th. Others began moving from other areas about that time, too.

As the Nazis gained firmer control over the coast on the north side of the island, with the landing of reinforcements by seaplane, troop-carrier Junkers, parachutes and gliders, Allied forces found themselves more and more split up into

units of various sizes, some of two, three and four men, others of ten and twenty. Like the Nazi parachutists, they moved as guerilla bands in many cases, since continuous " fronts " in the usual sense of the term were becoming non-existent.

No sooner would these small units shoot their way out of one ring of parachutists than they would most likely run into another. Advantages in light arms were with the Germans, who had tommy-guns. Many Allied units saved themselves only by killing a parachutist with a rifle or revolver shot, then racing to strip the dead German of his tommy-gun and the two long magazines of ammunition strapped round his neck. It was a back-to-the-wall fight.

Up over a range of rugged mountains, wild, dotted here and there with a tiny white-washed village or a shepherd's hut, ran twisted, ragged roads, rising and descending in long sweeps, through ravines and gullies. Steaming and sweating, men climbed round mountain shoulders, dropped down the other side. Fighting, or risk of fighting, was always with them. Death hung like a shadow over the island. In day-time, in the cruelly dazzling Mediterranean brilliance, you could fancy death being symbolised by the black shadows of the wings of hundreds of marauding machines, spraying destruction at any moving thing below, which fled lightly across the island's torn surface.

Soldiers marched, crawled, climbed for two, three or, sometimes, four days. Transport was of little value, because the dive-bombers sought it out. Mostly the men hugged the timber, moving as much as possible at night, scattering at the sound of machines. A great many were exhausted, many more wounded, but still able to walk.

Sleep, as it had been for a week, was impossible except in cat-naps, or when it came in a blinding flood from total exhaustion. They threw away most of their kit, keeping only their arms, water-bottles and what food they could carry. Thirst was a plague. Water had to be drawn from wells or at springs, often difficult to reach. They queued up for hours, sometimes.

Aware that they were on the move, drifting southward, the Nazis came over at night in numbers, dropping flares, showering the groves with incendiary bullets that cut the blackness in a golden hail, setting alight trees, that became flaring, crackling torches.

In the orange glares the black trunks of trees, their branches licked by flames, were vivid friezes. In areas where the bombers started fires in the timber, the troops froze to the **ground, flat** as shadows. " We crawled on our stomachs for

MAJOR-GENERAL
FREYBERG
WATCHES NAZIS

Perhaps no more striking photograph has ever been taken of a general in action than this study of rugged determination portrayed by Major-General Freyberg, V.C., in charge of the Allied Forces in Crete, watching over a parapet in the direction of the German advance on the island.





MR. MENZIES WITH THE AUSTRALIAN NAVY

As Prime Minister of Australia during the first two strenuous years of the First Total War, Mr. Menzies inspected all branches of the Fighting Services overseas. A photograph of him aboard an Australian warship.

Crete: A Classic Revolution in Warfare 49

six hours at a stretch," a New Zealander said, talking of how he and two others fought their way from Canea to Retimo, with German Tommy-guns, in a three-day hide-and-seek with groups of German patrols. They got the ammunition for their Tommy-guns only by shooting Germans. From Suda Bay to Heraklion, Germans, at different points, were either side of the connecting road. At Retimo, on May 28th-29th, they had a grip on both ends of the town, with strong machine-gun nests and mortars. Periodically the bombers were summoned by the German ground staff. But at night, with covering forces of Allied troops holding the Germans off, our men and Greeks were able to get down to the beach and board ships standing off shore.

Haggard but Undaunted

Marching southward in the day-time, the soldiers made their way along roads littered with abandoned gear, useless trucks, but they tried to bluff the Nazis about their movements by keeping out of sight as much as they could. Not that the Nazis were much bluffed. They had a good idea of the movements of the rescue units of the Fleet, thanks to their wide-ranging aeroplanes, and were well aware of the withdrawal of Allied troops from all sectors. They just went on mowing with machine-guns, blasting with bombs.

Tired men's nerves were telling under the strain, which had been continuous for days.

"How far off are the beaches, Digger?"

"Where's the bleedin' beach, pal?"

"Hell! What I'd give for a pint of clean water, even just a glass of water!"

Now and again the wounded, wiping sweat from their necks, stopped. "I can't walk so fast, Bill."

Some were badly wounded, yet they were determined to get to the beaches. Some were fresh as daisies. A group of sturdy country boys from New Zealand, solid as young oxen, strode along, easing some of the wounded for spells. They laughed a lot. Nobody lost his head, not even at the beaches, when hundreds of them were held up because only a few were allowed to go close down to the sands at a time, lest they present too good a target to the Nazi airmen. They remembered the return of comrades via Dunkirk; and here the Nazis had many more aircraft than they had at Dunkirk.

Some were held in the scrub and timber behind the beaches for two days. Mostly they got away to sea at night.

Getting drinking-water was no bigger problem than getting food, since it was difficult and hazardous to try to maintain internal supply lines; and supplies from Egypt were being

interrupted by the sustained, well-directed attacks by the *Luftwaffe* on the Royal Navy, which was suffering heavy losses.

At Sphakia, in the dead of night, hundreds of men were taken out to units of the Royal Navy, including the Australian cruiser *Perth*, in flat-bottomed boats, fifty men to a boat. Under the white darkness of a starry night, the boats slipped out from the ships to the beaches on a rippleless sea. So intense was the silence you could stand and listen to it. Weary men, sometimes staggering from lack of sleep, piled aboard the men-of-war to drink mugs of cocoa, coffee, tea—and tumbled into any corner to sleep.

Back in the timber, in the day-time, men killed donkeys, roasting the flesh over crude spits. They smoked grass, wrapped in any kind of paper, as the schoolboys do sometimes in New Zealand when they fill a twist of paper with tussock grass, which flames alarmingly, or dock leaves, which are so foul you are invariably sick, though you feel pretty pleased with yourself for having tried it. Any fowl on which they could draw a bead they shot.

There they stood or squatted or just lay prone, exhausted, sweltering by day under a sun that grilled—tired, haggard, undaunted, sunburnt, their clothes in tatters, their strong army boots slashed to rags by the razor-edge rock, soaked in sweat, caked with dust and blood and grease, waiting for the units of the Royal Navy to pull them out of a hole in which they had fought with classic gallantry against such overwhelming odds—in numbers of men and in types of armament—and beneath such a hurricane of bombs and bullets from the sky as no forces in the history of warfare had ever met.

Just down there, off from them a little, the fat, tantalising waves bulged in and out, indolent, murmuring enticingly. The Anzacs lay watching them, langour in every muscle. Desire to sleep was surging through scores of them like a drug.

Anzacs' Last Stand

As the Nazis everywhere grew hourly stronger, they jabbed at every Allied position; some from behind, others on the flanks, using the bombers as artillery to paralyse movement, using the tommy-guns and machine-borne batteries to destroy. In the last two days before the general evacuation began from the south coast Allied troops fought amazing rearguard actions right across the island, from the Canea-Suda Bay regions to Sphakia. Among them were the Royal Marines, who had been carrying out a variety of duties, including the manning of the anti-aircraft defences. Under Major-General E. C. Weston, Royal Marines, hurriedly formed into an infantry

Crete : A Classic Revolution in Warfare 51

brigade, they fought with a gallantry and determination that won them a fame which will be toasted wherever Royal Marines meet to talk about the men who have enriched the honour and tradition of the Corps. Many of them, none better perhaps, knew they stood little chance of being rescued by the Navy. Not only were they fighting a rearguard action, covering others embarking, but the Germans were getting closer to Sphakia and soon would make it impossible for the Fleet to operate.

Heroically they were battling on the night of May 31st when General Wavell sent this message to General Weston :

" You know the heroic effort the Navy has made to rescue you. I hope you will be able to get away most of those who remain, but this is the last night the Navy can come. Please tell those that have to be left that the fight put up against such odds has won the admiration of us all, and every effort to bring them back is being made. General Freyberg has told me how magnificently your Marines have fought, and of your own grand work. I have heard also of the heroic fight of young Greek soldiers. I send you all my grateful thanks."

Of 2,000 Royal Marines landed in Crete, 1,400 became casualties or prisoners.

Two days before, on May 29th, to help the Marines as the enemy took up positions north of Sphakia, the 4th New Zealand Brigade held a covering position in the plain six miles north of Sphakia, behind which an Australian Brigade and the 5th New Zealand Brigade (less a battalion) were resting. At night the Australian Brigade, a Royal Marine Battalion and other troops took up a position three miles east of Sphakia.

Like the Marines, the Anzacs here fought one of the most glorious actions of the war.

V.C.'s for Amazing Exploits

Heroism displayed in Crete will never be forgotten. It marked amazing exploits. In recognition of the bravery of two New Zealanders, the King awarded each the Victoria Cross. They were Second-Lieutenant Charles Hazlett Upham and Sergeant Alfred Clive Hulme.

Second-Lieutenant Upham commanded a forward platoon in the attack on Maleme on May 22nd, and fought his way forward for over 3,000 yards unsupported by any other arms and against a defence strongly organised in depth. During

this operation his platoon destroyed numerous enemy posts, but on three occasions sections were temporarily held up.

In the first case, under a heavy fire from a machine-gun nest, he advanced to close quarters with pistol and grenades, so demoralising the occupants that his section was able to " mop up " with ease. Another of his sections was then held up by two machine-guns in a house. He went in and placed a grenade through a window, destroying the crew of one machine-gun and several others, the other machine-gun being silenced by the fire of his section. In the third case he crawled to within fifteen yards of a machine-gun post, and killed the gunners with a grenade.

When his company withdrew from Maleme he helped to carry out a wounded man under fire, and assisted by another officer rallied more men together to carry out other wounded men. He was then sent to bring in a company which had become isolated. With a corporal, he went through enemy territory over 600 yards, killing two Germans on the way, found the company, and brought it back to the battalion's new position. But for this action it would have been completely cut off.

During the following two days his platoon occupied an exposed position on forward slopes and was continuously under fire. Second-Lieutenant Upham was blown over by one mortar shell, and painfully wounded behind the left shoulder by a piece of shrapnel from another. He disregarded this wound and remained on duty. He also received a bullet in the foot.

At Galatos, on May 25th, his platoon was heavily engaged and came under severe mortar and machine-gun fire. While his platoon stopped under cover of a ridge, Second-Lieutenant Upham went forward, observed the enemy and brought the platoon forward when the Germans advanced. They killed over forty with fire and grenades and forced the remainder to **fall** back. When his platoon was ordered to retire he sent it back under the platoon sergeant, and he warned other troops that they were being cut off. When he was fired on by two Germans, he fell and shammed dead, then crawled into a position, and, having the use of only one arm, rested his rifle in the fork of a tree and as the Germans came forward he killed them both. The second to **fall** actually **hit** the muzzle of the rifle as he **fell**.

Again, on May 30th, at Sphakia, his platoon was ordered to deal with a party of the enemy which had advanced down a ravine to near Force Headquarters. Though in an exhausted condition, he climbed the steep hill to the west of the ravine, placed his men in positions on the slope overlooking the

ravine, and himself went to the top with a Bren gun and two riflemen. By clever tactics he induced the enemy party to expose itself, and then, at a range of 500 yards, shot twenty-two and caused the remainder to disperse in panic. During the whole of the operations he suffered from dysentery and was able to eat very little, in addition to being wounded and bruised.

Sergeant Hulme showed the same outstanding and inspiring qualities of leadership, initiative, skill, endurance, and most conspicuous gallantry and devotion to duty from the commencement of the fighting on May 20th until he was wounded in action on May 28th. On ground overlooking Maleme aerodrome on May 20th and 21st he led parties of his men from the area held by the forward position and destroyed enemy organised parties which had established themselves out in front of the Allied position, from which they brought heavy rifle, machine-gun and mortar fire to bear on defensive posts. Numerous snipers in this area were dealt with by Sergeant Hulme personally; 130 dead were counted here. On May 22nd, 23rd and 24th Sergeant Hulme was continually going out alone or with one or two men and destroying enemy snipers. On May 25th, when Sergeant Hulme had rejoined his battalion, this unit counter-attacked Galatos village. The attack was partially held up by a large party of the enemy holding the school, from which they were inflicting heavy casualties on Allied troops. Sergeant Hulme went forward alone, threw grenades into the school and so disorganised the defence that the counter-attack was able to proceed successfully.

On May 27th, when Allied troops were holding a defensive line at Suda Bay during the final retirement, five enemy snipers had worked into position on the hillside overlooking the flank of the battalion line. Sergeant Hulme volunteered to deal with the situation, and stalked and killed the snipers in turn. He continued similar work successfully through the day.

On May 28th at Stylos, when an enemy heavy mortar was severely shelling a very important ridge held by the battalion rearguard troops, inflicting severe casualties, Sergeant Hulme, on his own initiative, penetrated the enemy lines, killed the mortar crew of four, put the mortar out of action, and thus very materially assisted the withdrawal of the main body through Stylos. From the enemy mortar position he then worked to the left flank and killed three snipers who were causing concern to the rearguard. This made his score of enemy snipers thirty-three stalked and shot. Shortly afterwards Sergeant Hulme was severely wounded in the shoulder

while stalking another sniper. When ordered to the rear, in spite of his wound he directed traffic under fire and organised stragglers of various units into section groups.

Magnificent Maoris

Stoicism displayed by the New Zealand Maori fighters was described as astonishing by the Australians who fought, here and there, side by side with them. A Maori giant, his forearm shot away, and with no more water or rations than the rest (some had only half a meal a day), trekked across the mountains with the able-bodied troops, uncomplaining. He asked for nothing.

"They were proud beyond belief," an English officer said. "No fighters could be better. They went into battle with an old war cry, and the Germans, armed with tommy-guns, screamed and ran as the Maoris charged with bayonets. They stalked like Vikings, booming encouragement to each other in their rich voices—and laughing, which the Germans could not understand."

Australians who had never seen the sterling qualities of the Maoris said, "I'll say they're great. At the end of the campaign you'd have thought they were setting out on an expedition, not finishing it."

Greeks' Bravery

Throughout the island the Greek forces were fighting bravely, and, as was the case in Greece, revealed individual superiority over the Germans. Their force numbered 15,000, of whom 11,000 belonged to the Army, 2,800 to the armed police forces, 300 to the Greek Military Academy, and 800 to the Greek Air Force Academy. Besides these, Cretans of all ages, and even women, formed a militia and were battling with supreme self-sacrifice for their hearths and homes.

In Canea, where finally "a terrible and bloody struggle took place" (in the words of the Greek Prime Minister), and everywhere else, the Germans paid with enormous losses for their effort to subjugate Crete. The Greek defence at Heraklion was particularly praiseworthy: for six days the Greek soldiers carried on the fight, and proved much superior to the Germans in courage, boldness and fighting capacity. By mopping up the German parachutists they enabled the Imperial troops to hold the aerodrome without diverting their forces, and to defend the coastal area of the town. At Retimo it was the same.

In one of many Greek-German encounters all the enemy parachutists were exterminated, but over 300 Cretans fell dead, and many were wounded. British officers tell how

Crete: A Classic Revolution in Warfare 55

young Greek militiamen of seventeen were disarming Germans and using their arms skilfully—"like seasoned soldiers".

The deliberate, cold-blooded wantonness of Nazi pilots appalled the members of the Greek Government who were on the island. The Prime Minister said afterwards :

"German air raids on Crete have been carried out with unparalleled ferocity. Three principal towns, Canea, Retimo and Heraklion, were literally ploughed up by the bombing, which was carried out with mathematical precision, laterally and diagonally, so that eventually there was not a stone left standing.

"People trying to get out of their primitive shelters, particularly children, were ruthlessly machine-gunned. Raging fires completed the work of destruction. Hospitals, with their wounded, were, of course, not excluded in the general catastrophe."

Armed with old rifles, many of them relics from campaigns fought against the Turks years ago, even muskets, which they supplemented with tommy-guns taken from parachutists, the hill-folk in Crete co-operated with the Allied forces. They scouted the countryside, whose narrow passes and dizzy ravines they knew by heart, reporting fresh pockets of parachutists to the troops who dealt with them.

Knowing all the short cuts, they directed, frequently guided, patrols of British, Anzac and Greek troops to routes which led quickly to points where the Nazis were establishing themselves. Scores of hardy, loyal mountain people were riddled by German tommy-guns on the slopes. Not all those killed were armed. Women and children and old men had been evacuated to the hills for safety: but there was little safety from the ferocious Nazi attacks. Even monks in the mountains were fighting the Nazis. So stern was the resistance of these hill-people that the Nazis issued a warning, designed to dissuade them, that "under international law" (sweet irony !) any Cretan civilian found fighting, or helping the Allied Army in any way, would be shot.

According to international law (Articles 1 and 2 of the annex to the convention concerning the laws of war on land), the legality of militias is recognised, Article 2 adding that: "the population of a non-occupied territory which, on the approach of an enemy, spontaneously takes up arms to fight the invading troops without having time to organize a militia, shall be considered as belligerent if carrying arms openly and respecting the laws of war". Thus all the executions of Cretan militiamen and militia-women, claimed by the Germans to have been carried out according to international law

Threats did not daunt the Cretans. Hundreds of those Greek, Anzac and British troops who, fighting rearguard actions while their comrades were being evacuated, got left behind, took to the hills and mountains. There, trusting the Cretans, they were guided to caves and huts, high up in the ranges; and there, months later, they were still.

Forming themselves into guerilla bands, they attacked and harried the German and Italian garrisons on the island. Nothing the enemy was able to do checked them. By September, when it was known that a Greek General, General Mandakas, was their leader, so daring and so costly to the conquerors had their exploits become that they were inspiring news items in the world's Press. In their turn, the Allied guerillas were being inspired by the sight of R.A.F. long-range bombers, operating from the Western Desert, delivering attacks on Greece and Crete.

Greek fishermen, ordered at the point of the revolver to ferry German troops across to Crete in the boats, agreed to load the boats, and moved off. The Germans, naturally, did not know the currents and rocks, but the Greeks did, and scores of them crashed the *caiques* deliberately, drowning hundreds off the Cretan coast.

What the Germans Said

Ten days after the battle began, on May 29th, the German News Agency declared that the battle had been decided, adding that Italian troops, who had landed in the eastern part of the island on the previous day, were advancing rapidly. (Not without its usual interest is the old familiar fact that by the day the Italians got into the battle the hardest fighting was over.)

In summing up, the German Agency described the operations "as a gigantic landing from the air which was aimed at occupying the British fortified base of Crete". The German Air Force were supporting the attack by continuous raids on retreating Allied columns, troop concentrations and nests of resistance. Squadrons of bomber, dive-bomber and fighter aircraft had wiped out British and Greek detachments in continuous raids.

Not only were Italian troops helping, according to the Agency, but German operations were supported by Italian naval and air force units, and especially by torpedo-boats.

Scattered British troops were being pursued in the direction of the south coast.

An Italian statement, issued also on May 29th, said that British naval units in the Eastern Mediterranean steaming towards Alexandria were being continuously attacked by Italian aircraft.

A glimpse of **the** tough character of the Allied fighting, even

when the end of the campaign was in sight, was provided that night by the German High Command *communiqué*, which stated :

" German troops in Crete yesterday passed Suda Bay, which is now firmly held, and continued their advance in an easterly direction to the Bay of Armiri (roughly half-way between Suda Bay and Retimo and a distance of about 15 miles).

" On the east coast of Suda Bay Greek and British forces put up a particularly tenacious opposition. German troops, however, succeeded in throwing them out of their positions and in capturing several hundred prisoners. In addition, a large amount of war material was captured.

" The hardest fight was for the last two positions held by the British—the stronghold established on fortified heights in the mountainous village of Galatos.

" Heavy resistance of the British entrenched here, barbed-wire entanglements and other natural obstacles made the attack an extremely difficult proposition. With great skill and outstanding courage German Alpine troops succeeded in penetrating the British positions.

" Hand-to-hand fighting ended in the annihilation of a number of British units and the taking of prisoners. The break-through of the British line has resulted in the disruption of the whole British defensive front between Canea and the high mountains.

" Two Bristol Blenheims were shot down during an attack by British bombers on an aerodrome in Crete held by the German troops. Strong formations of bombers and (five bombers again attacked British positions and sank in Crete waters a merchant ship and a patrol boat."

New Zealanders Guard a King

Undoubtedly one of the most dramatic incidents in a battle of dramatic incidents was the rescuing of King George of the Hellenes.

A crescendo of bombs all around Canea about 5 a.m. on May 20th awoke him. He listened to it for an hour, heard it shift from Canea to Maleme, then move on to Suda Bay to **blast** Allied anti-aircraft gun positions. Standing at the windows of his villa, commanding panoramic views on both sides of the hill—across Canea and to Suda Bay—he saw the orange-yellow glow of fires spurt. Smoke was smudging **the** sky.

With him in the house were an escort **of Greek** gendarmerie and a platoon of New Zealanders, under the **command of 2nd-Lieutenant W. H. Ryan, which had been in action in Serbia**

from the start of the Balkan campaign. Prince Peter, his cousin, stood with him, and Colonel K. S. Blunt, Military Attache in Greece, was there. It was Colonel Blunt who saw that a full-scale invasion was developing. He said later that they had a perfect picture of the attack. Noise filled the skies, reverberated among the hills and valleys, and following the bombing on the beaches came the roar of fleets of German troop-carrying transports, some trailing gliders.

Dressing quickly, the royal party hurried into the garden, getting into trenches among the cool olive-groves for safety. Fighters zoomed directly over the house, so low that the pilots could be seen. Red and green parachutes popped open at many points about the party, the Germans floating down from only a few hundred feet. One party of parachute troops landed not a thousand yards below the house, effectively blocking the way, although they were obviously ignorant of the fact that they were so close to the King—a rare prize if they could have laid hands on him.

Over the White Mountains

Colonel Blunt knew he could not now take the royal party down the valley; that the only thing to do—the perilous thing, incidentally—was to turn and go up the hills stretching away behind the house, to take a route over the picturesque White Mountains, with its Cretan herdsmen, its orange-tiled, white-stone huts, its wild, rugged prospect, a difficult path right across the island to the coast, where they might be able to find a British boat to take them to Egypt.

When the party set out it was composed of the King, the Prince, the Prime Minister, the Governor of the Bank of Greece, the Master of Ceremonies, an A.D.C. and one or two members of the royal staff. Guaranteeing them with their lives were the handful of Anzacs and Greeks. With only the clothes they stood up in, with no certainty that they would ever see the opposite side of the island, they struck up the back hills. Hardy mountaineers only would usually attempt such a trek. Excitement sprang at them from many a concealed turning, behind great outcrops of rock. Cretan hillsmen and Greek soldiers, roaming the familiar hills, sniped at them, not recognising them as friends, little dreaming a king would be with a party trying to force a passage through such hazardous country.

Mid-afternoon saw the little party arrive at a village, where a few mules were offered to them. A king has seldom borne himself with nobler mien. Tired though he was, profoundly regretful that, because of the German attack on Crete and of a concentrated attempt to seize the area in which his house was

situated and of the obvious threat to his life, he had been obliged to decide to leave that heroic spot so as not to hamper the conduct of military operations, he revealed none of the emotions he must have known. Like the New Zealanders, one or two of whom were making the march though they were nursing unhealed wounds from their fighting withdrawal from Greece, he joked, made light of his difficulties. They moved up the side of the White Mountains in the late afternoon.

Escape

Up on the windswept slopes, bitterly cold, they spent the night in a tiny stone hut, a shepherd's cottage, eating a few eggs they found and some olives. Even the village guides who had come with them stamped from cold. The White Mountains rise to 8,000 feet: they had made camp only a thousand feet from the biting summit. Stars in the clear atmosphere appeared to be frozen into a glistening stillness.

Soon after dawn they began to curl round the mountain's jagged, high, unfriendly shoulder. A dizzy descent stared up at them, causing them to turn loose the mules. Clinging with torn hands to razor-edge rock, stubbing their toes into any sort of holds, they drove themselves down. A point where mules could walk was passed a long way before they came upon one or two more animals. The New Zealanders, the Greeks, the Cretan hillmen guides, the officials, asked the King to mount one. Astride, he rode towards the beach, winding through a beautiful rock-strewn gorge, a tired man meditating upon his enforced flight. A steel helmet was on his head. He had been travelling in the roughest way over formidable terrain for more than two days. Luckily, as they came in sight of the beach, they were greeted by General Heywood and the British Minister from Athens, who had frantically tried—vainly—to get in touch with the King by telephone at his villa. Advised of the direction of the King's flight, this second party had made its way round the coast, hoping to meet the royal party, which, almost miraculously in the circumstances, it did.

Twenty-four hours later (May 23rd) the royal party was in Egypt. The Anzacs were with them. Not the Greeks or the Cretans, however: so far they had not fought the invader. They waved their caps in farewell as the rowboat bobbed away in the gathering night to a warship lying offshore, which one of the secretaries, risking his life, had rowed out to identify. It was too dark for anyone on the beach to do more than recognise from its shape that it was a warship. Their King had escaped. They turned back into the hills to fight the Hun.

Up behind them the White Mountains rose, spiky with numerous ribs of limestone, grooved with deep, narrow ravines walled in by precipitous cliffs, bleak in parts, the bare saddles being high. The other three main mountain groups were much the same as these White Mountains in the west of the island—Ida (Psiloriti) in the centre, Lassithi in the east centre and Sitia in the west.

Up there they hoped to become troublesome guerillas. No doubt their minds were on this next enterprise even as they listened to the creak of the rowlocks becoming fainter and fainter.

Australians with the Royal Navy

Night and day battles were fought around Crete by the Royal Navy, assisted by units of the Royal Australian Navy. Had it not been for the heroism of the men of the Navy, the losses in Crete would have been complete, not partial. It was the Navy, unprotected by fighters, in the face of the most murderous fire, depending on its own anti-aircraft defences, that saved many from death or imprisonment. The Navy also prevented the Nazis from making any large-scale landings by sea transports, and inflicted heavy losses upon laden enemy transports endeavouring to reach the island.

As the Board of Admiralty admits, operations of this type in confined waters and without fighter protection against the very large air forces employed by the enemy cannot be undertaken without loss. Ships sunk were the anti-aircraft cruiser, H.M.S. *Calcutta* (Captain D. M. Lees, D.S.O., R.N.), the cruisers H.M.S. *Gloucester* (Captain H. A. Rowley, R.N.) and H.M.S. *Fiji* (Captain P. B. R. W. William-Poulett, R.N.); and the destroyers H.M.S. *Hereward* (Lieutenant W. J. Munn, R.N.), H.M.S. *Imperial* (Lieutenant-Commander C. A. de W. Kitcat, R.N.), H.M.S. *Juno* (Commander St. J. R. J. Tyrwhitt, R.N.), H.M.S. *Greyhound* (Commander W. R. Marshall-A'Deane, D.F.C., R.N.), H.M.S. *Kelly* (Captain Lord Louis Mountbatten, G.C.V.O., D.S.O., R.N.) and H.M.S. *Kashmir* (Commander H. A. King, R.N.). H.M.A.S. *Perth*, struck by a bomb, had four of her crew killed and three wounded.

Every type of German aeroplane suitable for the work was employed in an attempt to wipe out the units of the Royal Navy operating in that region of the Eastern Mediterranean. At times the sky was thick with them. Dive-bombers **skimmed down to** mast-level before releasing their bombs.

Voyage to Egypt

Daylight and time—both were allies of the Nazis in these operations. When evacuation was completed, 17,000 men

Crete: A Classic Revolution in Warfare 6r

had been successfully removed from the island. Withdrawal had to be carried out from places with inadequate port facilities and within easy reach of the enemy's land and air forces. Suda Bay, which had port facilities, was early subjected to almost constant intense bombing with the object of destroying, or putting out of action, all shipping facilities there. Off-shore, at many points, the Navy stood by fearlessly while men came out in boats.

Nazi bombers made it impossible to embark men in the daytime; the necessity for carrying out embarkation by night meant that each shipload had to be taken the 350 miles to Alexandria during the whole fourteen hours of daylight, which meant, of course, in the face of extremely heavy concentrated Nazi air attack, sometimes, too, of attack by torpedo-carrying E-boats.

Nevertheless, naval aircraft during the operations shot down several Nazi machines, damaged others, sunk a number of E-boats; and a British submarine shelled two Greek *caiques*, full of German troops, sinking them both. All the British cruisers and destroyers sunk during the evacuation had been hit by German bombs: *Imperial* was sunk by our forces after being damaged by an enemy bomb.

No sooner had the Nazi air-borne invasion of Crete begun on May 20th than the Navy swept into the Aegean and the Ionian Seas to cover the beaches stretching from Canea to Heraklion. As there was no sign of enemy surface ships, they withdrew, although that night about ten E-boats struck at them, coming at high speed, swerving rapidly to avoid shell-fire. Three of them were sunk, the rest driven off.

German bombers began seeking out the Navy almost at once, harrying it, trying to drive it away. Brilliantly manoeuvred in the narrow waters between the eastern end of Crete and the Dodecanese Islands, the Fleet stayed on, though, a stick of bombs sank *Juno* immediately.

Convoys Smashed

The biggest engagement with sea forces occurred the next night, May 21st. Troops ashore, watching from the hillsides,, saw the darkness shot with flame as the Navy's guns blew out of the sea a large convoy, including two large transports and some Greek *caiques* laden with hundreds of German and Austrian troops, together with an enemy destroyer guarding it.. Destroyers broke up, dispersed, damaged and turned back a second convoy of about thirty *caiques* which was launched at dawn the next day under the protection of an Italian, destroyer. It raced away after three *caiques* had been sunk.

This was the last sea-borne attempt made by the enemy to challenge the power of the Navy on the sea.

Greyhound was sunk early in the afternoon of May 22nd in the Kythera Straits, between Crete and the southern mainland of Greece, as a result of concentrated high and low dive-bombing. So were *Gloucester* and *Fiji*, which were lending support to destroyers picking up sailors from *Greyhound* who were struggling in the water. Except for the fire from our own ships, there was nothing to hamper the Nazi bombers. They had the skies to themselves. During the same day *Kelly* and *Kashmir* were dive-bombed and sunk after bombarding Maleme aerodrome and combing the sea for survivors of *Fiji*.

All this time our officers could see a double line of German troop-carriers flying to and from the Canea-Maleme area. About our warships the German bombers swooped and roared, quick as wasps, weaving in and out, delivering attack after attack. Within two hours officers on one British destroyer counted 170 near misses around their ship, which, altering course constantly to avoid bombs, was travelling at 30 knots. Mostly, the Nazi airmen's technique was to fly at a great height first—often 30,000 feet—to make the anti-aircraft crews' job more difficult, swooping low to plaster the ship only when she had been forced by a direct hit to reduce speed or halt.

After the loss of *Gloucester* and *Fiji*, R.A.F. fighter escorts made more frequent appearances from Egypt. They were healthy in their effect, though too infrequent. Four-, even six-inch guns and pom-pom batteries on a cruiser, fired when travelling at speed, have slight chance of success against aeroplanes when the man-of-war is zigzagging to dodge direct hits, because the sudden changes affect the gunnery.

It was war—but war under impossible conditions—which threw nothing into sharper relief than the heroism of the crews, unless it was the need, in such an operation, for the closest co-ordination between the Navy and adequate air forces.

Success

Of all the feats achieved by the Navy in the First Total War, nothing in the first two years surpassed in bravery the keeping open of a sea lane to Egypt, in supplying troops in Crete with reinforcements in men and material and, finally, in evacuating 17,000. For here officers and men knew that they were courting an absolute certainty of death for themselves or their companions on the most unequal terms it is possible to impose on fighting men.

It was not to be a battle between warships, but between warships and dive-bombers, supreme and undisputed masters of the skies above them, just as it was not primarily a battle

Crete : A Classic Revolution in Warfare 63

between armies in the field, but between inadequately armed men and air-borne machine-gun batteries and heavy bombers used as artillery. Yet the Navy was victorious in its mission, carrying out fully the dangerous task laid upon it: the only Germans who got to Crete by sea were the hundreds of dead who were washed up, and a handful of swimmers. As the naval correspondent of *The Times* says :

" When the full story of what Sir Andrew Cunningham's fleet has achieved in the war comes to be written, there should be no doubt in which battle—Matapan or Crete—it earned the greater laurels."

No new lesson was learned by the Navy. There was only grim confirmation of the belief it already held—that men-of-war cannot operate in areas dominated by unopposed dive-bombers without heavy losses, any more than they can in areas similarly dominated by shore batteries.

Loss of Crete was not a decisive blow to the maintenance of the Mediterranean Fleet at Alexandria, but it tended to hamper every subsequent naval operation and to increase the perils the Fleet had to face.

R.A.F.'s Handicaps

Fighting under the extreme handicaps of geography and numerical inferiority, the R.A.F. did wonderfully within those iron limits.

Incontrovertible facts are these : against the six aerodromes which Germany possessed within striking distance of Crete, and from which enemy machines attacked the island from three sides, the R.A.F. had three—one each at Maleme, Retimo and Heraklion. Germany's bases were two in Athens, one each at Argos and Sparta, one at Scarpanto, another in the island of Melos, which was only ninety miles away, and the Italian aerodromes in Rhodes.

In the absence of proper fighter protection, British bombers could not operate freely, but on those occasions when they did smite the enemy they scored notable successes.

Nazi fighters were always in the sky with Nazi bombers or troop-carrying planes: if there was a suggestion of interference by R.A.F. fighters or the South African Air Force, which at times operated in the area, there were plenty of Messerschmitts to cope with them; and if there were no R.A.F. fighters, the Messerschmitts peeled off and screamed down at troops, gun emplacements, anything moving.

When the R.A.F. men were forced to withdraw in the impossible circumstances from the Cretan aerodromes, they had to operate from the nearest British base, which was in the Western

Desert, about 350 miles away. The handicap to fighters was obvious: Crete was then at the extreme end of the range of the Hurricanes. Long-distance tanks were specially fitted to Hurricanes which attacked, but it was too costly in men to continue.

Invariably their risks in flying to Crete in the face of hundreds of Nazi aircraft were as great as are those of moths striking at sticky fly-paper. Without fighter protection, British bombers were in the same fix. They found that day-time operations were almost certainly suicidal, and were obliged to confine their operations almost wholly to night bombing. Even so, Blenheim bombers, unescorted by fighters, struck at the enemy on May 29th, when the Germans were established and practically masters of the island.

How?

What had happened ?

When evacuation was complete, even before, this was a universal question. Why could we not give aerial cover to our troops who were driven back, slowly but remorselessly, by such a weight of men and metal as no army, not even in France, had hitherto been asked to stem with relatively little more than their bare fists ? Whence had these waves of Nazi war machines pounced ? How in twelve days did Hitler destroy half the entire Imperial Force in Crete, drive the other half away across the sea at a cost to us of three new cruisers and six destroyers, and make himself complete ruler of an island on which we had been installed for seven months ?

Was the explanation to be found in the inflexibility of certain British generals ? Was there a grave miscalculation which Nazi dive-bombers were destined to underline ? Because the lessons of Norway, Dunkirk, Benghazi and Greece had not been engraved on the hearts of the British High Command, were they now to be engraved on the tombstones of thousands of British Imperial troops ?

Was the terrible truth this : that, but for the final battle, every lesson of this First Total War must remain unanticipated by anyone in the world because the brilliant, ruthless authors, the Nazi confederacy of high war chiefs, are alone the masters of this new style of war, and distribute a too staggeringly simple summary to the world from the platform of the greatest **streamlined** engine of war ever devised as it roars, at express speed, **past** victory-post after victory-post ? Was **it only when this** engine flashed by that Allied Chiefs-of-Staff, slightly bemused by the thunder of the new tactics and revolutionary experiments, began to realise that each lesson was epitomised in two words, repeated monotonously, spilling over from one sheet of paper to the next, from one ream to another ;#

Crete: A Classic Revolution in Warfare 65

" Machine war. Machine war. Machine war. Machine war. Machine . . . ? "

A great company of critics throughout the world said this was the truth. Mr. Winston Churchill, flinging this criticism back into the faces of the critics on June 10th, 1941, crystallised the causes of the crushing defeat by saying the British Imperial forces lacked equipment.

Soldiers and sailors lacked the protection of an adequate air force; soldiers lacked the protection of adequate guns of all types, from anti-aircraft guns to tommy-guns. Answering, in the House of Commons, those who had said earlier that, as this seemed to be the true explanation of our retreat, it would be better to withdraw altogether from the Middle East, he cried :

" There are some, I see, who say that we should never fight without superior, or at least ample, air support, and ask, When will this lesson be learned ? But suppose you cannot have it. . . . Must you, if you cannot have this essential and desirable air support, yield important key points one after another ? The further question arises as to what would happen if you allowed the enemy to advance and overrun without cost to himself the most precious and valuable strategic points ?

" Suppose we had never gone to Greece and had never attempted to defend Crete ! Where would the Germans be now ?

" Suppose we had simply resigned territory and strategic islands to them without a fight ! Might they not at this early stage in the campaign of 1941 already be masters of Syria and Iraq and preparing themselves for an advance into Persia ? "

In saying that, he was answering criticism from some Australian newspapers.

A relevant and not uninteresting point in this regard is that the Australian acting official war correspondent, cabling a message on June 2nd from Egypt for distribution to the Australian Press, said in the course of it :

" . . . although the British have relinquished Crete, they could afford to do so with a minimum of loss to their strategic position and none to their prestige. At a short perspective, the Battle of Crete may be quoted as the first large-scale combat in which entirely air-borne troops have fought land forces, but it is not likely to be cited as a classic in military text-books of the future. This is because the limitation of land forces, air defence and of the means of reinforcement make it impossible for it ever to be considered as a typical contest of its kind.

" ' I don't think the Germans will ever again have such a favourable opportunity for the use of air-borne troops as they had in Crete', a high Air Force officer told me to-day.

" Never again, one hopes, will these armies from the sky find their prey so powerless to strike back in the same element. Whatever its ultimate significance, the tragedy of Crete would be a good deal blacker if we continued to ignore the practical lesson which it teaches. The brutal fact, proved brutally in two campaigns—those of Greece and Crete—is that the Allied forces were without hope from the beginning because there was admittedly no chance of adequate air support.

" It is a fact so naked now that no commander should still be allowed to nurture the delusion that, even if no air support can be offered, his men can hope to avert defeat from the sky by hiding in holes or relying on ground defences.

" The lesson of Greece and Crete is that military enterprises of this nature cannot, and ought not to, be risked to-day without at least air equality, or except under the pressure of the most urgent need.

" Air equality was not possible in Greece and Crete. It will have to be provided on our new fronts as quickly as the wheels of our factories can be made to turn . . . " *

Two points could be made by way of comment on this note : (a) The Cretan campaign is accepted, as was inescapable, as a classic example of a revolutionary tactic being thoroughly applied. The suggestion that the limitation of land forces, air defence and of the means of reinforcement makes it impossible for it ever to be considered as a typical contest of its kind, indicates that the point has been missed. For it suggests that the tactic could be considered a revolutionary one, worthy of the textbooks of the future, only if the Nazi attack had been matched by equal power, whereas in fact it would still be regarded as a revolutionary tactic if the Nazis had failed to win, (b) It would be a mistake if it were assumed that any army commander to-day cherishes any illusions about the power of an air force.

Questions and Answers

The hard pith of all the questioning can be said to be this : Did the Allied Forces have the dice loaded against them by nothing else but the stupidity, the short-sightedness, the

* *The Herald*, Melbourne, June 3rd, 1941.

Crete : A Classic Revolution in Warfare 67

muddle-headed thinking of Brass Hats and High Authorities ? Was the battle necessary, and if so did the fighting men, particularly the troops and the sailors, get all the protection it was possible to give them and all the equipment available ?

Mr. Churchill's answer to these questions was " No " to the first, and " Yes " to the second. The answers are likely to be debated long after the war, when the last blood-smeared piece is dropped into the jig-saw puzzle now spread before the eyes of the world, and the whole pattern of the vast design is clear, with its patches of brilliance and its blemishes.

But in all discussions of this epic, Mr. Churchill's description of it should be remembered : it is only one part of the very important and complicated campaign which is being fought in the Middle East, and it should be viewed as only one part.

British forces landed in Crete in November, 1940. There was plenty of time in which to prepare to defend it strongly against attack of the very kind that was launched.

No member of the British War Cabinet or of the British High Command had any illusions about the scale of the enemy air-borne attack. After the lessons of the Norwegian, French, Belgian and Greek campaigns, where ground forces were exposed to slaughter from the air, it was known that it would be immense. Because of this, the British authorities took steps to defend the anchorage of Suda Bay, to develop Maleme aerodrome and to provide both with the largest quantity of high- and low-ceiling guns which it was thought fit to divert from other strategic points in the Mediterranean theatre. For besides Crete, claims on equipment and men by Egypt, Abyssinia, Cyrenaica, Palestine, French Syria, Iraq, Cyprus and Malta had to be weighed, just as it had to be considered to what extent airfields, cities, ports and vital industrial areas in Britain could safely be denuded, or stinted, of guns for the sake of all these places in the Mediterranean theatre of war.

Germany had a superabundance of both guns and aeroplanes : Britain was far shorter in October, 1940, than she was a year later, but she was admittedly still short of both in 1941. Unable though they were to supply Crete with adequate mechanical defences, the authorities—and Mr. Churchill himself in the House of Commons claimed full responsibility **for** the decision, a responsibility which the Prime Ministers of Australia and New Zealand willingly shared—decided to stage a fight, to make the Nazis pay dearly if **they** were to occupy Crete.

The British Government has made it clear that this decision, taken in March, was arrived at with the full knowledge that the conditions permitted of only the most meagre **British air support for the Allied troops and for the units of the Royal Navy employed in the vicinity.** It hoped that the Army

would destroy the air attack and the Navy ward off the sea-borne attack. There was, however, a time-limit: it was reckoned that a certain proportion of naval losses could be withstood before the Royal Navy's guard would have to be withdrawn, but that the moment that proportion of losses was sustained, the guard would have to end.

The basis on which the decision was come to was stated by Mr. Churchill to be this: If the Army meanwhile could bite off the head of the air invasion before the limit of the Navy was reached, the enemy would have to begin all over again. Having regard to the scale of operations and the losses, he might have broken it off for the time being.

Once it was proved that the Nazi air-borne landings could not be crushed before the Fleet losses became too heavy to hold off longer a sea-borne landing, Crete was to be considered lost, and the decision had to be taken to fight to the death, or save what was possible of the Army.

A miracle in skill and endurance on the part of the Allied troops and of unmatched courage on the part of the Royal Navy enabled more than half the garrison to be saved.

Our Heavy Losses

British casualties were 51 per cent, of their strength (which was 13,000 men), Australian 55 per cent, (of 6,500 men), New Zealand 36 per cent, (of 7,100 men). The British troops therefore suffered slightly more heavily than did the combined Dominion forces. Over and above these were the naval losses, all of these British, which in loss of life alone exceeded 500 officers and men.

Of the total casualties (some 13,000) suffered by the land forces, the great majority are prisoners of war: the Germans claim that these number 10,000.

By far the heaviest losses in Crete—in proportion to the total population of their country—were among the New Zealanders. Of their cool-headedness and stoicism in the face of the worst, most concentrated, most fiendish dive-bombing, kept up for days, ever witnessed anywhere—and the intensity of which, because of the smallness of the target, virtually unprotected aerially and inadequately protected by ground defences, is never likely to be seen again in any battle—British officers could not say enough.

"They were lions they never flinched once, and the straffing they took made the dive-bombing in France seem a child's effort at a practice of the real thing," a British officer who was there told me.

A total of 2,540 New Zealanders were killed or missing out of the 7,100. To get a true picture of the severity of these losses

Crete: A Classic Revolution in Warfare 69

to the people of New Zealand (population, 1,600,000, compared with Australia's 7,000,000), it is only necessary to reflect that proportionately it was as if Great Britain, in a single battle, had lost 100,000 of her sons.

Partly the losses were due to the intensity of the fighting and the Nazis' domination of the air, partly to the lack of mobility caused by the absence of the full scale of transport. Once the Germans controlled Crete, they operated from the aerodromes, making it impossible for the Commander-in-Chief of the Mediterranean Fleet, Admiral Sir Andrew Cunningham, to operate in that region. Men had to be abandoned on the island, left to their fate as prisoners of war.

German Method—and Losses

German losses in killed were greater than the Allies'. Neither had the German losses in aircraft and trained air personnel any counterpart on our side. Undoubtedly these losses contributed to the German failure to take advantage of the ill-starred Raschid Ali rising in Iraq, and of the French resistance to the Allied advance into Syria. Extraordinary losses were sustained by the *Luftwaffe*. About 180 fighter and bomber aircraft and at least 250 troop-carriers, it was estimated, were destroyed.

The extent of the punishment inflicted on the Germans and the serious setback given the plans of the German High Command for operations in the Middle East, particularly north of the Suez Canal, becomes all the more remarkable when it is remembered that the troops responsible for it were tired and, as we have seen, under-armed. Some of the heaviest damage done by the Imperial Troops to the invading German force was with Italian guns. The quickest way in which the British could help the Greeks with arms and ammunition was by sending them material captured from the Italians in North Africa. In fact, this was the chief source of supply for the Greek armies, apart from the slender reserves held by the Greek Government. Immense quantities of Italian arms and munitions, collected by General Wavell's men, were sorted out in the desert, sent back to Alexandria and all the captured Italian arms for which there was sufficient ammunition were shipped to Greece, a little to Crete.

Major-General Freyberg, in a statement issued in October, 1941, commenting on the Cretan campaign, said, among other things:

" Living conditions were hard. The small number of planes available, the exposed position of the aerodromes,

and the scale of the enemy air attack made it impossible for the R.A.F. to operate from Crete.

" The battle started on May 20th with a tremendous air bombardment followed by glider and parachute landings over the Canea-Maleme area. During the first day, relays of enemy aircraft strafed the positions, and fierce hand-to-hand fighting raged on the Maleme aerodrome.

" On the second day, although the aerodrome remained no man's land under fire from Italian guns manned by New Zealand artillery, troop-carriers landed there, regardless of losses. Parachute reinforcements also arrived, and the savage air bombardment continued.

" A counter-attack before dawn on the third day reached the Maleme Aerodrome, but heavy dive-bombing made further progress impossible.

" Sunday, the sixth day, was critical for the tired Australian and New Zealand troops. After continuous air-strafting all day a strong enemy attack took Galatos; the British light tanks and New Zealand infantry retook it at the point of the bayonet. It was one of the great efforts in the defence of Crete.

" With Maleme no longer under fire, enemy troop-carriers poured in reinforcements. Tired troops could not withstand this indefinitely, and on Sunday night the New Zealand Division and the Australians were ordered to withdraw to a new line west of Suda.

" Between Canea and Maleme the New Zealand Division, later supported by Brigadier Vasey's Australian Brigade, had fought for six days without respite. More than 20 fierce bayonet counter-attacks were carried out. The fighting was the most bitter of this war, and such fierce hand-to-hand fighting had seldom been seen. The scale of enemy air attack was unprecedented.

" With Brigadier Vasey's Brigade, the 5th New Zealand Brigade covered the withdrawal from Suda. Here, at the finish of the real defence, men in the front line said: 'Let's fix bayonets and go for them.' The joint New Zealand-Australian bayonet charge threw the enemy back over a thousand yards but the position could not be held.

" On the withdrawal to Sphakia beach the New Zealand battalion fought rear-guard actions together with the Australians and the Royal Marines. The bulk of the fighting troops were evacuated, but the losses were heavy. Many of the wounded had to be left behind with doctors and medical orderlies who had volunteered to stay **with them.**

Crete : A Classic Revolution in Warfare 71

" New Zealand pays tribute to all her comrades, British and Australian and Greek, who fought gallantly in both campaigns. The greatest admiration and gratitude of the fighting troops go out to the Royal Navy, who guarded Crete effectually from sea-borne invasion and brought many back from Greece and Crete.

" In Crete the enemy under-estimated the defence and expected to capture the island with parachutists alone. He failed and had to launch a full-scale attack which used up in all 35,000 highly-trained, perfectly equipped troops. Although he was successful, his losses were great, and he was severely mauled; he lost at least 4,000 killed, 2,000 drowned, and 11,000 wounded.

" By having to fight he was delayed a month in his plans, and when the time came he had neither the material nor the troops to face further air landings in either the Western Desert or in Syria."

To regard Crete as being in his possession was essential to Hitler in shaping his plans for launching the kind of attack against Syria which he then had in mind. Because of this, the storming of Crete is looked upon not primarily as the closing chapter in the battle of Greece, although in a sense it was that too, but as the prelude to the opening of a fresh campaign in the Middle East. Crete has always been a strategically valuable island, but in the First Total War its value has been greatly enhanced by the emphasis the war has put on the power of aviation. For example, Crete can be described as an unsinkable aircraft carrier lying near vulnerable targets. Like Sicily, its possession is of immense importance to the execution of certain plans of attack on the Axis Powers, which can easily be imagined, and in considering some hypothetical military moves the capture of both islands by Allied forces may be accepted as indispensable to success.

Inevitably, the Battle of Crete becomes a military classic.

An air-borne division—the Panzer in the air—has an effective strength of 7,000. Considerably weaker than a normal division, it has, on the other hand, a higher proportion of officers and non-commissioned officers. During the invasion of Holland it consisted of two regiments of infantry (each of three battalions), a regiment of artillery (with twenty-four 75-mm. mountain guns, though sometimes they are as large as 105 mm.), an anti-tank battalion armed with 37-mm. guns, engineers, signals units, also a reconnaissance unit, presumably equipped with motor-bicycles. Each infantry regiment possesses an infantry-gun company equipped with four 77-mm.

guns, **and each of** the three battalions in the regiment has three rifle companies and one machine-gun company. Men of superior physical and mental ability usually compose these divisions.

It is estimated that it requires 250 troop-carriers, making two, three or four trips, to fly one invading division. They did not all arrive that way, however, but by seaplanes, gliders and parachutes as well. Apart from the men, of course, there were the stores and equipment. The practice was to carry troops in relays in old, slow-moving Junkers (Ju. 52) transports—stripped of everything to make room—gliders and seaplanes—with a proportion of stores and fighting gear.

Allow also considerable losses as a result of direct hits by our ground defences, the Royal Navy's guns, and by the few but not wholly negligible raids made by our fighter and bomber aircraft based in Egypt, and by the enemy's deliberate crash-landings on the island, which was the shrewd Nazi way of at once giving the men a chance to save themselves by getting them out of anti-aircraft fire as quickly as possible and of solving the problem of finding suitable smooth patches on which to land. Include, too, the large number of German fighters and bombers employed all the time—and the staggering picture of the number of aircraft used by the Nazis fills itself out to its massive proportions.

A high R.A.F. officer in Cairo, after the abandonment of Crete, estimated that considerably more than 1,000 German aircraft of all types took part in the gigantic invasion. Certainly this is not an exaggerated figure. An example : in the battle the Royal Navy met the largest force of dive-bombers ever assembled for action at sea.

Atrocities

Savage brutality, of a type not found even among some of the most primitive of tribes, was practised in cold blood by the Germans as soon as they had driven the Allied troops away. M. Dimitrakakis, the Greek Minister of War, after months of careful investigation, cabled on October 4th, 1941, to the Greek Prime Minister, then in London, the following summary, a stark picture of almost unbelievable horror :

" After the capture of Crete the German Army burned to the ground the villages of Skine, Prass6 and Knadanos. Their sites are now marked by posters bearing the inscription, ' Here once stood Skine, Prasse and Kandanos '.

" The Germans looted every single house and store in towns and in villages, leaving them empty of every single **object**. They proceeded to innumerable murders of

Crete: A Classic Revolution in Warfare 73

people *Hying* for safety in the open country, of children and old people asleep in their homes, and to collective execution after summary parodies of trial. The condemned people were forced to dig their common grave before the execution,

" At Kystomadon three men, wounded during the execution, were buried while still alive. Their families were forced to offer a dinner to the murderers of their own husbands, fathers, and brothers, and to suffer the mocking jests of the feasting Germans.

" The Rev. Koukourakis, curate of the church at Roumaton, as well as the abbot and monks of the monastery of Aghia Gonia, were put to death. The fate of the Bishop of Kissamos and Selines, Mgr. Evdokimos Singelakis, is not known.

" The altar of the church of Manolio was turned into a public lavatory by the Germans.

" The surviving inhabitants of Skine were driven away to Argyroupolis and Margarites. Eight hundred women and children from lower Cydonia were seen being marched through Canea after being expelled from their homes. In the village of Vrises in the Retimo district, Police-Sergeant Ipaitzakis was tortured to death, his limbs being wrenched off one by one with the object of forcing him to denounce the holders of German rifles.

" At Perivelia and Sellia, in the Retimo district, people were executed one by one in the presence of others, also condemned to death, and of their relatives, after having been forced to dig their own graves.

" At Heraklion the prefect was executed, and Colonel Tsatsaronakia met the same fate because he tried to help the persecuted to escape. In the same place five more Greeks were executed because they failed to declare they knew German. According to the first available information the number of executions in Canea amounts to 506, in Retimo 130, and in Heraklion 50. The male population of the island, especially in western Crete, has taken to the mountains in arms."

Strange as it Seems

The industrious Mr. (" Believe-it-or-not ") Ripley could not have capped some of the lessons yielded by the battle. Perhaps the oddest of all was that in this streamlined example of the ultra-modern style of warfare, the old-fashioned bayonet, often denounced as obsolete, should more than once come into its own.

Its moral effect was considerable on many occasions. For

instance: two companies put in to retake in the dark the village of Galatas, which they had never seen, cleared it very quickly with the bayonet, their progress being marked by their own shouting and yells of terror from the Nazis.

Another was the discovery that the chief formidable thing about a parachutist is his novelty. Generally, the parachutist employed by the Nazis in Crete was young and fit, but not a super fighter. One New Zealand platoon of an officer and eighteen men killed 140 and took twenty-seven prisoners.

Undoubtedly one of the greatest lessons, so far as troops were concerned, which this battle yielded to officers was this: that the highest standard of discipline is needed to enable troops to withstand the terrific strain of continuous low-level bombing, just as the highest standard of weapon-training is required for the rough-and-tumble fighting developing from air-borne attack. Parachutists and air-borne troops are not a menace unless they are given time to establish themselves and co-ordinate the actions of various groups. Speed in dealing with them is therefore vital, and determination is the motive force of speed.

The key to the Nazis' success lay in their supremacy in the air. Lack of air support was the key to the whole setback suffered by our forces. It was due to this that:—

(1) Our supplies were sunk or damaged by bomb splinters and salt water;

(2) Any German landing in force was made possible;

(3) Our troops were constantly blasted by bombs and harried by "ground-strafting" machine-guns; and

(4) The Navy, which saved the Army by its intervention against the hostile convoys and again by carrying out its withdrawal, suffered so heavily.

We were none too well off for transport. Lack of transport and of armoured fighting vehicles was largely due to the difficulties of supply by sea. There had been heavy bombing of Suda Bay before the attack began, with the consequence that some equipment—and there was little enough of it to begin with—was destroyed. Some had to be reconditioned on being put ashore, and all was landed very slowly. Transport difficulties also resulted in a number of non-combatant troops, ill-armed and ill-trained, who had been brought off from Greece, being left on the island, and in the close fighting they were rather **an** encumbrance than an acquisition to the defence, according to **Anzac** officers.

Practice for Invasion of Britain?

Will **the lessons of** Crete be learned, **and how** will they affect

the defence of Great Britain ? was a natural question. Critics raised it everywhere.

On a close analysis, it was found to be difficult to draw a real analogy. Two cardinal facts have to be borne in mind in considering the question. First: Britain had in October, 1941, far greater air power, actually and relatively, than she had at the time of the Battle of Crete, incomparably greater than she had in September-October, 1940, when, in the first aerial Battle of Britain, what she had proved sufficient, by however small a margin. Second : the grand scale on which the Nazis would be forced to plan an aerial invasion of the British Isles would be such that it would very probably prove to be beyond the capacity of their resources, particularly after the severe blows dealt the *Luftwaffe* by Russia. In the Commons on September 30th, 1941, Mr. Churchill, in declaring that the Government had a responsibility to keep in Great Britain an ample first-rate Army to annihilate any invading lodgment, said that he believed Hitler's power then was still such that while standing on the defensive in the east, he could, if he chose, strike simultaneously at the valley of the Nile, at north-west Africa and at the British Isles. Mr. Churchill added : " The enemy's only shortage is in the air. That is a very serious shortage; but for the rest he still retains the initiative. We have not had the force to take it from him." This was, in effect, the British Government's answer to those critics who, at that time, were suggesting that in order to take full advantage of the Russian-German battle, the British should take offensive action on land against the enemy. Emphasising the magnitude of Hitler's shortage in the air, Mr. Churchill said a few weeks later (November 10th): " Now we have an Air Force which is at least equal in size and numbers, not to speak of quality, to the German air power."

Apart from this, the Royal Navy, operating to break up any accompanying sea-borne landings, would be free from the thralldom in which it was gripped by the *Luftwaffe* in the waters around Crete.

Nevertheless, officers who took part in the thickest of the fighting, including the New Zealander, Brigadier L. Inglis, were brought back to Britain to report, and at the same time full appreciations were written by the Staff in the Middle East. All the information was examined by, among others, General Sir Alan Brooke, Chief of the Imperial General Staff, but who then, as C.-in-C. Home Forces, had command of the several millions of armed men in Britain, including the Home Guard.

" Heroism is not enough," and " Greater, faster production," were morals drawn cenerally. Not only was it clear that

workers in the factories must produce more guns of all types, more aeroplanes, but that all those responsible for the supervision and organisation of production should quickly remedy a perilous position.

Nazi Lies

As they did when the Anzacs fought so valiantly in Greece, shocking the cream of the German soldiery time and again by their daring and tenacity, the Nazis, through Goebbels, broadcast over their radio network, especially to the North American and Pacific regions, that here was proof positive that Britain was fighting to the last Australian and the last New Zealander.

That the facts were otherwise was of course clearly realised throughout the Empire. The Acting Prime Minister of Australia (Mr. Fadden) had said on April 26th, 1941, when the Anzacs were in Greece :

" Australia to a man stands solidly behind Great Britain in this war, and is proud to be associated with British and Greek troops in the Balkan sector."

Australia and New Zealand realised that British troops were playing an important part in the campaign in Greece. Answering the same mocking taunts, New Zealand's Prime Minister (Mr. Fraser), among New Zealand troops in Cairo in June, said:

" Never was consultation between the Governments of the Dominions and the Government of the United Kingdom on any matter ever closer than it was on the occasion of this fighting."

On June 8th, 1941, the Prime Minister of Australia (Mr. Menzies) repelled and repudiated the Nazi claim, and three days later in the Commons, Mr. Churchill declared :

" There is one thing I regret very much. That is that the brunt of this fighting in the Middle East should have fallen so heavily on the splendid Australian and New Zealand troops.

" I regret it for this reason, among others—that the German propaganda is always reproaching us for fighting with other people's blood, and they mock us with the insulting taunt that England will fight to the last Australian or New Zealander. I was very glad to see Mr. Menzies in his noble speech on Sunday night deal with this vile propaganda as it deserves.

⁴ There have been, in fact, during 1941, almost as many

Crete: A Classic Revolution in Warfare 77

British as there are Australian and New Zealand troops engaged in all the operations in the Western Desert, in Greece and in Crete, and our losses, during this year, compared with the numbers engaged, are slightly heavier for the British than the Dominion troops."

Chapter II

Greece: An Epic of Too Few against Too Many

" In the face of heavy odds, Anzac troops have been fighting magnificently by the side of our most gallant ally (Greece), in the cause of justice and freedom."
—The King, Anzac Day, 1941.

" We must defend the nation to the very end."
—King of the Hellenes, to the Greek nation, 1941.

" It is not unlikely that the action of this small and noble nation may prove in the end to be the beginning of the final downfall of Nazi tyranny."
—Lieutenant-General Sir Thomas Blarney, to Anzac Troops, in Greece, 1941.

AT 5.45 a.m. on April 6th, 1941, the Germans crossed the Bulgarian-Greek frontier. There was no ultimatum; but the attack had been awaited for some time, and the Metaxas line, which runs along this frontier, was manned by three Greek Divisions. Simultaneously, the Germans invaded Yugoslavia, which was far from ready for war against such a formidable foe. The best weapon in the whole of that nation's armoury was its unquenchable courage.

A few minutes earlier, the German Minister in Athens, Prince Erbach von Schonburg, called at the home of the Greek Prime Minister, M. Korizis, to tell him that a Note was at that moment being given to the Greek Minister in Berlin, and that German troops would cross the Greek frontier that morning as a result of the arrival of British troops in Greece. The Prime Minister's reply reflected the spirit of the people : Greece would defend herself.

A more baseless argument than that Germany's reason for the attack was the presence in Greece of forces of the British Empire it would be impossible to find. It was a characteristic Ribbentropian line. The facts were that Greece was confronting the second utterly unprovoked attack that the Axis had made upon her, and the Nazis were hoping that the weapon of surprise, coupled with unmatched ferocity, would rapidly paralyse her.

America's Anniversary

After the entry of German troops into Bulgaria had brought to a head the long-threatened German invasion of the Balkans,

Greece : Epic of Too Few against Too Many 79

the British Government, in full consultation with the Dominion Governments, sent an army to Greece comprising troops of Great Britain, Australia and New Zealand, " to stand in line with the soldiers of our brave Allies in defence of their native soil". Reinforcements were also sent to the Royal Air Force, which had for some time been operating in Greece against the Italians.

Either coincidentally, or by design, it was the twenty-fourth anniversary of the United States declaration of war against Germany on April 6th, 1917. If it was a coincidence, it was a blunder on the part of the Nazi hierarchy to have permitted it, because it was interpreted as one of those psychological errors of which the Nazis are past masters. If it was designed that the attack should be carried out that day, rather than the day before or the day after, especially to burn upon the minds of Americans who were remembering their own part in the Great War, some parents poignantly, that the Nazis' military power was supreme in Europe and war with Hitler, in whatever form, was something they would do well to avoid, it could only fail. Nothing could underline more to thoughtful Americans the need for the destruction of a tyrannical confederacy of war-lords who, with such incomparable, cynical disregard for human dignity and human life, demonstrably relished the spreading of terror and slaughter to peaceful places if they thought it would bring them one half-inch nearer the domination of Europe. There, enthroned above millions of enslaved peoples, the unholy incense rising about them from burning cities and reeking battlefields, they could plot the next ghastly move in the grandiose scheme for the virtual conquest of the world.

Flowers for Tommies and Anzacs

British Imperial Forces, to honour the British Government's pledge to give aid to the Greeks, arrived in Athens, en route for the battle-front, early in March. They comprised a considerable part of the Imperial Army of the Nile. When the Nazis first struck, the combined British and Anzac forces numbered about 45,000, finally 60,000. A large proportion of them was composed of men straight from successes in Libya, soldiers who had assisted in smashing Graziani's army of 200,000. Others were fresh to fighting. Their equipment was good: it came from factories in the British Empire and in the United States of America. Convoys bearing them and their material from Egyptian ports were fortunate in encounters with the enemy. None was lost; not a man was injured, despite the presence of Italian surface and submarine craft and of German and Italian aeroplanes. All the

paraphernalia of war—transport lorries, armoured cars, tanks, ambulances, machine-guns, artillery, anti-aircraft guns, hand-grenades and land-mines by the thousand, barbed wire—had to be shipped. Commitments in North Africa prevented a larger force from being sent.

Piraeus, the port of Athens, was the chief port of disembarkation. Other British Imperial troops went ashore at Volos, the port about forty miles from Larissa, which was the advanced British headquarters. After some consideration, it was decided not to use Salonika, a much larger port than either, chiefly because it was too vulnerable to German air attack. A handicap, because the British Imperial forward position was only about thirty miles from it. Yet Salonika is barely forty miles by aeroplane from the Bulgarian frontier: and long before the Nazis occupied Bulgaria, always more pro-German than pro-Greek, a great many aerodromes had been built as secretly as possible by expert ground staffs of the *Luftwaffe* wearing civilian clothes and passed off by the Bulgarian authorities as "tourists". Aware of this, the British authorities decided against using either Salonika or the aerodromes in the Salonika plain, or to the east of it.

A hail of flowers greeted Imperial troops in Athens. A gala spirit was everywhere. Wherever they walked they were fêted. Wine, fruit, bouquets and kisses of admiration and gratitude were given them. "Nike! Nike!"—the Greek for victory—was chanted, shouted, sung by the gay, excited, lovable people. Shopkeepers frequently treated them to whatever they ordered.

Like sons or brothers, the Anzacs were embraced. Just as every Anzac (and British Tommy) of 1914-18 remembers Struma, Uskub, Vardar, so thousands of Athenians that day remembered Allenby, and the thrill of being taught, in the picturesque idiom of the southern democracies, to say "dinkum", "bonzer", "fair cow", by jovial, generous men who knew how to die.

Into Position

Of the total number of British Imperial troops put into Greece, approximately only 37,000 were fighting soldiers; the rest were lines of communication troops, attached to the supply columns. Substantially, the fighting force was composed of a British armoured brigade, an Australian infantry division and a New Zealand infantry division, while the lines of communication, supply and maintenance troops were all from the United Kingdom.

Apart from famous British regiments—the Royal Armoured Corps (Hussars), Royal Armoured Corps (Royal Tank Regi-

TO THE GLORY
OF THE FUHRER
Sprawled in death
under a warm Medi-
terranean sun, these
Nazi youths lie beside
a crashed glider in
Crete, their work for
the Fuhrer ended.



OUT FROM
UNDER HITLER'S
NOSE

An historic scene on the quayside in Egypt when British Imperial troops arriving from Crete gulped tea and cocoa and puffed cigarettes the moment they stepped ashore.



Greece : Epic of Too Few against Too Many 81

ment), the Royal Horse Artillery, Royal Artillery, Royal Engineers, the Rangers (K.R.R.C.)—soldiers from all parts of New Zealand and Australia, and Cypriot and Palestinian units took part. Australian forces which served in Greece included several Brigades, two being commanded by Brigadier A. S. Allen and Brigadier G. A. Vasey, as well as corps troops, divisional artillery, engineers, signallers, and A.M.C., commanded by Major-General Sir Iven Mackay, of Sydney.

Anzac forces, with units of the British forces, spread out to various points in the country. It was flowers, fruit and wine all the way. But there was precious little time for congratulation and celebration: the transports roared at speed along the roads, the troops singing, waving, laughing confidently and giving the don't-worry-thumbs-up sign.

On March 21st defensive positions were first taken up by elements of the New Zealand Division, which set about preparing them, together with demolitions on the Katerini-Ellason road, where they arrived on March 15th. Concentration by the 4th New Zealand Brigade was completed in the Katerini area, and was proceeding by the 6th New Zealand Brigade and the New Zealand Divisional H.Q. on March 24th. The same day the New Zealand Divisional H.Q. was advanced to Kalokouri, two miles west of Katerini.

By April 3rd the concentration of the New Zealand Division was complete. Concentration of the 6th New Zealand Brigade was finished on March 27th, just when a New Zealand Field Regiment reached Katerini, and when the 5th New Zealand Infantry Brigade, with two New Zealand Field Regiments, began to unload in port and rumble up towards their comrades. The 5th and the 21st New Zealand Brigades moved to Katerini area on March 28th, the New Zealand Field Regiments the next day.

Barely three days before Hitler's violation of Greek territory, concentration of the New Zealand Division was complete, except for one battalion remaining in Athens, and a field company moving up on April 5th.

Less than twenty-four hours before the Germans struck, concentration forward of one of the Australian divisions began. On the third day of the invasion, Lieutenant-General Blarney assumed command of the New Zealand Division and the 12th Greek Division north-west of Veria. The same day a New Zealand machine-gun battalion, less two companies, H.Q. Australian Brigade, and a battalion of the New Zealand Division, with other troops, dropped back to the line of Mount Olympus.

Each of the Australian and New Zealand divisions was composed of more than 10,000 men, but less than 15,000. Both had their own divisional artillery of twenty-five-pounder field-guns and two-pounder anti-tank guns; and they both had their own anti-tank regiment. Each unit in each division also had its own anti-tank rifles and light machine-guns; while each brigade was armed with a certain proportion of Tommy-guns as well as with rifles. Nowadays, a divisional cavalry regiment means a fully mechanised force equipped with tanks and Bren-gun carriers. The New Zealand Division had one of these.

All the same, a commentary on the lack of transport is that although each division was equipped with a considerable number of motor vehicles, neither was motorised in the sense that the entire force could be put into trucks at the one time and transported to any spot together. All the German motorised divisions which were to be pitted against these Tommies and Anzacs were fully motorised in this sense.

The single exception among the British Imperial troops was the British armoured brigade, which was fully motorised. It was composed of between 3,000 and 4,000 men with more than one hundred tanks. To support it, it had its own artillery, its anti-tank regiment, its Royal Engineers, and was equipped with anti-tank rifles and machine-guns and some light mortars.

Protecting this force in the air at the time of the German invasion were about ten squadrons of the Royal Air Force—Army co-operation machines, fighters, bombers.

Mussolini's False Pride

What had brought about this entrenchment of British Imperial troops?

Expecting to break down Greek military resistance as quickly as Germany shattered Holland's, Mussolini ordered the Italian forces to strike at Greece on October 28th, 1940. He had no doubt that Greece would resist—at least his agents had advised him of that—but he never believed it would be so stern a resistance. When the Italians failed to break the Greek defences, their own position became extremely embarrassing. Once this was established, as it soon was, the Italians were faced with a position in which the real choices were to abandon the war against Greece, or continue it in dribblets, killing on an average one Greek for three, four, five, even six Italians. At the end of November the Italians were not only held at all points, but were being driven back everywhere.

- Not that it raised the morale of the Italian army, the *Duce* decided to carry on. At least, the maintenance of a facade

Greece: Epic of Too Few against Too Many 83

of Italian Imperial military power required that he should; and politically he could not afford to do otherwise. Too, there was the necessity for trying to square facts with his own vain belief that his end of the Axis was not imitation steel, a lath-and-plaster sham.

So it was, broadly, that the whole Greek and Albanian campaigns rapidly became a variation of a Roman Holiday—with Italians being thrown to the Greek lions.

Time, of course, is a vital ally, a fickle ally. It will run with anyone who grabs it by the hand. The German High Command, like the Italian and the British High Commands, kept this fact well in their minds while they watched the Greeks, relatively not so well armed as the invaders, for the most part make sport of the much-vaunted Italian forces.

Two things were required by the Italian High Command in November, 1940, if it desired to avoid a winter of war in the Balkans, which it most earnestly did. The first was a threat to British power in Egypt, to stop what British aid there was flowing to Greece. The second was something that would weaken the unexpected, startling giant dominating that whole area of northern Greece nearest Italy, and which was then striding audaciously into Albanian territory, kicking out crack Italian soldiers despite their fine equipment, their tanks, their aeroplanes—the immortal Army of the Epirus.

Secret

To what degree Hitler supported Mussolini in his attack on Greece will not be known until the archives of the Nazi and Fascist dictators are opened. On the day Greece was attacked, Hitler and Mussolini met at Florence. What makes some observers think that Hitler was against an invasion at that season of the year is the fact that a Balkan winter, notoriously, is one of the worst in Europe from a purely military standpoint. Snow puts a tremendous strain on communications, for one thing. The weight of military opinion, however, is that Hitler did support Mussolini's suggestion that he should attack then. Principal among the reasons for this belief is that the advantages to Hitler would be twofold immediately: he would be in a position to see the effect upon Britain and Russia of Mussolini's pincer movement against Egypt, through Libya on the one side and, threateningly, through Greece on the other; and also, if it met with even second-rate success, to find in it additional pressure to put upon the other Balkan countries—Rumania, Bulgaria, Yugoslavia—besides strengthening him in his attitude towards Turkey, Iraq and Syria.

With a tremendous superiority over the Greeks in men and equipment, and with an army of 200,000 in Libya, the chances, on paper, of total Italian failure could be practically ruled out. It was possible; Hitler may have thought, as Mussolini certainly did, that the Greeks, confronted by such apparently overpowering forces, would capitulate and sign an "honourable" peace.

Politically, from the German viewpoint, the position was somewhat analogous with that which existed in May, 1940, on the collapse of France. Germany was alternating the use of great military and aerial power with diplomatic sabotage. Pursuing closely her now celebrated policy of defeating countries by first "rotting" them at the core with quislings, she had no wish to start a fight for something she could get by treachery from within. True, there never was, or has been, any sort of Fifth Column in Greece, and to let Mussolini attack Greece was a gambler's throw; but the odds appeared, on balance, in favour of the Axis, especially as the "rotting" process was being tried by Germany all around Greece, including Turkey, where von Papen was intriguing indefatigably. Justification for assuming the Greek Government would be frightened into the Axis orbit appeared to be ample.

Alarm

Italy struck suddenly, treacherously and viciously. Yet within a month it was clear to the world that she was in serious difficulties. Three miscalculations had been made: (a) the spirit of Greece was indomitable; (b) the power of the strong Italian military and aerial machine was not irresistible to the under-equipped Greeks; (c) the severe Balkan winter, then just beginning (and which was as severe a handicap to Greece as to Italy), coupled with the fact that the "rotting" political process had not had time enough fully to develop in the other Balkan and Middle Eastern nations, where it was being assiduously applied, made it impossible for the German General Staff to advise assistance for the Italians. Also the German General Staff could not have said then that it was ready, because it is extremely doubtful if it had assembled forces in sufficiently overwhelming numbers to make the move risklessly. They knew, for instance, that it would require at least a third of the *Luftwaffe*, and this was needed to help bomb Britain throughout the long winter months.

Time was not opportune for the Germans to intervene. There was nothing that could help the Italians in Epirus or elsewhere in Greece: nothing except German intervention, or a collapse of the Greek armies, which never came. Instead Greece's spirit was rather more lustily nurtured by contact

Greece: Epic of Too Few against Too Many 85

in battle with the Italians. A diversion did occur in Egypt and Libya less than six weeks after the Italians attacked Greece; but it was caused not by the Italian Army in Libya moving towards the Suez Canal, but by General Wavell's decision, on December 9th, to try to shatter Graziani's army. A large advance striking force of Italians was camped at Sidi Barrani, to which Graziani had by then completed his water-supply lines from his rear bases.

If the spectacle of the Greeks holding up and hurling back the Italians did not wholly precipitate Wavell's advance on Graziani's prepared positions, it was at least very largely responsible for the idea. Until troops of the British Imperial Army of the Nile launched their attack at dawn along the whole front in Western Egypt, it looked as though he had decided to deal first with Italians in Abyssinia and Eritrea, in order to remove any threat of an attack from that region against Egypt and the Sudan before deciding to move his main force towards Graziani's army, thus leaving Egypt sparsely guarded.

For Hitler and Mussolini these facts began to create some degree of alarm.

German Thoroughness

Although between December and February the German General Staff could not advise that Germany should go to Italy's aid, the German Foreign Office never relaxed its attempts to eat away the will to resist of all the countries in the immediate vicinity of Greece: it took a little longer time than had been allowed. True, Rumania was officially in the bag on December 4th, when a ten-year agreement with her was signed in Berlin; but while the Germans were acting with their usual thoroughness in the Balkans, the occupation of Bulgaria had yet to be formally achieved, although there was no room for doubt that Bulgaria was clearly on the side of the Axis. The "Prussia of the Balkans", as Bulgaria loves to be called, has always been on the German side: it is a matter of inclination rather than of Fifth-Column activity.

At first little success was secured in Turkey—where there was, and is, no chance for Fifth-Column operations, but where there is a lot of common-sense. Eventually, Turkey saw good reason for defining her attitude as one of "non-belligerency", which meant that she had decided not to run the risk of war immediately, perhaps that she had even decided not to risk it in any case short of actual invasion.

There was also a problem presented to Hitler by Yugoslavia, which had not been as thoroughly rotted away from

the inside as Rumania had been—as he thought it had. He wanted powerful forces, like those in Poland, to screen his left flank as far as possible against the Russians when he was ready to drive into Greece and to push the British completely out of Europe—except for that one other rocky spot, Gibraltar, against which he would have liked the Spaniards to rush madly. About stubbing the toe of his own jackboot against it, he was more than a little chary.

Ruses with Russia

But, doubtful of the real value, as pieces of deception, of his own and von Ribbentrop's slap-happy pact-making episodes with Russia, doubtful that Stalin was really deceived by his palaver, since he had some years before been unwise enough to tell the world in his extraordinary confession, *Mein Kampf*, precisely of what he dreamed of robbing the Bolshevik "scum", he preferred not to expend energy in fighting in the Balkans.

This was sound, too, for another reason: when Hitler put his doubts to the test by trying to get Russia to join the Axis, he knew, when Stalin refused, that he was right in not pretending to himself that he had cheated Stalin as easily as he had, time and again, swindled the Western Powers. He guessed, since it was the only reasonable explanation, that Stalin would probably strike him in the east when he was really up to his eyes in the war with the British Empire and America, instead of being merely up to his waist, as he was then. Therefore, he knew he would be wise to conserve every ounce of his military and aerial power for that inevitable struggle.

It was obvious to him that as he had intended to do it all the time, at the right moment, his only chance was to smash the Red Army the second he got rid of the British from Greece; but to avoid a scuffle with Yugoslavia was to have one branch less of the Slav family hating him when the time came—as he mistakenly and belatedly thought it had on June 22nd, 1941—for him to turn on Holy Mother Russia. Apart from the political value to Goebbels' propaganda factory of an attack on the cradle of Communism, he had in mind chiefly an endeavour to prevent Russia being linked with Britain and America in an attempt to grab him by the scruff of the neck. But because Russia's power was, startlingly, many times greater than either Britain or America imagined it to be, this is exactly what they sought to do. And so far as not wishing to have more Slavs seeking his throat, by trying to avoid a show-down with Yugoslavia, he knew he was trumped the very day he moved against

Greece: Epic of Too Few against Too Many 87

Yugoslavia and Greece when, in Moscow, on April 6th, M. Molotov, the Soviet Foreign Commissar, and M. Gavrilovitch, the Yugoslav Minister in that city, signed, on behalf of their respective countries, a pact of friendship and non-aggression !

Mussolini in the Mud

So Hitler waited, which meant that Mussolini was condemned to a winter of war in the worst possible territory. Little wonder there was dissatisfaction among members of the Italian High Command. Marshal Badoglio resigned from the position of Chief of the Italian General Staff on December 6th; General de Vecchi, Commander-in-Chief of the Italian Forces in the Dodecanese, resigned the following day; and on the day after that came the resignations of the Chief and the Deputy-Chief of the Italian Naval Staff and of the Commander-in-Chief of the Italian Fleet.

To try to push the Greeks out of Albania on March 9th, when they were established well inside that country, Mussolini launched an offensive on a twenty-five-mile front; three days later, when he took personal charge of operations, the Greeks were repulsing the Italians with heavy losses. An idea of the way in which the Greeks were man-handling the Duce's troops, some of his crack regiments among them, is given by the fact that on March 17th it was estimated that Italian losses in Albania during the preceding seven days were 48,000.

The Italian dead lay in heaps. Bodies were scattered over the heights in the central sector of the Albanian front in such great numbers that they could not be counted. Tens of thousands of projectiles had ploughed up the whole area. The weather was warm; the stench was nauseating.

None the less, by the time the ridiculously small British Imperial force which Wavell had used to achieve such incredible results was in retreat from Benghazi, the indecisive character of the Greek fighting in the quarter of Tepelini suggested that the Greek advance had spent a good deal of its momentum. Had Wavell's force been strong enough to push across the 400 miles of waterless desert to Tripoli, strong enough to base itself there, and had the British been able to give the Greeks more aid, particularly in men, transport, munitions and aeroplanes, what followed might have been averted. Britain did not have it to give.

Anglo-French Staff talks, before the war, and during its first few months, had provided that the major Allied forces in the Middle East would be French, that largely French war supplies would be diverted to help Greece and Turkey, if the need arose to honour the pledges. When France collapsed,

it was left to Britain to reinforce Greece, or any country in Western or Eastern Europe or in the Middle East prepared to stand against Hitler.

Apart from this, the results of Nazi underground work and diplomacy (almost synonymous Nazi terms) were showing themselves. Bulgaria joined the Axis on March 1st, the pact being formally signed in Vienna, haunt of the ghosts of statesmen broken by Hitler, like Schuschnigg, or, like Dolfuss, murdered by his hirelings. Both the gravity and the significance of this pact were underlined by the arrival in Athens next day of the Secretary of State for War, Mr. Anthony Eden, and Sir John Dill. Even while these two were in conference with American and Turkish Ministers and Chiefs of Staff, German troops were crossing Bulgaria and reaching the Greek frontier.

Britain's Gamble

The race had begun. Britain was making a last bid to establish a Balkan bloc to dam the German tide which at any minute, it was guessed, would surge over the borders of Greece. Germany was out to wash away the foundation-piles of such a structure with the threat of overpowering, irresistible force.

No sooner had Mr. Eden and Sir John Dill left Greece for Cairo on March 5th, than Yugoslavia called up the 1891-1919 classes for "normal spring manoeuvres", the British Legation advised Britishers to leave, and the British Government broke off diplomatic relations with Bulgaria. In Cairo, Mr. Eden and Sir John Dill held a vital conference with Sir Archibald Wavell, Admiral Sir Andrew Cunningham and Air Chief Marshal Sir John Longmore and General Smuts. The question was aid to Greece.

Increased German pressure on Yugoslavia to join the Axis coincided with that conference. Without a pause, it was maintained until March 25th, when Yugoslavia, by a stroke of the pen of M. Tsvetkovitch, the Prime Minister, joined the Axis in spite of the hottest condemnation throughout the country. Few Prime Ministers have had a colder home-coming than had M. Tsvetkovitch. Patriotic demonstrations throughout Yugoslavia against the Government's "betrayal" marked it. The railway platform into which the train pulled from Vienna, where the pact was signed in the Belvedere Palace, was empty.

Revolution broke out within twenty-four hours. In a lightning stroke which made the almost shock-proof world catch its breath, the Yugoslav Army deposed Prince Paul, the Senior Regent, and all the members of the Tsvetkovitch

Greece : Epic of Too Few against Too Many 89

Government, proclaiming that young King Peter had assumed power—six months before he was to come of age on his eighteenth birthday in September, 1941. General Simovitch, Chief of the Yugoslav Air Force and a former Chief of the General Staff, formed a new Government. It was a political Dunkirk. It was the choice of the Yugoslav people who had refused to be betrayed, and who preferred at least to try to bar the door. Enthusiastically Mr. Churchill cried: "The Yugoslav nation has found its soul! "

Hardly any attempt was made in Berlin to hide anger and surprise. Berlin radios warned the Yugoslavs "to expect action if order is not restored"—the old, old Nazi gag. Yugoslavia knew war was on the way, although tough, vibrant Simovitch wrote a statement in which he declared that the first task of his Government was "the maintenance of order in the country and peace abroad", and that Yugoslavia desired to remain "independent and respected".

Colourful Day

Belgrade teemed with happily excited crowds as the General's new Cabinet took the oath of allegiance to King Peter at the Royal Palace. Multitudes cheered as Ministers came and went. Six Serbian bishops watched the King sworn in by the Patriarch of the Serbian Orthodox Church, heard him take the oath in firm tones, swearing to defend the rights and liberties of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes. That was on March 28th.

With his Cabinet Ministers, the King drove to Belgrade Cathedral. Solemn Mass was celebrated amid all the glittering splendour. They walked from the brilliance outside and the wild exuberance of their people's homage into the purple dimness of the rich cathedral to say their prayers and with tear-filled eyes to give thanks to God.

How speedily the fortunes of a nation can still be altered in this mid-twentieth-century world by a swelling of national revulsion against an act of political cowardice in the face of a Frankensteinian monster, how the robust spirit of a free people, however small, will not permit politicians' deeds to be in conflict with the stubborn national will in a matter of national honour, was epitomised by this scene of David giving thanks for an opportunity to remain free and square himself against the menaces and encroachments of Goliath.

Not less remarkable than the spirit was the degree of national unity the act of revolution secured. When, in 1934, King Alexander was murdered with the French Foreign Minister, M. Barthou, in Marseilles, Yugoslavia was full of

bitter internal strife, the Croat federalists clamouring for home-rule for Croatia on the ground that they had not flung off Hungarian overlordship merely to be governed by Serbs. Envious enemies hung on her fringes : Hungary and Bulgaria had their eyes on the territory Yugoslavia had taken from them; Italy wanted a strip of the Yugoslav Dalmatian coast; Albania, controlled by Italy, was a dagger in her ribs.

Since then everything had changed so quickly that this scene of thanksgiving and prayers for the future after an overnight revolution, a right-about-face in the life of the nation, was a perfect panorama of our times. The eloquent parade illuminated stages of the abuse of the victory of the Great War: Locarno, the Stresa Conference; Germany's march into the Rhineland without so much as asking anyone's permission and surprised to find no one asked " Why ? "; Japan's Manchurian grab; Britain, France and Italy at loggerheads over the Abyssinia sanctions fiasco; the writing off of Austria, Czechoslovakia—all the Yugoslav politicians, Croats, Serbs, Slovenes, watching it, sought the best foreign policy. There were squabbles, murders, discontent and political antagonisms, but with it all Yugoslavia, unlike Austria and Czechoslovakia, had got beyond Munich, beyond the outbreak of the First Total War, without becoming a storm area herself.

Black clouds were massing on the horizon as they knelt that day in Belgrade Cathedral. Everybody saw danger: the Government and the whole Diplomatic Corps, including the German Minister, von Herren, and the Italian Minister, who were in their presence as they prayed.

" Long live Yugoslavia ! " " Long live the Army ! " " Long live Russia ! " " Long live Britain ! " " Down with Hitler ! " " Down with Mussolini ! "

It was the crowd crying wildly as they came away, surging around the royal car, encouraging the boy King. Boos for von Herren; cheers for the British and American Ministers. Relief was married to excitement.

Next day von Herren burnt his Legation's papers. After a long conversation with the new Yugoslav Foreign Minister, he left for Berlin " to report ". Meantime additional Yugoslav reservists were being called up and sent to the frontier.

From then on the intensity of the Nazi pressure against Yugoslavia increased daily. It was thought, for instance, that the heavy German pressure applied to Hungary to join in a war against Yugoslavia caused the Hungarian Prime Minister, Count Teleki, who committed suicide on April 3rd, to take his life rather than be a party to such a murderous assault. On the day that he died, the German Legation in Belgrade was ordered to leave for Berlin; a number of German median-

Greece: Epic of Too Few against Too Many 91

ised units were already on their way to the Yugoslav border of the Rumanian Banat, which they reached that evening.

Eleventh Hour

No stopping the war now: the German Juggernaut was at last rolling. Hopeful that the announcement might save some innocent lives, the authorities declared Belgrade, Zagreb and Ljubjana, capitals of the three component States of the Triune Kingdom, open towns. Seven German divisions were in the region of the Struma valley, and German Headquarters moved to Gorma-Djumaya. Salonika, plainly, was a target.

All frontiers with Yugoslavia, with the exception of the frontier with Greece, were closed by April 5th. Telephone communications with other countries were mostly cut off. Air patrols were constantly in operation over the northern and eastern borders, on the look-out for enemy movement rather than as an indication that Yugoslavia believed she could combat the *Luftwaffe*. For while the new Government was ready to fight to preserve the nation's independence, both it and the people knew that it was only partly mobilised, unprepared for war. It was only partially mobilised when the Nazis, not intending the new Government to have a chance to be prepared, struck.

Although the Tsvetkovitch Government had been overthrown, the adherence to the Tripartite pact which M. Tsvetkovitch and his Foreign Minister, M. Cincar Marcovitch, had signed had not been formally repudiated by the Simovitch Government, precisely to prevent the Germans using it as an excuse for assault. As was the case with Greece, no ultimatum or other warning was given. But the Yugoslavs, like the Greeks and ourselves, sniffed the air and knew what was coming.

The time that was likely to elapse between the switch in Governments and the hour of delivery of the Nazi blow was not expected to be long enough to allow the Yugoslavs to do much preparing. And the disposal of the Yugoslav forces, which appears to have been governed not alone by military but also by political considerations, was such that inadequate forces had been allotted to the south of the country, where, actually, the real threat lay. The old, old differences between the Croats and the Serbs had resulted in the larger part of the Yugoslav forces being distributed in the north for the protection of Croatia against an invasion.

This disposal had been carried out by the Tsvetkovitch Government, and General Simovitch, appreciating how valueless it was if Yugoslavia were to give any sort of worthwhile aid to Britain or to Greece, had no time to revise the

plans. More than time was needed if Yugoslavia's contribution was to be helpful: an opportunity for full staff conversations with the British and the Greeks was an essential and, in the circumstances, strategic considerations alone would have made it necessary to have abandoned northern Yugoslavia, including Croatia, to the Axis temporarily, a course which would have raised old racial prejudices.

The danger was obvious: the Germans might advance rapidly up the Strumitza valley, past both sides of Lake Doiran and down the Vardar valley, and reach Salonika before the British and the Greeks were ready to meet them on anything like equal terms.

The Mark of the Beast

Over the Bulgarian-Greek frontier the Germans poured at five points on April 6th. They went down the Struma valley to the Rupel pass, over the Nevrokop plateau towards Drama, towards Xanthi, towards Komotini, and from Svilengrad down towards the Maritza valley. Except for the last line of advance, which was not seriously defended—nor was it intended to be—the Greeks opposed all advances. Down this last line the Nazis reached the Aegean Sea at Dede Agach on April 9th, capturing Alexandroupolis on the Greek-Turkish frontier. At the same time, the Nazis stabbed Yugoslavia at six points.

Initiative, as was customary, was with the Germans. From the outset, the task presented to the Greeks was impossible. It is to their credit that they never flinched, even though they were fully aware, as a result of talks between the Greek and British Governments, that the amount of aid from Britain could be of only the most limited character.

Dawn barely brushed the sky with cold grey before the Nazi mechanised units were rolling over the frontiers of Greece and Yugoslavia.

In those towns where things were fairly normal the workers and business people were mostly just waking, stretching out their hands to silence alarm clocks, or still sleeping, the covers drawn up round their shoulders, cuddled down to keep out the cold. In the cities few people were astir, except those who had to be—the railwaymen, the bakers, the cleaners, and so on.

Things were more wide awake in the country. Women in the villages were preparing the meals for the menfolk who had not been called up—there were few enough of them—or setting about the work on the farms, in the kitchens, the barns, out in the yards. Everywhere the ground was cold, wet. There was a smell of wetness.

Greece: Epic of Too Few against Too Many 93

In the highlands there was thick snow and slush. In some places melting snow was thin on the ground, covering the earth in shabby grey patches, so that you thought of a threadbare garment, the dirty lining showing. Up there, the old men were contentedly plodding behind the wooden, ox-drawn ploughs. The landscapes were still stark; poplars and elms against the hard morning sky, a rook or two sailing disconsolately, swerving and sailing, sheep-bells tinkling, and a peasant slowly walking. Geese, their necks elongated, beaks open, waddling in the black mud, over the dank fields, along the lanes, here a pair, solemn and silent as policemen, here a platoon, squawking aggressively, a regular, noisy procession.

In the centre and in the south, in the warmer hollows of the lowlands, carpets of spring flowers were beginning to gleam, red, yellow, blue, white, pink. Up in the highlands, too, here and there, in rare spots, the sap was bursting the bojighs with minute green shoots.

Within a few hours of that five-prong thrust against Greece, fighting was going on north of the Rhodope range; while at the same time the *Luftwaffe* carried out widespread air attacks over both Greece and Yugoslavia, which launched the Yugoslavian attack against the Italians on April 9th.

Debris of war marked the rambling, fluid lines: stacks of dead, sometimes too numerous, to bury; the scorched earth; the deserted towns; the blackened, broken-down ox-carts; smashed-up lorries; the litter of discarded personal possessions; blasted bridges; the devastated orchards and farms; the razed buildings; the blocked roads; the slaughtered cattle. Yet there were no streams of refugees: in Western Thrace, for instance, and in some frontier districts, the population was moved; but elsewhere people were told to stay where they were—and they stayed.

Heavy gunfire rumbles in the high valleys, and there are few places in the war zones where the brittle comment of the machine-guns is not heard. The flash of red as the guns fire and the bombs explode, and the golden hail as the tracers sear the sky. The smoke rising lazily from the roads in the valleys where the Germans are being smashed, rising from the towns and the cities where the Germans are pulverising the people—as in Belgrade. A grotesque day.

On the day the Nazis delivered the blow—a Sunday—dive-bombers, bombers and fighters attacked Belgrade three times. Countless fires were started; men, women and children were mown down by Nazi aerial machine-gun batteries, blown to pieces by bombs. Twenty thousand people were dead in Belgrade within a few hours. They lay in their

best clothes, in their night clothes, in the streets, under piles of rubble, in churches, in the squares, the parks, the cross-roads, in the gutters, mutilated, lying there with the cats and the dogs, jumbled together with the smashed-up masonry, the wrecked buses, the demolished shops, the flattened houses, the tangle of wires, the hanging ruins from tall buildings that looked like fantastic frozen cascades of rubbish.

Plans

When Germany struck at Greece and Yugoslavia, the position of the Greek forces was such that fifteen divisions on the Albania front were facing twenty-eight Italian divisions. The front ran from Lake Okhrida (Pogradets) to Himarra on the Ionian Sea. The Greek force was divided into four army corps, each with three divisions. Seven of the fifteen divisions composed the Western Macedonian Army, more familiarly known to foreigners as the Greek Northern Army. The other eight made up the Army of the Epirus.

Compared with the way in which the Germans were armed with hundreds of tanks and thousands of aeroplanes, the British Imperial troops were considerably under-armed: compared with the way in which the British Imperial troops were armed, the Greeks were hopelessly out-classed in material. They had rifles, and a middling number of machine-guns, and some divisional artillery. But they had no anti-tank guns and no tanks. The only way in which the Greeks could halt a German tank was by scoring a direct hit from an artillery piece, by ingenious trapping devices, or with the aid of " Molotoff cocktails ".

From the sea to the Aoos river (Viossa) stood the I Greek Army Corps; from the Aoos to a point slightly north of Boubessi was the II Greek Army Corps. These Corps were known as the Army of the Epirus.

The Western Macedonian Army operated on the front from Boubessi to Lake Okhrida. It was composed of the III and V Greek Army Corps and one reserve division. The remaining two divisions were reserves for the Army of the Epirus.

In the central sector, to fight alongside the Forces of the British Empire, were the XII and XX Greek divisions. Supporting the fortress garrisons in the eastern part of Macedonia, between the Vardar and the Nestos valleys, were the VTI and XVI divisions.

None knew better than the Greeks the perils of a sudden collapse of Yugoslavia's armed forces. Because Yugoslavia, instead of being a friend of the Axis, became a friend of the Allies, the Greek General Staff moved a number of valuable divisions eastwards with the idea of more effectively defend-

Greece: Epic of Too Few against Too Many 95

ing Eastern Macedonia. A great many lives hinged on the trust placed in the Yugoslavs by the Greeks when they made this vital shift in the balance of their forces.

At that time, the hour before the blow fell, the alternative plans before the Greek General Staff were these :—

(1) Stand on the strongly fortified line running approximately with the Greek frontiers, known as the Metaxas Line;

(2) Make the main line of defence the line in the rear of the Metaxas Line—the line of the Struma river; or

(3) Hold firmly on the Aliakmon (Vistritsa) Line, forming an integral part of the whole defence system, which gets its name from the Aliakmon river. The Aliakmon Line, however, consisted of positions, not fortifications.

With such astonishing speed and utter ruthlessness was the Nazi attack flung headlong forward, that eventually it was the third plan which came into operation.

Early in March, in preparation for a Greek attack, the Greek General Staff decided that Western Thrace, that part of the country running from the Nestos river (Mesta) as far east as the Turkish frontier, a slim strip of land with poor communications, should be evacuated. Not only are its resources small, but it has no depth.

Originally, too, there was a British plan which it was intended to operate if the Germans could be held for a while by the Yugoslav forces. That plan was to make the high ground west of the Vardar Valley our main defensive position, and to delay the Germans on the Metaxas Line. The British intended to inflict the maximum damage on the enemy in Eastern Macedonia but, if necessary, to withdraw from that part of Greece west of what would have been the British main defensive line, including, if possible, Salonika. It was expected that there would be opportunity for an orderly withdrawal of the Greek forces in this area.

Strategy had been worked out in consultations between General Sir John Dill, Chief of the Imperial General Staff; General Sir Archibald Wavell, Commander-in-Chief, "Middle East; and General Papagos, the Greek Supreme Commander.

Adjustments

The northern frontiers of Greece are very long. The frontier with Bulgaria and Yugoslavia, along which it was expected that the German attack would be launched, stretches for something like 450 miles. It was obvious that, even with British help, the whole of this frontier could not be defended. For this reason it was decided to sacrifice Western Thrace. When the German attack came, the Greek troops and the bulk of the population had gone; only a few reduced garrisons

remained in the small forts guarding the main routes into Thrace, that of Ectrinus, north of Xanthi, and that of Nymphaea, to the north of Komotini.

These garrisons had orders to fight delaying actions, a mission which they fulfilled with honour. The two isolated forts, attacked from every direction, were still resisting three days after the occupation of Salonika, impeding the entry into Western Thrace of any large number of German troops or heavy material.

The speedy capture of Western Thrace has been described, even in Britain, as a military feat. This is a mistake. Thrace was evacuated, and not defended. Its defence would have been advisable only if it were a case of concerted action with Turkey.

So far as the rest of Northern Greece was concerned, the Greek General Staff prepared its plan of defence on the assumption that Yugoslavia would be favourably disposed towards the Axis, to which she adhered on March 25th.

According to this plan, the main Greek line of defence, which aimed at the preservation of the Albanian front and the covering of its eastern flank, was to be concentrated in Central Macedonia—that is, in the Greek provinces south of Yugoslavia, which are intersected by the two historic invasion routes into Greece, the Vardar Valley and the Monastir Gap. Eastern Macedonia—that is, the area south of Bulgaria as far as the port of Kavalla—would also be defended, but its defence was mainly entrusted to the forts covering the main passes from Bulgaria and stretching along the southern bank of the River Nestos, the Nevrokop plateau (north-west of Drama), as far as the Kresna Pass, where the Struma runs and where the Rupel Fort is situated. The forts would delay the entry of the enemy, without, however, the possibility of the capture of Salonika from the east being precluded.

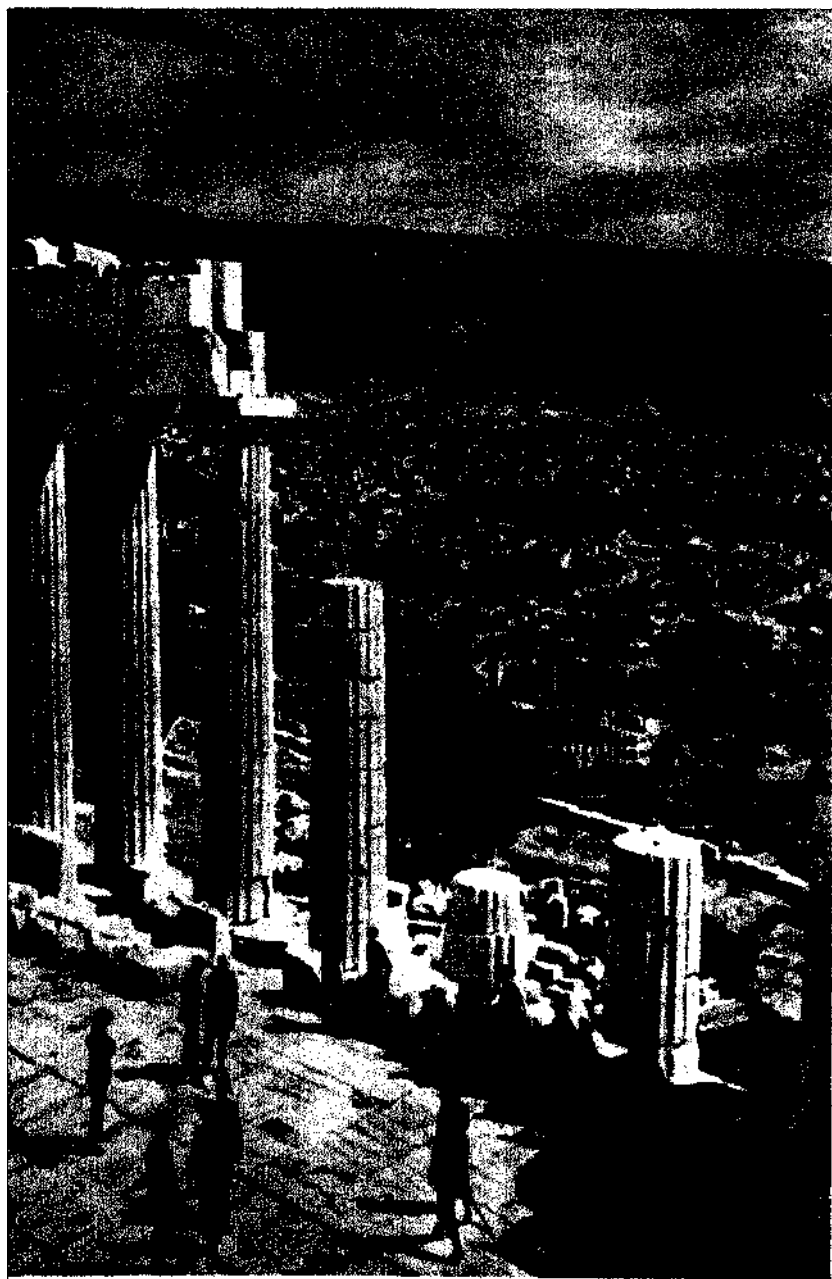
On March 27th the political change in Belgrade took place. Yugoslavia, from being a friend of the Axis, became our friend. The Yugoslav Army, which was already mobilised, had on the whole completed its dispositions, and mustered substantial forces in Southern Serbia. The routes into Greece, therefore, were closed, being covered by the Yugoslav Army. Consequently, the Greek divisions were transferred to the east, so that the defence of Eastern Macedonia could be rendered more effective. This transfer, though dictated by logic, proved fatal.

When the German attack against Greece and Yugoslavia began, the dispositions of the troops were as follows : (1) The Albanian front was held by the Greek Army; (2) the routes along the Greco-Yugoslav frontier were guarded by the

END OF A
DRAMATIC
ESCAPE

The King of the Hellenes, safe in Egypt, shaking hands with one of the New Zealand bodyguard that accompanied him over Crete's White Mountains. Second-Lieut. W. H. Ryan, who commanded the bodyguard, stands behind the King.





ANZACS UN THE ACROPOLIS

Passing from Egypt's desert sands to the snows of Greece's mountains, Anzacs, en route for the battlefronts, looked at Athens from the Acropolis.

Greece: Epic of Too Few against Too Many 97

Yugoslav Army; and (3) Eastern Macedonia was protected by the Greek Army.

The Forces of the British Empire were farther south.

Blitzkrieg

The sudden German attack was launched with all the customary violence and with all the technical means of *blitzkrieg*] with tanks, abundant heavy artillery and considerable forces in the air.

To understand something of the weight of the Nazi attack it is only necessary to know, for instance, that a German armoured division is equipped with four hundred and sixteen tanks, including heavier tanks than any of those attached to the British armoured brigade. Apart from this, the various Nazi brigades, forming the division, possess a motorised machine-gun battalion of armoured cars and motor-cyclists, a motor-lorried infantry regiment and a motor-cyclist battalion. Besides, each Nazi division has an anti-tank and an anti-aircraft battalion allotted to it. These are armed with 8.8-cm. guns which can be fired with equal effect either against aircraft or tanks. (Technically, these are known as *Flak* troops and are therefore part of the *Luftwaffe*, but, for practical purposes, in Greece they were part of the German Army.) The Nazis also brought a surprise weapon with them—a 105-cm. big gun. It was on tank tracks and moved under its own power.

Along the whole Greek line, during the first two days, the Germans made no progress anywhere. The only thing they succeeded in doing was to destroy, in the Rupel Pass, the two advanced fortified positions of Istinbey and Kelkaya. Persistent attacks with tanks and dive-bombers on the two main forts of Rupel and Ussita were completely repulsed. Farther to the east, the Lissi fort put up the same effective resistance against repeated enemy assaults. In the Nevrokop plateau the Germans succeeded, after persistent efforts, in penetrating into the Perithori fort, but after a fight in the subterranean galleries of the fort itself the enemy were destroyed, and the fort remained in Greek hands.

The following day, April 8th, Perithori was temporarily captured by the enemy, and immediately recaptured after a Greek counter-attack. Similarly the Dassavli fort, captured by the enemy, was speedily recaptured after a Greek counter-attack. At the same time Greek patrols operating outside the forts were recapturing by counter-attacks various points where the enemy had temporarily established a foothold.

German parachutists were captured or destroyed wherever they were dropped, before they had time to act. The Greek

Air Force, or what of it could be spared from the Albanian front, aided, with great sacrifice, the task of the army. While this was going on, the Greek Army in Albania, at the other end of the front, was carrying out successful attacks, occupying two Italian fortified positions and capturing 540 prisoners.

During these developments on the Greek fronts, the Yugoslav forces defending the Stumnitsa Pass, pressed hard by the Germans, were forced to withdraw. Thus a German mechanised column, after penetrating far into Yugoslav territory, succeeded within two days in capturing the Serbian town of Doiran, thus reaching the Greco-Serbian frontier twenty-two miles to the rear of the extreme edge of the Greek lines, and entering Greek territory by the flat corridor east of the Vardar. The very small Greek mechanised formations fought an unequal battle against an enemy whose equipment was incomparably superior both in quantity and in quality. This endeavour to slow down the enemy advance lasted for many hours.

Finally, however, the Nazis succeeded in advancing dangerously in the direction of Salonika, cutting off the communications between the Greek forces in Eastern Macedonia and the remainder of the country.

Maginot Line

During the evening of April 8th the Nazis were on the outskirts of Salonika; at dawn next day they entered the city. But the delaying action of those very small Greek mechanised units permitted Salonika to be stripped of anything that might have proved useful to the enemy, while all the installations were destroyed. British and Australian sappers assisted the Greeks in demolishing military plant, besides blowing up bridges. Rather than let their goods be taken by the Germans, shopkeepers gave them away.

After the capture of Salonika by the German Army, the Greek units cut off in Eastern Macedonia were reduced to a hopeless position. Nevertheless, they did not relax their resistance all along the frontier, and for several days maintained their lines intact. Salonika fell on Wednesday : during Thursday, Friday, Saturday and Sunday the small Greek forts in Eastern Macedonia, with their weak and doomed garrisons, as well as the many units outside the forts, continued to fight, although constantly harried and suffering heavy bombardment and dive-bombing attacks.

The German military spokesman in Berlin admitted that the same technical means were used against the Greek forts as were employed against the Maginot Line. Yet this line

Greece: Epic of Too Few against Too Many 99

of solidly built, strategically placed forts cost only £6,000,000, compared with upwards of £92,000,000 (to 1938 only) spent on the Maginot Line, which resisted direct Nazi pressure for only two-and-a-half days!

The self-sacrifice of the brave defenders of the forts was not in vain. Not only have they written one of the most brilliant pages of Greek military history, but they for many days blocked the routes into Eastern Macedonia, making possible the rescue, smooth embarkation and transportation of substantial numbers of the Greek forces in Eastern Macedonia. Of the 45,000 troops between the Vardar and the Nestos, the Germans took 17,000 prisoners, a few thousand were killed, but the majority got away by the sea, some in ships, some in fishing-smacks.

Nazis Key Move

Hitler's key move was one that he made ruthlessly to avoid mistake.

Crashing through Yugoslavia at full speed, unretarded by consideration for any scruple, the Nazis within two days after occupying the town of Stroumnitz, in Serbian Macedonia, were astraddle the Greco-Serbian frontier at Doiran. Using tremendous power, comparable with anything ever used in France, the German armoured troops cut through the scantily armed, ill-prepared, hastily-mobilised Yugoslav troops with the ease of a knife passing through butter. On the same day, April 8th, they arrived at Skoplje (Uskub) and Veles, in Yugoslavia.

As General Papagos saw, the menace to the Monastir Gap was grave from that moment.

Monastir, to give the Yugoslav town of Bitolj its more familiar Greek name, is a focal point. Just inside the Yugoslav border, it is near the junction of the frontiers of Albania, Yugoslavia and Greece. If you run a finger up the backbone of Greece from the Gulf of Messenia, at the bottom of the map, you will find it roughly at the top. Once an enemy controls the Gap in the mountains that makes Monastir famous, he can threaten to drive a wedge down the centre of Greece, splitting the opposing forces in half, or fanning out and encircling them, depending, among other factors, on where and how strong are the opposing forces.

Ironically, during the weeks between Christmas Day and the beginning of April, the people in the Monastir region on the Greek side worked so hard clearing road-blocks, making the roads wider and better suited for heavy army traffic, that supplies, which before December took weeks to reach the Greeks operating in Albania, were now able to run straight

through. This was due, in a pretty good measure, to the work of the R.A.F., which had driven away the Italian bombers—until the Nazi land and air forces swarmed on the scene.

When the Germans came through the Monastir Gap and one branch of their forces forked south-west, their objective was the control of one of the two vital roads serving the entire Greek forces on the Albanian front—the road from Fiorina to Koritsa. Enemy control of this road would hinder very seriously the supply of the Greek troops in the Koritsa sector and their contact with the Allied Army to the east.

Once this route was cut, there would remain, for the maintenance of communications with the Greek forces in action round Koritsa, the main road from Amyntaion through the pass of Klisura in Macedonia, via Kastoria to Koritsa.

Coming with great dash and complete disregard for any obstacle in their path, the Germans, with armoured divisions, descended upon Amyntaion via Fiorina and Xino Nero, thus becoming masters of this route, while on the other side they were pouring into the plain of Kozani. They seized the pass of Siatista and moved on towards Grevena and Servia. It was precisely in this way that the supply of the Greek Army in action on the northern sector of the Albanian front, which had been maintained from the main railway stations of Amyntaion and Fiorina, was doomed to be cut off: the German High Command knew that the moment it could achieve this, withdrawal of these Greek forces to the east—that is to say, towards Macedonia—would be impossible.

Consequently, once these goals had been attained, it would only remain to consider the roads to the west of the great mountain chains of Morava and Pindus, which run from north to south and separate Greek Macedonia from Albania.

From Koritsa a good *chaussie* runs southwards via Erseka-Liaskoviki-Elia-Jannina, thence to Preveza and Arta. This road is joined near Mesogefyra by the road from Berat via Boubessi-Premeti, running along the River Aoos. It is a good motor road. Farther to the south of Mesogefyra, at the village of Elia, this road is joined by that serving the areas of Argyrocastro and Himara.

Below Elia, where the roads meet, and as far down as Jannina, and on from there to Arta and Agrinion, only one road would remain open if the road from Jannina, via Metsovo and Trikkala, into the plains of Thessaly could be cut by a German descent on Kalabaka (an objective which the Nazis reached immediately after the battle of Grevena).

As soon as the Germans appeared at Monastir Gap, the Greek High Command knew what the Nazis would aim at

Greece: Epic of Too Few against Too Many 101

achieving, and knew, therefore, that by the single route from Elia to Jannina, on down to Preveza and Arta, the whole Greek Army of Albania, consisting of fifteen divisions, would have to be withdrawn—and supplied. Throughout the duration of the German attack this road was most violently and continuously bombed, day and night, by German and Italian aeroplanes.

The only other routes which existed lay upon the mountains, and were all mere tracks. No wheeled vehicle could be hauled there; men had to walk in single file.

Disposition of Allied Forces

How serious to the Allies was the fall of Skoplje and Veles, with its dire threat to the Monastir Gap, is seen when we consider the disposal of the British and Greek Forces.

By far the greater part of the Greek army on April 8th was in Albania, some thirty or forty miles away from the Greek frontier, with its left flank on the Ionian Sea and its right flank on the Yugoslav frontier.

From the Yugoslav frontier to the Axios river (Vardar) British Imperial troops and two Greek divisions, all under the command of General Wilson, had taken up a strong natural line of defence running from the Aegean Sea near Katerini, through Veria and Edessa, to the Yugoslav frontier. A British armoured force was out to the east of this line, engaged on demolition work and similar activities.

The force under General Wilson, therefore, was opposing the Germans along a front of sixty to seventy miles on the east, while to the west the main bulk of the Greek army was opposing the Italians along a front of similar length.

Between the two the mountains of Southern Yugoslavia formed a natural barrier pierced by the Monastir Gap. This frontier was manned only by Greek mountain guards.

Backed by a vast air force which gave him superiority, the Nazi attack on the Greek, British and Anzac forces fighting only on the "British front"—that is to say, south and east of Monastir—consisted of a total of seven divisions: three armoured divisions; two mountain divisions; the Adolf Hitler Division; an infantry division. Over this force flew the hundreds of units of the *Luftwaffe*—heavy bombers, dive-bombers, fighters, which Hitler used as advance heavy artillery and as machine-gun batteries. Behind these divisions stood substantial reinforcements, and there were a great number of other German troops controlling territory as it was occupied, and others maintaining the lines of communication.

Again, there was the large German army fighting Yugo-

slavia, assisted by the Italians, and which eventually marched from Albania into Greece. No official estimate of these forces is procurable.

Mountain Life

This was the state of things when the Germans began their advance against the Greek and British forces. Before watching the first clash with the main Allied force, glance at the country over which the battles raged.

Mountains rise up from one side of northern Greece to the other, from the Aegean to the Ionian seas, striding along a great part of the Greek-Yugoslav-Albanian frontier.

Snow was then lying on the mountain tops. Sometimes it fell on the flats, its slush turning the roads into quagmires. The weather was bitter. Like the people, the country is rugged and indomitable. Even in the summer its mountains threaten to break your back when you climb them. A cold pressure would oppress your heart if you tried it in the winter.

Along the Albanian-Greek frontier in January mules died from cold. Hauling pieces of dismantled artillery over tracks where no wheeled vehicle could go, they toiled until exhausted. Lying down to rest, they never got up again. They froze there quietly, unprotesting, just as the Finns and the Russians did in the Russo-Finnish War when a bullet struck them mortally, and the dead soldiers, their feet on a lorry's running-board or their guns snuggled close to their cheeks, ready to fire, looked for all the world like figures in a scene from Madame Tussaud's waxworks. The Greeks watched the animals freeze to death, unable to do anything about it, except eat a little bread and cheese and, with all the irrepressible optimism of their race, unpack the gear from the frosted carcasses and move on.

Along that frontier, too, there are tracks so narrow that even mules cannot tread them. Not that the Greeks were daunted. They climbed the tracks, passing the paraphernalia of war up, up, up, by means of human chains. Peasants rallied to the soldiers, the women helping their men-folk. Their love of freedom was as strong as their love of life. Nothing stopped them.

A wild, hilly region. In the summer it is idyllic. From the summits of the mountains, in the finer seasons, you can see far away to every side : the green rivers winding through the foothills; the spread of the meadows; the yellow-brown cut corn, dry in the sunlight; the red-and-white villages; the forests opening suddenly to broad spaces of clear blue sky.

Greece: Epic of Too Few against Too Many 103

The air then is bitter and sweet with flowers and hay and the smell of cattle and hard dark earth. The sound of the grasshoppers, brittle, choking. Hayricks and corn-stacks stud the fields around the threshing-barns. Men and women and children laugh and talk at their work in the fields until the air throbs with their voices. A gay, lusty, boisterous, busy life of its own. In the evening, an inexpressible stillness.

In the winter and early spring it is brutal. The British and Anzac forces were there in the spring. The hoar-frosts take a long time to disappear. Mists hang about in tattered trails. Great fingers of heavy mist grope their way down the valleys. Rain sifts down, day after day. The sky is full of close-pressing, pompous clouds, grey and fat. When it opens up it is as transparent and blue as ice. Soaked in wet, the trees are patterns of black boughs, except in the winter, when they are white on the upper side of the branch where the snow lies, with a thin black line underneath where the icicles suspend themselves in glittering streaks, like a glass filigree.

It is the same in the autumn sometimes, with the difference that then there is the odour of decaying leaves and grasses. There is, too, a quiet mellowness in the clear, bright, shining beauty. Noises carry farther, and you can hear the creak of a cart a long way off.

Gorges and ravines are innumerable. Often the rivers, like the Aliakmon (Vistritsa), south of which a mixed British and Anzac force met the second wave of the German advance down the Monastir Valley, are overhung by steep, bare, rocky mountains, snow-capped.

British and Anzac Commanders

A grim spectacle, it greeted the three British and Anzac Commanders as they stood in the bleak, rain-lashed highlands—Lieutenant-General Sir Henry Maitland Wilson, Lieutenant-General Sir Thomas Blarney, and Major-General Iven Mackay (now Sir Iven Mackay). General Papagos, Commander-in-Chief of the Greek Forces, was in supreme command of the Allied Forces (British and Greek). General Wilson was in command, under General Papagos, of all British troops and the three Greek divisions which, in the first place, were operating with the British on the Aliakmon position. General Mackay was temporarily in command, under general Wilson, of a mixed force which was sent to block the south end of the Monastir Gap. General Blarney was in command, under General Wilson, of the Anzacs.

A rare trio. General Blarney and General Mackay, Australians, both started out as school-teachers; General Wilson, a soldier all his life, is a veteran of the South African War.

All three had a great admiration for General Papagos, dapper, punctilious, clever: it was matched by his admiration of them. General Wilson's fame, burnished so recently by his brilliant work in North Africa, had been well marked everywhere.

Look at General Blarney: his biography is about as romantic as General Freyberg's. As a country boy in the corrugated-iron-roofed town of Wagga, New South Wales, he used to walk three miles along the white, dusty road to the little school. Even then he had an idea that he would like to be a soldier. The high spot of those school-boy years, perhaps, was when he went into Sydney once a year as a member of the cadet rifle team. He was a good shot; he was as popular at shooting matches with other schoolboys as he was at sport. He played most games well. He liked motion: hunting, riding, shooting, fishing, hockey, were his favourite recreations.

Two years after he had engaged in school-teaching he gave it up to settle down to his life's work of soldiering, starting as a lieutenant in the Australian permanent forces. His curiosity was boundless from the outset—a fact which enabled him to have as much experience as any first-rate red-tab in London. His first voyage abroad as a military representative was to India, in 1911, to Quetta. He was familiar with the technique of Indian warfare by the time he left two years later. Going to England early in 1914, he was made a major on the General Staff soon after the outbreak of war. Within a few weeks he was on his way to Egypt to join the staff of the 1st Australian Division at Mena. In the Great War he was Chief of Staff to Sir John Monash, the greatest of all Australian soldiers, who regarded him as a brilliant man, one whose orders were always marked by precision and clear-thinking. Then, as now, he was immensely popular with every Digger, to whom he is affectionately known as Tom. Back in Melbourne, after the War, he became Chief Commissioner of Police in Victoria, a job he held until he resigned eleven years later. Before the outbreak of the First Total War, he had married, mapped out a civilian life of comparative quiet for himself, dreaming pleasantly of happy hours with firm friends, drinking good wine, eating good food, enjoying a rest. Stocky, medium-sized, with small bright blue eyes under bristling brows, he has an arresting personality. You never forget Blarney.

Wilson: only a few weeks before he found himself at his headquarters in Greece, Mr. Churchill, extolling the part played by General Wilson in defeating Graziani's army and describing what had been achieved, declared: "General]

Greece: Epic of Too Few against Too Many 105

Wilson, who commands the Army of the Nile, was reputed to be one of our finest tacticians, and few will now deny him that quality." After the capture of Benghazi, Sir Henry Wilson was appointed General Officer Commanding-in-Chief British Troops in Cyrenaica and Military Governor of that Province. He had become General Officer Commanding-in-Chief British Troops in Egypt in 1939; in that position he was responsible for the defence of the Western Desert frontier during the hard months after the collapse of France and Italy's entry into the war. He served in 1914-18 on the Staff on the Western Front. A mild-eyed, powerfully-built, heavy, square-jowled man, with a mouth firm as a line.

Like Sir Thomas Blarney, Sir Iven Mackay served with the first A.I.F. and was at Gallipoli. He became a major in 1915, was wounded, mentioned in dispatches, became a lieutenant-colonel in France in 1916, commanded the 4th Battalion, was again mentioned in dispatches and awarded the D.S.O. and bar, commanded the 1st Machine-gun Battalion in 1918 until June, when he became commander of the 1st Infantry Brigade, A.I.F. From 1920 until 1937 he commanded militia brigades, and when he was promoted to the rank of major-general, he was given the command of the 2nd Division, A.M.F. In March 1940, he was appointed to the command of a division, A.I.F. For almost seven years he was headmaster at Cranbrook School.

Like General Wilson, General Blarney and Major-General Mackay had scored considerable triumphs in the Middle East already. Recognising them, the British Government had appointed General Blarney, who until the end of the Libyan campaign was G.O.C., A.I.F., Middle East, to the position of Deputy Commander-in-Chief of the British Forces and Imperial Forces in the Middle East under General Wavell; and a knighthood had been conferred upon Major-General Mackay, G.O.C. a division, A.I.F., who played an important part in the campaign.

First Shots

When, on the evening of April 7th, the disaster to the Yugoslav forces was apparent and the threat to the Monastir Gap became a reality, General Papagos ordered a small reserve of mixed Allied troops, under a Brigadier, to form near Amyntaion, south of Fiorina. Included in this reserve were a famous British regiment of artillery and an anti-tank regiment; a New Zealand machine-gune battalion; and a battalion each of New South Wales, Victorian and British troops. Simultaneously, orders were flashed to the British armoured brigade operating on the plain west of Salonika

to blow up bridges and railway crossings and to push westward to Edessa.

Within a few hours General Papagos's worst fears were confirmed : the Yugoslav forces in the Vardar Valley crumpled. Wide open to attack now through the Gap lay the flank of the Greek and British Imperial forces.

Consequently, on April 9th, General Mackay was sent with his Divisional headquarters, one artillery, one anti-tank regiment, and an Australian Brigade (less one battalion) to augment this force, which remained in the Amyntaion neighbourhood.

Advance elements of General Mackay's force the next day went as far north as Monastir itself. Meanwhile, the armoured force, acting under orders to withdraw to Edessa, took up its position behind the Australian Division, under whose orders it was placed.

Preparations to meet the threat through the Monastir Gap were made only just in time. On April 10th the Germans, before they had time to move into the Fiorina region, were hotly engaged by the advance elements of General Mackay's forces. Actually, this skirmish marked the first contact between Imperial and German troops in the Balkans. Near Monastir the advance elements came upon a group of German infantry de-bussing. Unhesitatingly the mixed British and Anzac force opened fire. Hits were scored. Within a space of seconds the Nazis were leaping out of buses to scramble into the fields on either side of the road. Germans lay dead near torn vehicles when the Imperial troops retired.

That day the Nazis did not attack in force : but they advanced southward from Monastir. At night, when darkness settled over the snow-clad mountains, out crept the German advance patrols. They were on the prowl for prisoners. Quiet as mice, they crept away from their positions, then, here and there, came forward boldly, suddenly. No one could see them. Voices and scraps of conversations in colloquial English were all you heard. They sounded as if they were parties of our own men, coming forward so confidently, laughing and talking.

As they got nearer to where they guessed we should be, they called out:

"Don't shoot, pal. It's only me."

"That you, Steve?"

"Put that bloody rifle down ! It's only me."

"Give us a hail, Bill."

At the same time some of them prattled away in what passed for Greek. They seemed to be happy, and a bit agitated lest a guard should pull a trigger. They acted as if

Greece: Epic of Too Few against Too Many 107

they knew where they were going. It was a good trick—an old trick, but a good one. Their comrades had worked it with uncommon success in other campaigns in other countries. And it worked again here : they captured one of our sections. After that an order was issued prohibiting anyone answering any question called to him at night.

The first *communiqué* from British G.H.Q. in Greece, issued on the afternoon of April nth, read as follows :—

" German troops advancing into northern Greece came into contact with British and Imperial Forces on April 10th.

" The situation in Eastern Macedonia is obscure, but it is characterised by the magnificent resistance of the Greeks.

" Farther west German forces have reached Monastir and Yannitsa (thirty miles north-west of Salonika).

" In southern Yugoslavia resistance to the German advance is stiffening."

Once astride picturesque Monastir, the Nazis raced for the Greek town of Fiorina, sixteen miles south. Vital communication arteries lie there. A turning-point in the war would be effected when they reached it.

The main object of this vicious southern thrust through Yugoslavia, attacked also at various points north across the encircling Hungaro-Rumano-Bulgarian frontiers, was the cutting off of the Yugoslav armies from the Greeks and the getting into position to swing south-south-east to grapple with the British, Greek and Anzac forces.

Crunch

Dawn and drizzling rain. Mountains are holding up the leaden sky. Here and there in the mountains, unheeding, is a peasant, with the beard of a prophet, tending his flocks. Sunlight will not enter the mountain fastnesses to-day. Alert, the soldiers of both sides have been preparing long before the first light. The Germans are in force in the vicinity of Fiorina.

A deep, sickening rumble of fire. Shells screech through the air, the mountains mockingly echoing their screams. The fire rumbles and reverberates among the mountains, seemingly colliding with them in thunderclaps. Denser grows the roar, blindly crashing down the valleys with mighty cracks, as if heralding the approach of Judgment Day itself.

It is the first crunch of the combined Allied Forces.

Tanks lead the Nazi assault with the greatest ferocity. In

flashes of red flame and geysers of black earth, several of them were destroyed in our well-placed land-mine fields. From strong emplacements our artillery poured streams of shells upon the Nazi tank columns. The atmosphere was pervaded by a sense of inexhaustible explosions. Havoc caused among the tanks by the land-mines forced a retirement upon the Nazis. Fiorina was now in their hands, but they tried in vain all that day to prepare a break-through in our line with heavy artillery.

Snow began to fall in the late afternoon. Next morning again it was snowing. Under a blanket of snow the Nazis launched the deadliest thrust of all. They were going to make no mistake. Tall Adolf Hitler shock troops were the spearhead of the attack. They swirled out of the snow, wave after wave. Great grey Atlantic rollers rather than human formations, they looked. Avalanches of men; avalanches of shells; whirlwinds of machine-gun and tommy-gun bullets.

Some of our men had experienced nothing like this. Stoically, the Greeks had withstood fire-power almost as bad from the Italians and the *Regia Aeronautica*, in savage bursts throughout the bitter winter in Albania. In one special Order of the Day to his troops, General Blarney said :—

" In Australia we know little of this valiant nation. I am sure that as you get to know the Greeks, the magnificent courage of their resistance will impress you more and more."

This was nothing of an over-statement: British and Anzac troops found inspiration in the exploits of the valiant Greeks; but over the bodies of their dead they themselves fought with such cold, proud fury for the honour of the high traditions imposed on them by history and for the supreme faith in the Allied cause that they won from the Greeks the enviable tribute: " Valiant friend I "

That day in the clinging snow we killed about 20,000 Germans. In waves they came, and in waves our machine-gunners mowed them down. Watching the Germans charge forward, a sense of limitless and exuberant manhood and bleak panoply struck some of our men. One said : " They came as if nothing could stop them, as if they were masters of the world. They came fighting with all they had, and we mowed them down in hundreds. Just like sacks, they fell,"

Into their ranks we dropped hundreds of shells from our mortars. Bursting laterally, the shells kill within a considerable radius. Failure marked the first attack : a second

Greece: Epic of Too Few against Too Many 109

time they came, a third. Our line held. We had lost a number of men—dead, wounded, prisoners.

Three days later an official announcement stated simply that:

"On nth April an attack by the S.S. Adolf Hitler Division in Northern Greece was repulsed by our infantry and heavy losses were inflicted on the enemy."

Withdrawal Begins

Night froze the battle into an ominous silence. Dawn released it as if from springs and chains. Far heavier attacks were launched. Ruses were tried, too. Mixing Allied prisoners with groups of Germans, a massive line advanced. At either end were considerable bunches of Germans. So accurate was our fire that the line was too thinned of Germans before it got within striking distance to do anything but retire. On the flanks the Germans fell like ninepins under a hail of shot and shell. Dead Germans lay in piles.

But it was apparent that a stand could not be made indefinitely against the greatly superior German numbers. Much more important, however, was the grave fact that if the enemy could not be held at Amyntaion, it was clear that the whole line on this front would have to be withdrawn. Otherwise it would be outflanked. Reconnaissance by the R.A.F. showed that for the precise purpose of outflanking it, large reinforcements were arriving for the Germans in the Monastir region. To avoid being outflanked on the left, General Papagos ordered the retirement of the whole line. It began that day, April 12th.

When the Nazis controlled communications in the region of Fiorina, however, they dealt a grievous blow to the Greek army of the Epirus, then still thirty to forty miles beyond the Greek-Albanian frontier. This great army had only two lines of communication with the troops in Macedonia under General Wilson: the roads to Fiorina and Kastoria, and the road to Jannina and on through Metsovo and Grevena to Kalabaka. The first of these lines of communication was cut when the Germans came through Monastir Gap. Immediately they set about hammering at the second line. Against their vast machine, the comparatively tiny Greek Corps west of Kozani could not hold out: they, too, began to withdraw. Jannina was the Nazi goal in their westward push.

Brilliant Episode

Seventy miles behind the point where they were then standing, in imminent danger of being outflanked and sur-

rounded, lay the new positions which General Papagos selected for the Allied forces. The new line was one running from the Aegean Sea south-east of Mount Olympus, north-west to Servia, thence south-west along the Aliakmon river, finally north-west again along the high ground to the west of the plain of Kozani. Simultaneously, General Mackay's mixed British and Anzac force, which had suffered considerable losses in the two days' fighting, was to withdraw down the rough Kozani Valley and behind the new line. Lastly, the armoured force was to withdraw over the Aliakmon river to Grevena.

General Papagos's generalship, put to a stern test in the face of tormenting onslaughts of aerial and land forces, executed this extremely difficult manoeuvre so brilliantly that the plan was carried out with surprising smoothness.

Protected by a small British force around Amyntaion, the Allied forces retired. Dropping back, with other troops, to the same line were a New Zealand machine-gun battalion (less two companies), H.Q. Australian Brigade and a battalion of the New Zealand Division. Some of these troops had been guarding the Verria Pass, north-west of Mount Olympus, where General Blarney had assumed command of the New Zealand Division and the 12th Greek Division on April 9th.

Of all the superb fighting achieved during this episode, perhaps that which will be flaunted most proudly on the parchment of British Imperial military honours was the action of the small British force which bore the full brunt of the Nazi assault as the great withdrawal was taking place. There is no doubt it will stand as one of the finest and bravest fragments in the whole of the campaign of the British Imperial Forces in the Balkans.

Only one battalion of cruiser tanks, another of (Hussar) light tanks, one regiment (R.H.A.), one battalion of London Territorials, and one (Yeomanry) anti-tank regiment, as a shield, took the weight of the Nazi blows. Each blow except the first was delivered with all the technical equipment of a *blitzkrieg*—motor-cyclists, armed with machine-guns, motor-borne infantry, tanks, dive-bombers. When the first attack by motor-cyclists and motorised infantry was launched it was completely annihilated.

Surprised, the Nazis tried again and again. All to no avail. For two whole days this small British force could not be dislodged. It clung to life and to its position with the obstinate tenacity of a barnacle. Satisfied by the strength of the defenders' fire-power and their determination that they could not be shifted that way, the Nazis rushed up large

Greece: Epic of Too Few against Too Many in

numbers of tanks. Several were put out of action in our mine-fields; but after a murderous engagement the enemy, severely mauled, was so strongly reinforced that in the face of such overpowering numbers the amazing retreat began.

In the meantime, by April 14th, the main Allied forces were getting into their new line. Dispositions of troops resulted in that part of it from the Aegean Sea to Servia, and along the Aliakmon river, being taken up by British Imperial troops, while the high ground along the Kozani Plain was manned by the two Greek divisions.

The mad pursuit of the British armoured force continued, the Nazi Panzer forces in full cry.

Fighting and manoeuvring finely, it raced for Grevena, via Kozani, where the Greeks were just getting into position. Hopelessly unequal though the struggle was from the time the retreat began under the noses of the Nazis, the Britishers were always just able to keep the Nazis at bay. Frequently turning, nipping in unexpectedly, especially in the open, they inflicted heavy damage. Among their feats of demolition, carried out in the face of dive-bombing attacks as if it were merely incidental, was the spectacular blowing up of a six-span bridge across the Aliakmon. Machine-gun fire warded off the dive-bombers. In the nick of time the armoured force reached the protection of the Greeks and began seeking their own position back along the line.

Losses were sustained: a number of heavy cruiser tanks were destroyed : but what gallant remnant was left managed magnificently to shield the whole retirement.

Nazi Tornado against Greeks

Abruptly, the Nazis' machine, in full career, brought itself up against the gallant Greek divisions. With demoniac intensity it directed withering fire with the object of either beating down resistance or turning the line eastward in the hope of outflanking the whole Allied force by advancing in the general direction of Larissa, an important town on the main line of the Allied communications and about fifty miles behind the positions of the Allied force at Servia.

Simultaneously, enemy forces pressed hard down the Kozani valley to lock with our forces at Servia, where the New Zealand brigade, holding the main roads, withstood for hours the first attack. They mowed down the Nazis in hundreds. The Nazis rolled on in swarms, fanatically, exuberantly, robot-like, "They fell as lead soldiers do on a counterpane," a New Zealand country boy said.

Against the Greeks, the Nazis exerted increasingly terrific

pressure, employing more dive-bombers, bringing up more heavy tanks. R.A.F. reconnaissance patrols saw as many as twenty, thirty, sometimes forty, German tanks bogged in oceans of black mud behind their lines. Still there were always others to fill the gaps. There was machinery to scrap, there was so much of it. But it was air superiority, rather than superiority in land forces, that was turning the scale—turning the whole withdrawing movement into a desperate race against time for the southern ports.

Australians estimated that a hundred more Hurricanes would have tipped the scale in favour of the Allies. Whether so small a margin would not have been immediately countered by twice that number of Nazi machines is something which does not subtract from the value of the estimate as an indication that in the Greek campaign, as in every campaign fought in modern *blitzkrieg* style by the Nazis, aeroplanes and aerodromes are of the first importance.

Beneath a weight of metal which no force, even one many times larger, could bear, the Greek divisions were virtually crushed to death. Dying on the frozen ground, they still sought to pull a trigger.

" Victory ! " Alone that was in their minds.

" To victory, brother; to final victory ! "

Bombs and shells were their world at the last. They burst among them as in a horror-dream : a raging, flame-coloured abyss. Machine-guns crackled angrily, those of the diving Messerschmitts whistling bullets at them in thousands as magazine after magazine was emptied in seconds by exultant young Nazis merely pressing a tiny lever.

Comrade watched comrade annihilated. They held fast. An eternal spirit of patriotism dominated their limitations in equipment and numbers. Things flashed noisily. The world seemed to crack asunder. Weary, brave warriors : on them hung in sodden bundles the uniforms of honour, mud-caked, torn, their dishevelled hair sticking out under the caps. They swayed as the bullets and the splinters hit them, dropped heavily. They never rose again. Their blood drained away, enriching the dark, hungry plains of Kozani.

Few survived the massacre. Death, choking greedily, as he rode with the Nazis, gathered thousands. Honour, riding above them all, watching over the top of her golden scroll as the noble Greeks died, their blood, trickling from wounds as open as books, congealing in a jungle of stubble and slush, noted their devotion. Quickly their faces blanched; the unshaven bristles stressed the whiteness. How fine and slim the quiet, roughened hands looked now! The fingers stiffened!. The wreckage on the battlefield, the gun-carriages

Greece: Epic of Too Few against Too Many 113

with broken wheels, the blasted machine-gun nests—these were their memorials.

"Don't weep now, little mother. No use. The Nazis passing this way have 'liberated' your son."

Epics in Epirus

North-west the Nazis were raining heavy hammer-blows. In Albania the position was grim. Squadron on squadron of the *Regia Aeronautica* and the *Luftwaffe* deluged the Greek Northern Army and the Army of the Epirus with high explosives. The means of destruction at the disposal of the Axis Chiefs-of-Staff matched in its abundance their ferocity. Without equality of air power, reciprocal extermination was impossible by the Greeks.

It was seen on April 12th, when the German land forces first came in contact with the Italians, that it would be only a matter of time, a very short time, before the balance of metal being hurled against the Greeks would be so colossal that they would have to surrender or be wiped out.

Greek divisions began to withdraw on the eastern part of the Albanian front on April 14th. Other Greek forces which had hung on in the heights south-west of Fiorina retreated to the west bank of the Upper Aliakmon.

And while during that same day, in the central sector of the Albanian front, local Italian attacks were being repulsed, Koritza had to be evacuated because of the retreat of the Allied troops in Macedonia, Koritza being roughly to the west of the Greek town of Fiorina.

South-east, on the plains of Thessaly, the British were taking stock. Beyond all hope of uniting, the Allied Forces were now split in two distinct parts, approximately on a line running down from the Monastir Gap. They were utterly incapable of giving each other the slightest degree of support. Nor was there enough air force cover to stretch adequately over one half, let alone both. Each hour the Nazis were driving the wedge deeper.

Remnants of the heroic Greek divisions fell back about thirty miles from Grevena to Kalabaka, southwards. The British left flank was therefore open to attack, and the Germans had now a comparatively clear road through Trikkala towards Larissa—on the main line of British communications. Steadily, German forces were advancing from Argos-Orestikon and Lake Kastoria in a southerly direction.

"Abandon the Aliakmon Line I" There was nothing else for it. The weight of the German attack was not as full of surprises as a pair of dice; but the Allies, Having assessed it,

and not being able to oppose it with anything like equal weight, were relying on tactics.

Farewell, Valiant Warriors !

It changed the whole nature of the campaign, that ringing order.

From that moment the part of the forces of the British Empire in the Greek campaign was destined to become a series of brilliantly fought rear-guard actions. As soon as the Germans burst in a torrent through the Passes of Grevena and Sarantoporo, the twin principal gateways to the sprawling Plains of Thessaly, the Greeks knew that their British and Anzac comrades would have to fight for their lives to get to the southern ports in time to escape encirclement. For the Germans' single ambition then was to swirl like a tide around the Imperial troops from two directions—down the east from the Peneios Gorge, south of Mount Olympus, and, diagonally, from the north-west, striking across country through Trikala; to trap them and wipe them out on the north side of the Gulf of Corinth.

Again General Wilson thwarted the Nazis. Again he ordered the withdrawal of the Allied Forces back to a new, a shorter line—the Thermopylae Line, south of Lamia. It was 100 miles away. In the teeth of the fiercest air attacks it was, viewed purely from the militarist's angle, carried out with the smoothness of silk. As a feat of endurance it was heroic.

Victory and defeat were intermixing: for the British Imperial forces had to withdraw, giving up all hope of rendering further aid to the Greek Armies. The Greek Corps which had been fighting with our troops could do no more. The bulk of the Greek forces were away beyond the high Pindus Mountains.

To keep the troops intact, to manoeuvre them safely southward, step by step, to achieve another Dunkirk, to batter the superiorly armed enemy day after day, at every opportunity, to make him fight for every desolate acre—this was General Wilson's task now.

Bombers in the Valleys

Danger threatened from the flanks as it had never threatened before. The enemy's strength was about five to one. To meet danger from the west and north, an Australian infantry brigade was sent from Larissa to Kalabaka, the important terminus of the local railway from the Thessalian harbour of Volos. A West Australian battalion, which had just arrived in the line as a reinforcement, was sent off with it. The prime purpose of this move was to stem the German armoured divisions advancing on Trikkala, south of Kalabaka,

Greece: Epic of Too Few against Too Many 115

sufficiently long enough to let part of the retirement be carried out to the new line. Countering the threat in the east, a small New Zealand force had flung itself across the path of the Nazis at the eastern entrance to the Peneios Gorge, south of Mount Olympus.

Over the mountain tracks the Allied force trailed. The soaked roads were alive with transport. Over them, periodically and methodically, the *Luftwaffe* flew. Junkers, dive-bombers, Heinkels, Messerschmitts, would come screaming over at low levels, first standing high in the sky, seeking out an easy target crawling along a winding valley, then swooping down unmolested and delivering the bombs. Yet the weary, red-eyed lorry-drivers never wavered and, indeed, it was extraordinary how, completely unhampered by the presence of the R.A.F. as they were at times, the German pilots missed in their attempts to score direct hits on motor convoys. Hundreds of bomb-craters pitted the ground on either side of the roads; but it was seldom that they hit a convoy or so seriously damaged a road that it could not be patched up well enough for the column to continue.

Next day, April 15th, while the withdrawal was going on, a New Zealand Brigade took up a covering position north of Tirnavos. On the same day the small New Zealand force holding the eastern entrance of the Peneios Gorge was heavily engaged by German forces—an armoured division and a mountain division. Alone, it had been holding out for days. Dive-bombers failed to shift the New Zealanders: their artillery knocked heavy German tanks off the roads, one after another. Others came on as if from nowhere. The world here seemed to creep with tanks. During the following day two battalions of an Australian Brigade were ordered to their support. Together, this small Anzac force continued to battle against superior odds until withdrawal was secured on our right flank.

Crux

Cold winds blew fiercely off the thick snow covering Mount Olympus, as thousands of limb-stiff men were falling back with the main force. At night the wind and the dark cramped the fighting: The wind rushed down the mountains madly, rushing at you, biting your hands, your face, rummaging impudently in your clothes, trying to nip your tired body. Over long patches of the rocky, muddy territory through which the men were making their way rain streamed down. Their wet waterproof capes gleamed dully in the darkness. They shuddered. Feet and trousers were sodden* The darkness hampered movement: you lit a fire or drove with lights

burning at the risk of being shot or bombed. Yet without lights the drivers of the convoys could not see. The roads were death-traps, blasted and torn or quagmire as they were every few miles, so they switched on their headlamps. The lights threw heavy shadows in the gaping holes beside the road. Like black sockets in a skull, they looked at you with humble reproach. But there was a greater need than ever now for rapid movement, for extraordinary military skill.

Nothing could stop the Germans: nothing but scores of R.A.F. fighters and bombers. Not that the R.A.F. was not straining every nerve. Night and day its fighter pilots challenged death on unequal terms whenever they flew straight at the enemy's bombers, just as did the crews of the bombers when they sought out enemy concentrations or struck at his communications. Simply stated, the crux of the matter was this : that in the air, as on the field, there were too few against too many.

Within the next few days the main force reached the Thermopylae position. It was taken up finally on April 20th. The New Zealand Division (under General Blarney) held the actual pass and the sector near the sea; the Australian Division (under General Mackay) held the left.

While the main line withdrew, small forces holding forward positions on the left and the right were told to stand firm until withdrawal had been completed. Tired British and Anzac troops as far north of Ellason as Verria Pass, too, were to be given every chance of marching and motoring back to Larissa, then to move south to the ports. Each of these units has a fantastic, inspiring tale to tell of devotion to duty. Discipline was exemplary.

Thousands of men fought for days without a pause. Churned-up, frozen mud is no sort of substitute for a dry mattress. No opportunity for peaceful bivouacs on the mountain slopes, with Nazi bombers seeking you every hour, the grey clouds of Nazi infantry moving behind you like locusts. You kept on tramping, tramping, tramping, uphill, downhill, across the plains. Sometimes you bounced along in trucks. If you were near the Germans, the sky would flame weirdly at night; perhaps be lit up by coloured tracer bullets and multi-coloured flares that cascaded fantastically in the blackness.

A River Flows Blood

A stoicism under mass dive-bombing with relatively no means of retaliation that will long be remembered was shown by an Anzac force at Peneios Gorge. Here, before Australians joined them, a unit of New Zealanders were clinging" to life

Greece: Epic of Too Few against Too Many 117

against odds of four to one in a mountain pass of strategic importance.

A small, desperate bunch of men, mostly kindly, fresh, eager country boys, armed with machine-guns, a little artillery, a few anti-tank guns, they withstood a variety of types of attack.

Rolling through the deep, pleasant Tempe gorge—the Vale of Tempe of antiquity—one of the most beautiful and idyllic in Greece, the Peneios river, curving, mumbles along between Mounts Olympus and Ossa. A narrow road and the railroad run beside the river, just skirting it. Walls of rock on either side rise steeply. At first the German motor-cyclists, with machine-gunners in the side-cars, charged the New Zealanders faster than cavalry, and deadlier. Then they used tanks, but the New Zealanders' artillery and anti-tank gun fire knocked them over: after that their infantry, picked shock troops, rushed them under cover of heavy mortar and machine-gun fire. It was useless. Those Germans who were not killed were captured. An officer said: "The Nazi prisoners seemed aggrieved that they had had to fight so hard at such great cost. They had expected a walk-over."

That evening the Germans massed about ninety dive-bombers. The New Zealanders were to be pulped. After that the German infantry would advance. Diving, screechingly low, the bombers came in squadrons, wave following wave. Columns of earth gushed skyward. Immense ramparts of rugged rock shuddered. Reverberations rolled away among the mountains, great surges of ear-splitting Martian laughter.

With their tin hats pulled down, dug in deeply, the New Zealanders waited, survived, refused to budge. Onrushing German infantry, intending to mop up after the bombers' pounding, were riddled by machine-gun fire. Holes were torn in their tanks. Wavering, the attack snapped, fell back. This went on for a thousand years, it seemed. The noise was as of the skies falling. Then the Australians came.

They came in the afternoon. They came tired, but determined, sublimely confident, cheerful, after having walked and fought their way south from Verria for four days and nights, often losing their way in the darkness on the slopes of Mount Olympus, sleeping fitfully for an hour or two in their clothes, melting a handful of snow to drink. They had loaded their guns and gear on mules. Trudging through the snow and slush that threatened at each pause to suck the boots off their feet, they had no food but the rations in their packs. Frequently, in the day-time, the eddying mists' banging on the mountain-top would swirl down and around them, They

were as cold as a few weeks earlier they had been warm on the sands of Egypt and Libya. They arrived, grinning.

"Hiya, Charlie? Hiya, Steve, old boy? Let's wrap these Jerries round the mulberry bush, eh?"

"Sure, pal. Sure, sure, sure. Where'll we hit them? Right pat between the eyes? Yes, pal, I guess right between the eyes*is the only safe place to smack an ambitious Jerry."

That was the spirit, if there was not time for its convivial expression.

Under the yellow-painted snouts of the Nazi Junkers, under the tractors of the Panzer forces, the Anzacs inflicted heavy losses on the Germans.

Units of the Panzer divisions tried to edge towards them, carefully, respecting their fire-power and their spirit. Beneath anti-tank and artillery fire, tanks went up in heaps of flying metal. When the tanks disintegrated in a burst of smoke and flame, or withdrew, the Nazi infantry fled, sometimes scrambling up the hillsides to a precarious cover. Realising that they could not shift the Anzacs with either tanks or infantry, the Nazis put down a heavy artillery barrage, trying to blast them out with shells.

Ah Australian said of the New Zealanders: "This lone detachment, contesting every yard of the ground against the Panzer divisions, displayed a gallantry beyond praise."

The fighting will become legendary among the Maoris. When the battle was at its height, when the German infantry, covered by mortar fire and tanks, swept against the Anzac Ksition, a battalion of Maoris leapt out, charging with fixed Kyonets in the midst of the Nazis.

An old Maori war-cry was caught by the wind. The sound of it flapped over them all, noisily, a banner of song. Before them, the Nazis fled. Those overtaken were bayoneted to death. A hail of machine-gun fire and bursting shells, from both sides, marked the sacrament of death which the Maoris administered with shining steel blades.

Brave brown men, they charged right up to the tanks themselves. Only with great difficulty did the Australian artillery gunners avoid hitting them. Under a smoke screen, laid down by our guns, they came back, sweat glistening, heads of sweat rolling in runnels down their necks.

"Kia ora !"

Opposite the Anzacs, suddenly, Germans appeared in rubber boats. Scores of them came. The Anzacs sent forward Bren machine-guns to greet them, and shot them to ruffs in hundreds. Tumbling in the river, they stained areas red with their blood. Unable to drive a passage along the road, they had hit upon the idea of boats. Eight to a rubber

boat, they came paddling down the river, protected by the fire from their tanks. A New Zealand officer said :

" My men got sick of killing. It was mass slaughter."

The Germans were armed with strings of hand-grenades and tommy-guns with terrific fire-power. Soon the river was clogged with the dead and the dying. They lay on the banks thick as leaves in an autumn drift.

All the time the Nazis were reinforcing the infantry with fresh troops brought up in trucks. Because of the sparse transport system in Greece, the Nazis frequently pushed their infantry far ahead of their guns, pushing the men over mountains in some cases where guns could not be hauled quickly. Almost everywhere from the start they relied on the *Luftwaffe* for preliminary heavy bombardments: these air-borne batteries preceded the infantry. Persistently, however, on the plains, where they would be useful, the Germans landed pieces of light artillery by heavy Junkers.

Yet the Anzacs never gave way. They held their position. Under cover of night, when the hour of their withdrawal struck, they departed so stealthily that they were clear and, in buses, were racing through the night for Larissa before the Nazis were quite aware they had vanished, carrying their wounded in motor lorries.

Race for Safety

Meantime, at Servia, on the main road running from Fiorina, Kailar, Kozani and through Servia to Larissa, the Nazis had broken through. Their immediate goal was Larissa. By the time those of our troops who had been holding the Peneios Gorge, and others in that region north-east of Mount Olympus, approached Larissa the Nazis were already there. An orange-coloured glow in the sky was from raging fires. Some of our motor-cyclists came careering along the road, warning our men. The bulk of the force took to the hills. Not all: contemptuous of the Nazis, some of the Anzacs shot forward to Larissa, found it occupied by the Germans, but went in with machine-guns blazing, killing right and left, shooting their way past Nazi machine-gun nests. They tore a hole right through Larissa to freedom—and to the line.

In the darkness, scrambling over the hills, their comrades pressed on, driving the lorries and the Bren-gun carriers crazily over the most hazardous of routes and, by a roundabout route, reached the line long afterwards. Some, overtaken by the Nazis, were killed or captured; others, losing their vehicles, groped their way independently, sometimes, in knots of four or seven, down to the beaches. They stayed there until the Royal Navy, patrolling the Aegean, picked them up.

A few days earlier, up on that same central road, Anzac gun-barrels had burned red-hot, holding up a horde of Germans pressing down towards Larissa from Servia. Part of the task of a New Zealand Brigade, and of the Australian artillery with it, was to blow up a shell dump. They were destroying everything as they fell back, dragging trees across the road where they would be useful (and could be found conveniently placed), blowing a building into a street.

The commander, a man who intended to put a steel edge to his ironic sense of humour, declared : " The best way to destroy this dump is to throw it at the Germans!" That was palatable enough to the gunners. They sprang to the breaches. They will tell you that they never fired guns faster, felt them get hotter quicker. A solid, continuous stream of long-range fire was directed at anything and everything moving in the direction of the enemy's position. Tanks, motor-cyclists, lorries, guns, machine-gun nests, infantry—they shot up the lot.

During a single afternoon they fired 8,000 shells.

" Paralysis," they said afterwards. " It was paralysis. Jerry couldn't move for quite a spell. We cut him down so badly, kept him back so far, that the New Zealand infantry, ready to attack, didn't have a chance to fire a shot."

They thought the brigadier a fine, sensible fellow. They were very pleased with what they had done. At night they moved back to the line.

But not every unit was as lucky in withdrawing. Road congestion and hostile air interference hindered the planned withdrawal in some quarters. Part of two battalions, for example, were cut off by the Nazis in the peninsula south-east of Volos.

The Last Outpost

When the Thermopylae line was finally formed, there was still one small force out in front. It was under an English brigadier, a daring officer. He had a burning desire to smash up everything in the path of the Nazis. It amounted to a passion; it was matched by that of his men. An interesting collection of soldiers : besides his own medium artillery and an anti-tank regiment, he had with him two battalions of the Victorian brigade, part of a New Zealand machine-gun battalion, a battery of Australian artillery and part of the New South Wales battalion.

This company was standing out beyond Lamia, quite a way in front of the line. They caught a terrific cuff from the Nazi dive-bombers, and then the Panzers trundled up. But this mixed dish of British Imperial nuts just did not

Greece : Epic of Too Few against Too Many 121

crack. Until the right flank of the line was safely guarded, they fought. They brought the Nazis to a standstill. At night they got clear.

Of all the British and Anzac troops who had been sprawled across the eastern half of Greece, who had tramped and driven all the way back to Thermopylae, bringing their material with them, these were the last handful to retreat. With their comrades they had covered more than 200 miles, fighting all the way.

It was April 20th.

Fantastic Scene

The sword of Damocles hung over the strained, tired, sinewy neck of the Army of the Epirus.

Ammunition was running low. Food was scarce. The wounded were in hundreds. Up and down the single narrow road, winding through the mountains and the flats, everything moved—from the south to the north, from beyond Arta through Jannina to Argyrokastro and back again.

British and Anzac troops, fighting with the unbreakable Greeks in the east, beyond the Pindus range, found it hard to believe what they saw the Greeks fighting with. Only occasionally did they have motor transport. Long lines of ox-carts drawing ammunition and food were common sights. Oxen travelled an average of three miles an hour. Battalions sometimes moved little faster on the backs, or at the sides, of heavily laden mules. Horse-teams hauled guns. The backbone of the Greeks' motor transport in the east when the Forces of the Empire arrived was a few British trucks and heavy Diesels captured from the Italians. Most of their motor transport was broken-down cars, trucks that had been rushed to the fronts after a life-time of civilian work. City buses turned into ambulances; delivery vans into ammunition trucks.

Here, west of the Pindus, it was even less. Worse still; everything had to be crammed on to this one solitary road—a heaving stream of humanity and vehicles: mule-trains, the handful of motor lorries, the handcarts, the wounded on litters coming down from the front, the able-bodied men pushing up, the refugees, the stores, the gun-carriages, the cases of ammunition—everything. Each village and hamlet *en route* was the source of a tributary. Congestion every yard.

You waited for hours while beavies cleared a pile of wreckage, filled in a crater, removed the debris of a blasted building, shifted an avalanche of rock blown down from the mountain-side after the bombers had been over. The bombers stood high up in the icy sky, wheeling as vultures do, turning easily,

seemingly lazily, sure of getting their prey, as if rolling the taste of the kill round their tongues.

The road was as full as a bursting corn-sack. You pitied the bandaged, bedraggled wounded; you pitied the shivering refugees, the little, shrivelled old men who gazed up into the sky with faded brown eyes, wagging their heads, fossicking in their minds for words to express what they wanted to say, and not finding them; the shell-torn children, quiet, with black-brown eyes, sick, cold, frozen into dumbness by the dark wonder of it. You could hardly turn. Up or down, whichever way you went, you had to struggle through the squelching spring mud. You pitied yourself for witnessing the spectacle, though you knew it was historic.

Peasants piled their families on their carts, legs dangling, their possessions stacked in bundles. Sometimes a wounded soldier with his head bandaged or his leg braced up rocked on some straw in the back of a cart. A sombre procession. The soldiers in war-stained uniforms, the priests trudging with the people, the tradesmen, the peasants, the women, the horses, the creaking waggons, the dilapidated motors rattling and limping along, one tyre missing, perhaps two, the leaky radiator stuffed with rag, the springs long since useless. They stumbled through the mud, haltingly, determinedly, these endless columns moving either way. They stumbled through the snow, the deep wheel-ruts turning and twisting in ridiculous patterns. Traffic control was admirable in spite of everything. There was no panic. Muddy-yellow streams ran busily beside the road. As if a little ashamed of the sombreness, spring was showing a patch of her flowered shawl here and there, trying to catch your eye with a bit of colour.

Incredible that this was the life-line of the mighty Army of the Epirus. True, all the same.

To protect it from being slashed by the Nazis, General Papagos ordered a division of the army on the Albanian frontier to Metsovo, a town in the south, on the road from Grevena, and to Jannina. The town is at the gateway to the Metsovo Pass. Hold the pass, and you hold Jannina. Lose the pass, and the enemy will sweep on to pound with his big guns at the gates of Jannina and hack the life-line.

Accepting its marching orders, the division climbed up into the mountains. If it had gone by the road it would only have added to the congestion and impeded the retreat which had to be carried out along it. Consequently, the men took no heavy artillery, no anti-tank guns; just mountain artillery. After a gruelling trek they reached Metsovo in time to fight, but not in time to dig in.

Against them the Nazis, coming from Grevena, put an ar-

Greece: Epic of Too Few against Too Many 123

moured force—infantry, motor-cyclist machine-gunners and dive-bombers, Few Greeks came out alive, though the whole division held up the Nazi onslaught for many hours, fighting with gallantry, resource, spirit. Trudging over the mountains to help their brothers, two other divisions were on the way. They arrived too late. Metsovo had fallen; the Nazis were rolling on to Jannina. Corpses littered the battlefield. Bombers, like hungry kites, wheeled overhead.

Jannina fell, under the terrific *blitzkrieg* strokes of the *Luftwaffe*, on April 20th, the day the British Imperial forces on the east side completed the Thermopylae line. Little of value was left standing in Jannina: the hospitals were entirely destroyed by bombing, the nurses, the wounded, the doctors all being killed and buried beneath the débris. A pall of smoke hung over the town.

Precarious

An official *communiqué* issued from G.H.Q., Cairo, next day remarked of the British withdrawal to the Thermopylae line that:

" This withdrawal has been covered by Australian and New Zealand troops, whose delaying action has been brilliantly conducted, causing the enemy heavy casualties."

Full of spirit and a readiness to fight though the men were, the commanders recognised that the entire force was in a precarious position. It had not yet made itself safe. It would do that only when it was aboard units of the Royal Navy. Pressure was being increased by the Nazis all along the line, from all angles. And the sea was a long way off. Fresh German reinforcements were being brought up to sharpen each of their thrusts. With the collapse of Jannina, the threat that the Panzer divisions being used there would be swung south-east from Albania was both plain and serious. As it was, R.A.F. reconnaissance flights were showing that the Nazis were landing guns by aeroplane at different points close to the Thermopylae line. Apart from this, traffic congestion on the roads behind our line was hourly becoming more dense.

Withdrawal was continued, although a strong defensive position was maintained. Roughly in the shape of a wedge, the forces of the Empire were now gathered in the south-east corner of the mainland, the point of the wedge in the general direction of Athens. Evacuation would, it was hoped, begin from there.

By this time it was obvious that the Greek Armies could fight no longer. They had fought themselves to practically the last stages of exhaustion. Only a highly mechanised force, the largest ever seen in the world, had beaten them in

the field. Unquenchable, their independent spirit still flamed. Barely had the Thermopylae line been completed before the Greek Government, recognising that the last hour had struck for its fighting men, requested on April 21st that the United Kingdom and Empire contingent should be withdrawn from Greece.

Within twenty-four hours the Germans were pushing down on both flanks of the Imperial line. The Nazi forces, so badly battered in the Peneois Gorge, had now come below Lamia, and were in contact with our forces on the Thermopylae position.

Meanwhile, other German forces, freed from any threat to their rear by the Army of the Epirus, were rapidly driving south from Jannina through Arta and Agrinion, constituting a threat to the rear of the left of our position. At the same time they were landing troops and material by air on Euboea, an island stretching from a point opposite Lamia to another opposite Athens. A road and rail bridge connect it with the mainland, so close is it. Nazi columns were pouring across this bridge on the evening of April 22nd, trying to work their way behind our positions and cut off the Imperial force from the ports near Athens. Simultaneously, heavy bombing of all roads and ports in the south began. Even with our inadequate defences, we brought down sixteen aircraft, and probably destroyed another thirteen.

Armistice

That same night envoys were sent to the Germans by the commanders of the Greek armies engaged in Albania and in Epirus (but not representing the Greek Army as a whole) to discuss an armistice. Cut off now from the rear, surrounded, there was nothing else to do.

It was almost the end. All knew, and, knowing, were moved, that from the time of the Italian attack comrades of those Greek soldiers had stood firm to their posts in Albania until they had been bombed or frozen to death. A handful of olives or sultanas, a slice of bread, a piece of sour cheese : on these they had subsisted uncomplainingly for days, watching the passes or advancing against the vain foe, never wasting a round of ammunition. Intelligent, clever, they had made anything do in the way of arms.- Nobility, pride, fidelity: these were their virtues. Now they were on the eve of being straddled by the Nazis.

" Not for long, brothers, not for long. We will avenge you. We will survive to come back to smash the iron fetters they will clamp on your legs and try to clamp on your soul-Remember, brothers, we will return I "

Greece: Epic of Too Few against Too Many 125

Next day it was over. The Army of the Epirus signed an Armistice.

"Evacuate Greece." The order came from General Maitland Wilson. It was a race for life, a question of military skill: our discipline and tactics and cool nerve against hundreds of dive-bombers, an ingenious, ruthless enemy with a numerical superiority of five to one, incomparably better equipped. We had to abandon heavy armament—disabling it first—taking with us gun-sights and light pieces.

Hundreds of tons of high explosives were being jettisoned on the roads and the ports. The choked roads were lined with wrecked lorries, burnt-out cars, burning houses, torn buildings, smoking ruins. Incendiary bullets and bombs were starting fires everywhere, harrying the troops.

A New Zealand brigade took up a position on the pass south of Erythrai to cover the withdrawal of the main force to embarkation areas. As dawn broke on April 25th the last sections of the Thermopylae line withdrew behind Erythrai.

Eyeing this from aloft, the Nazis redoubled their bombing at the various points of embarkation in Attica, Argolis and the Peloponnese. Broadly, the plan was to take practically the whole of the force back to the ports and beaches of the mainland. To cover them, British and Anzac forces—New Zealand infantry, Australian artillery and British anti-tank units—secured positions across the road and in the hills south of Thebes, gateway to Athens. In the darkness the move was made.

Tears

Tense hours, these. A deluge of bombs practically put Piraeus out of commission. There was another beach, Megara, between Piraeus and Corinth. It was agreed they should embark there. Transports were waiting. Stuka dive-bombers came in small clouds and sank a transport; but 5,500 got away from there. Hiding in the fields, among the olive trees, the other men were safe. The Stukas roamed for hours overhead, dropping bombs for good measure, but not spotting the hidden troops.

A blazing, crackling world of movement. A confusion of noises assailed the ears. At times there were long patches of silence during the night; at others the darkness was scorched by wavering fires and fantastic lights. Or the blur of sound would suddenly become the background for the sharp definition of a scream from brakes violently applied, of a shout, or, strangely loud, the echo of a lonely groan from a wounded soldier on a stretcher in a lorry. Such features were woven into a kind of sombre symphonic epilogue to an ugly act in which Greece had been drenched in Mood.

Bravery abounded. An example: on the night of April 28-29th, a column of German armoured forces entered Kalamai. This column, which contained several armoured cars, 2-in. guns and 3-in. mortars, and two 6-in. guns, rapidly converged on a large force of British and New Zealand troops awaiting embarkation on the beach. When the order to retreat to cover was given, Sergeant John Daniel Hinton, of the New Zealand forces, shouting, "To hell with this! who'll come with me?", ran to within several yards of the nearest gun; the gun fired, missing him, and he hurled two grenades, which wiped out the crew.

He then went on with the bayonet, followed by a crowd of New Zealanders. German troops abandoned the first 6-in. gun and retreated into two houses. Sergeant Hinton smashed a window, then the door of the first house and dealt with the garrison with the bayonet. He repeated the performance in the second house, and as a result, until overwhelming German forces arrived, the New Zealanders held the guns. Sergeant Hinton then fell with a bullet through the lower abdomen and was taken prisoner.

But in recognition of his gallantry the King, on October 16th, 1941, awarded him the Victoria Cross.

Athens itself was calm. The people had steeled themselves to meet the inevitable. As the British rumbled through the city, there were no gay, noisy scenes, no thumbs-up signs. They were serious, strained; a sense of anxious waiting for some intolerable tension to crack pervaded everything. But now and again at the roadside, or on the pavements where knots of people glanced up from the latest newspapers, there was a wave to cheer Australian and New Zealand and British wounded, lying bandaged in the long ambulance convoys. There was an incredibly strong, noiseless tide of mutual sympathy. There was no bitterness, although the Nazi propaganda machine had been trying to whip up Greek animosity by blaring over the radio and through its Press that "Churchill now openly sneers at the victims who have chosen to bleed for England". Women, tears quivering at the corners of their eyes, shook hands with you, unable to trust themselves to speak. There was understanding and a feeling of flat acceptance. In the suburbs, people were digging air-raid trenches.

Efficient, Noiseless Service

With the bombers whacking at the transports at Megara, it was decided to move round to the Corinth Canal, cross it, and try to embark in the Peloponnese. Over a wide area the transport convoys began moving. They crossed the canal

Greece : Epic of Too Few against Too Many 127

and dispersed under orders, some to wait their turn in perfect pastoral scenery a few miles beyond the sea. Sleep came easily to the men in the trucks, or huddled beneath them, or in dis-used farm buildings. All the way through the villages and hamlets in the Peloponnese, women and children threw bunches of flowers into the lorries. At the ports, where long queues waited their turn to board a ship or a Sunderland flying-boat, Greek womenfolk gave meals of wine and boiled eggs.

No sooner did the men arrive at some of the embarkation points than they were taken aboard. The Royal Navy was waiting. Shielded spotlights pointed the way. Aboard, it was complete darkness. A sailor's hand came out and got you by the arm, firmly, silently, passing you along a lane of dark, silent, helpful arms until you clattered below decks and came into a flood of light and saw scores of your comrades packed on the deck, some of them already asleep. The bombers stayed away during the night; as the ships were moving away from some ports in the early morning, over they came. A curtain of anti-aircraft fire was shot into the sky by the warships' pom-pom guns and by the escorting units.

It was a strange fleet of ships that came and sailed away : warships, cargo-boats, drifters, Greek *caiques*, small motor-boats. Again and again a Sunderland flying-boat dropped into a harbour, lightly as a swan, and carried away a tired, thankful cargo of slumbering warriors. The men were crammed into anything that would carry them to Alexandria. One 9,000-ton merchantman, designed to carry 150 passengers, reached Egypt with 5,000 men.

Motorised German forces, in hot pursuit of the evacuating force, advanced as far as the southern harbours of the Peloponnese, preventing some of the last troops from escaping. The German High Command claimed that they captured on the wharves and jetties 5,000 British soldiers, including a general, and many Serbs, including four generals and 300 other officers.

In a desperate attempt to thwart the Allied troops in their endeavour to reach the Peloponnese, the southern peninsula of Greece, the Nazis dropped parachutists in the neighbourhood of Corinth : even so the troops fought their way through. Just in time: for not long afterwards the advance units of the Hitler S.S. Division arrived on the scene at the isthmus of Corinth, hoping to join up with the entrenched parachutists. The S.S. soldiers came sweeping down the road to Missolonghi, where Byron died, and to Antirion.

The escaping Allies made their way to numerous small fishing ports and tight, white little beaches—to Raptis,

Marathon, Nauplia, Megara and several others. Among the warships taking part were the anti-aircraft cruisers H.M.S. *Calcutta* and *Coventry*, H.M. cruisers *Orion* and *Phoebe*, H.M.A. cruiser *Perth*, H.M. destroyers *Hotspur*, *Isis*, *Griffin*, *Diamond*, *Wryneck*, *Vampire*, and H.M.A. destroyers *Stuart* and *Voyager*.

Brilliance

To annihilate the sea convoys, the Nazis employed every aeroplane they could muster—Me. 109's carrying a single bomb; Dornier 17's and Ju. 87's and Ju. 88's. The Navy was firing so accurately that most of them were prevented from coming too close. A lot were destroyed. The Me. 109's came skimming over the water at low levels and let go their bombs when only fifty yards from the target. Bombs came hurtling almost horizontally at the ship with the added momentum of the aeroplane, which zoomed up out of the way of the explosion. In three hours H.M.S. *Calcutta* fired 1,200 rounds of four-inch shells; pom-pom and machine-gun ammunition ran into so many rounds that it could not be counted. Some transports were hit and sunk, but most of the victims were saved. One afternoon H.M.S. *Diamond* saved 600 who had been flung into the sea.

No more brilliant operation has been carried out in the history of the British Army, Navy or Air Forces, all of which co-operated to achieve its astonishing success. It was ten times more dangerous than the return via Dunkirk, because not only were there aeroplanes in abundance to contend with—many more than there were above the French beaches—but there was a far greater, more hazardous sea journey to be made, with surface ships and submarines lurking in the path.

Even the story of this strained argosy had its lighter side. Among those taken aboard the Australian destroyer *Voyager* were 150 Australian nurses. As they neared Alexandria, the captain of the *Calcutta* signalled: "I will leave you to make your own arrangements for disembarking your own gorgeous girls." To which the *Voyager's* captain replied: "Thank you. I wish I could keep them forever. My ship's company have never been so well groomed!"

'As was to be expected in view of the active, gallant part played by the Royal Hellenic Navy during the operations in Greek waters, some heavy losses were suffered, but a number of extremely useful and modern vessels got safely to Alexandria—British officials pay only the highest tributes to the Greeks at sea: it was never a large navy but its spirit under fire was sublime. At the outbreak of the Italo-Greek war (October. 28th, 1940), it consisted of one armoured cruiser, ten de-

MISTS ON
THE
MOUNTAINS

Like eagles, the
Greeks clung to
mountain tops,
rugged shoulders,
scraggy spurs,
fighting for every
acre. A photo-
graph taken of
Greeks actually
attacking Ital-
ians in Albania.



WHAT ANZACS
SAW IN GREECE
In this group of four
generations of peace-
loving Greeks, vic-
tims of Nazi bombers
in Piraeus, the aged
great grandmother,
sitting in the middle,
rests on a mound of
rubble that was her
cottage . . . and
weeps awhile.



Greece : Epic of Too Few against Too Many 129

stroyers, thirteen torpedo-boats, two motor torpedo-boats, a jmmber of submarines, and about thirty auxiliary craft—minelayers, minesweepers, dep6t ships and the like.

Salamis was the fleet's main base, auxiliary bases being Salonika, Volos, the Straits of Euboea, and Patras, which were protected with coastal defences. Some anti-aircraft batteries afforded some slight defence from the air, but what was needed was fighters. The organisation and efficiency of the Greek Navy as a fighting force were put to a hard test during the six months of operations, and proved to be highly satisfactory. Credit for this is due to the work of the naval missions, which the British Admiralty had been lending for the last thirty years to the Greek Navy.

The main work of the fleet was to defend Greece's vital sea communications to ensure the safe transportation of troops through the Aegean during the mobilisation and, after this was completed, the supply of the Army at the front and of the country as a whole with foodstuffs and war material.

Greek destroyers were entrusted with this task throughout the five months of war against Italy. They were almost constantly at sea escorting convoys or patrolling, while the British Mediterranean Fleet was covering these operations from any possible interference by the Italian battle fleet. But the overwhelming superiority of the Italian Fleet never daunted the Greeks : alone on two occasions, Greek destroyers sailed up the Adriatic to shell the Italians in the vicinity of Valona. The tonnage of the Italian supply ships sunk by the Greek submarines in the Adriatic during the campaign totalled 50,000 tons.

In the evacuation, the Royal Hellenic Navy's part was important. In this delicate manoeuvre it was invaluable in combing the tiny beaches, which its Greek crews knew by heart, and in scouring the small islands for Allied troops who had escaped from the mainland in any kind of cockleshell in the hope of being picked up in time. From these beaches, and from others on the mainland itself and on the Peloponnese, all sorts of Greek craft, from cargo and coastal steamers to sailing boats and fishing smacks, transported for several days, soldiers to Crete, even to Egypt, escorted by British and Greek destroyers and torpedo-boats under almost uninterrupted attacks by Nazi dive-bombers. What is left of the fleet is now fighting with the British—the cruiser *Averoff*, seven destroyers, two torpedo boats, five submarines : a brave remnant.

Some of the argosy sailed away *in* the morning, some in the evening. It was a case of sailing whenever you could. A Greek officer in Cairo said :

" As our boat was moving out of the harbour we all stood on the deck and watched the white vision of Athens disappear in the shades of evening. The words of the policemen were still in our ears as we passed near the Straits of Salamis where our ancestors fought against the Persian aggressor. At the last moment, before our departure, a Greek policeman who had been on duty aboard the ship, appeared at the door of the dining-room where we were assembled and shouted : ' You will not be away for long. You will leave, and we who stay will fight on for the liberation of our country. Long live Greece! '"

" *Hold Firm—Dawn Will Break* "

In that hour, when the eyes of the world were on the great episode in Greece, *The Times* said :

" It holds the strained attention of the Empire. Pride and not fear is the feeling in the Empire's quick-pulsing heart—pride in loyalty to an Ally who has done gloriously; pride in the gallantry of the Empire's forces; pride in the resistance to the vaunting might of immense and arrogant power; pride in the spirit which is the animating force of that resistance."

Preparing to leave the mainland to continue the struggle for liberty elsewhere, Greek naval and military and air force members were parcelling up earth from the shores of their homeland, so that wherever their destiny might take them it would be a symbol of their faith to sustain them.

Preparing to leave, too, for Crete, the Prime Minister, M. Tsouderos, delivered a message to the nation :

" In this tragic but great moment, when I am leaving for Crete with the heroic King of the country—a worthy symbol of the great struggle that the nation is pmrsuiig—I feel the need to say that I am truly proud of this political and national move, which illustrates in the fullest manner possible the unconquerable soul of Greece, and proclaims the firm determination of us all not to give m to the invader.

" We are defending ourselves against an unjust aggression of unprecedented baseness. To save a cowardly parther that we had vanquished, an empire of 100,000,000 souls has struck us in the back.

" From these trials, which a hard struggle has imposed on our race, and which all free peoples of the earth look upon with disgust, we shall emerge victorious—a glorified and greater nation.

Greece: Epic of Too Few against Too Many 131

" Moreover, the moral strength of our country has never in the past reached the heights attained to-day.

" The military armistice signed with Germany without any authorisation appears to be a precipitate act which may be put down to fatigue, brought about by six months' unequal but victorious struggle, and which is the result of overwhelming pressure brought to bear by the enemy on our valorous army.

" Our struggle has been filled with material catastrophes and cowardly blows showered on non-combatants. But material losses do not intimidate the brave. They can be repaired and they will be made good.

" All Greeks will share these losses with those who have suffered them. This is a sacred and irrevocable obligation.

" Hold firm. By so doing we shall increase the moral gains of the country, through which a new and great Greece will arise.

" Nations that keep their honour and respect their undertakings towards their friends will acquire the right to have their interests safeguarded. Our own rights are written in blood and bear witness to our sacrifices and supreme heroism. We must venerate and defend them.

" Be assured that the dawn of a brilliant day for the nation will not fail to break, and that day will be the greatest of Greek civilisation."

Beauty To Dust

Gone forever are some of the beautiful towns and hillside villages of the world.

Bomb- and shell-wrecked, they stand coldly; broken, dilapidated, hideous as nightmares; many are deserted. All are empty of colour—piles of broken stone, blackened timber, scattered iron, blasted walls. They stand bleakly, as if in funeral attire for their vanished past of exquisite peace, music, happy movement, and a deep tranquillity that was as comforting as a slow orange-gold sunset over a still green sea. An inexpressible loss. Somehow the poignancy of the emptiness of a corner of the world's store of beauty, destroyed with such wilful savagery, is suggested by the lonely dogs, moving over the rubble, calling gloomily.

Gone, too, are singular and important collections of sculpture, some pieces dating from the sixth century B.C. The museums in which they were displayed were flattened by the Juggernaut. By the end of October, reports from Greece showed that the whole of the country was on the verge of starvation. An unsurprising fact, since the war has resulted in the disruption

of all inland communications. Even in normal times the transport system is not as well developed as it is in other parts of Europe, due, in considerable measure, to the mountainous nature of the land.

Utterly in ruins lies Kozani, a delightful, semi-Turkish town, typically Macedonian. Servia, enchantingly set among crystal streams and flowering trees, an artist's dream, is a shapeless heap. Lamia, perhaps the most wonderful of all Greece's inland towns, is an ugly graveyard of symmetry. Volos, too; and once Volos was like an old oil painting.

Flames licked noble Corinth as it shuddered, night after night, when bombs fell in scores from Nazi machines. Imagine immortal Corinth as a smear instead of as a pearl on the glistening blue gulf! Yet, as with Nauplia—gracious, massive, medieval city, once capital of Greece—the streets of Corinth to-day are pock-marked with bomb craters. The few buildings that are standing, instead of reeling drunkenly, are scarred: the heaps of rubble are reminiscent of weather-beaten mounds in a cemetery. The fashionable, historic thoroughfares, the twisting side-streets, the alleys—all have a gap-tooth look, horrible. A mourned ruin is lovely Piraeus.

Besides these, Preveza, Jannina, Arta, Elasson, Calamata, in Continental Greece, and Canea and other Cretan towns and villages have, been entirely destroyed: while Patras, Chalkis, Corfu, Thebes, Argostoli, Lixouri and Kastoria have been marked for as long as they survive.

No country in Europe, across which Nazism has left its smoking, blood-stained trail, has suffered in the same proportion as has Greece. A monstrous catalogue of Nazi crime lies there amid the piles of dead, the shattered cities, the gaping villages, the torn earth.

A bitter fact. Like a sharp, icy draught, it will blow down the dark corridors of Time, enormous, silent, unending, blending with a thousand currents from a thousand different quarters, which, rising to a gale, will for unnumbered generations shrill the shame of Nazism to men unborn. . . .

Ammunition Runs Low

Right up until six weeks before the German attack, the Greeks were steadily advancing on the Albanian front. The period of indecisive fighting which marked engagements around Tepelini then was chiefly attributable to three factors: (1) lack of supplies, particularly ammunition; (2) a swelling of the Italian land forces to almost twice the size they had been **four months** previously; and (3) the diversion of Greek troops

Greece: Epic of Too Few against Too Many 133

towards Macedonia owing to the German menace and to the establishment of the German armies in Bulgaria.

All Greek guns were made for French ammunition. When France collapsed the main source of supply dried up. The few factories in Greece were hopelessly inadequate. No factory in Britain was geared to the needs, nor was it possible to make the adjustment in view of the tremendous loss in equipment which the B.E.F. suffered in France. America could not see her way to change the gearing in one of her munition factories.

Adjustment itself is not a long operation: a matter of a month, perhaps two. Rather than the time factor involved in readjusting the machinery, it was, apparently, a question of what the British and American factory authorities considered to be the most vital need. Realisation that supplies of all types of ammunition were limited virtually to the reserve stocks made it necessary for the Greeks to nurse their shot and shell. They never wasted a round. They could not afford to squander it as did the Italians, and later the Germans. As much as anything else, perhaps, this single fact emphasises the amazing prowess of the Greeks as fighters.

When the Greek forces surrendered, the Greek High Command knew that it had enough ammunition to carry on guardedly for about a fortnight.

The state of the Greek forces, naturally enough, was well known to the British Government. They had hardly any anti-tank guns, an absurdly small number of lorries, practically no aircraft (and what they had was old, not comparable with Italy's latest machines), and a small, dependable navy. With this they went into action.

At the outset the British contribution was an extension of bombing raids to Southern Italy. But the great oil-plants at Bari and Naples were not destroyed, although this was not for want of trying on the few occasions when the R.A.F. struck at them.

The stern facts are, of course, that we cannot judge our aid to Greece without taking into account the consequential effect on the position in Libya, as well as the whole question of production in Great Britain and the rate of supplies from the Empire and America.

As to the question of general agreement about the wisdom of the campaign, it does not arise, despite what the Nazis say to the contrary. There was not only no doubt among the Prime Ministers of the various nations of the Commonwealth, but there was no disagreement among expert military opinion, either in the Chiefs-of-Staff Committee in Britain or among the generals commanding in the field. „Mr. Churchill has declared, and the Prime Ministers of Australia and New

Zealand agree with him, that all decisions were taken unitedly and freely, and in good will in response to the hard pressure of events.

R.A.F.'s Gallant Part

Because Durazzo and Valona were not destroyed, it is reasonable to suppose that this was because we did not have the bombers to spare. "If, in particular, we could have had a squadron of heavy bombers to bomb Valona and Durazzo," said Mr. Noel Baker in the House of Commons, referring to the Albanian campaign in a speech on which Mr. Churchill congratulated him, "we might have won that campaign, and I am sorry it was not done." The bottleneck, through which the Italians were passing everything, would have been obliterated.

The fact that this was not done is suggestive of the extent of our weakness in the air at that time. The truth, authoritatively stated in London, is that when Italy attacked Greece, some of the R.A.F. squadrons which had been fighting for six months in the Western Desert moved at once to Greece. This was a small force, but even then it was too big for the few Greek aerodromes. As new bases were built the R.A.F. in Greece gradually increased, but never approached anything like the strength of either the Italian or the German air forces operating against her. It was a hard winter, and flying conditions were the worst in Europe.

Indeed, had it not been for the severity of the winter the Greek Army would very likely not only have pushed the Italians out of Greece (as they did), but also out of Albania. The worst snowstorm within living memory robbed the Greeks of this chance. It prevented them bringing up supplies. Snow and mists hung about the mountains for weeks, the mists rolling down to the flats at times, at others just draping the mountain tops, and lying in a blanket at that level over everything. The weather remained very bad for a long time. It greatly reduced the assistance which the R.A.F. could give the Greeks. Driving snow and enveloping mists utterly blotted out the targets on the occasion when British pilots did manage to get off the ground.

Nevertheless enemy ports and aerodromes were consistently hammered to relieve pressure on the Greek Army holding their line in the mountains. Early in November the first British fighter squadron arrived. Though equipped only with Gladiators, they immediately made their presence felt. This squadron accounted for more than 100 Italian and German aircraft before leaving Greece.

At the finish of six months' arduous fighting, bombers of the

Greece: Epic of Too Few against Too Many 135

R. A. F. in Greece had carried out more than 300 raids, and nearly 300 aircraft had been confirmed as destroyed in the air, as well as a huge total damaged both in the air and on the ground.

When the Germans broke through on the British left flank and the Army commander decided upon withdrawal to a new line, the R.A.F. were forced back to two or three bases only and the odd, temporary landing-grounds they had used at the commencement of the campaign. All new aerodromes which had been built were lost or were too close to the enemy lines to be used. The R.A.F. carried on, although the enemy hammered its few remaining bases continuously. But then it became impossible to obtain replacement of aircraft. Those that did arrive were shot up on the ground. Nevertheless aircraft, even though officially "unserviceable", took off all the time, and inflicted great damage on the enemy forces.

The withdrawal of the British forces set the British air forces in Greece their greatest task of the campaign. Bombers, flying-boats, captured enemy aircraft and R.A.F. fighters played an outstanding part in getting British Imperial troops safely away. R.A.F. fighters, heavily outnumbered, had to guard the continuous stream of ships that went back and forth to Greece. All day and all night aircraft of every type—bombers and flying-boats, training machines and civil aircraft—packed to capacity with human cargoes, flew to safety and returned again for more. In addition, these same aircraft carried out important reconnaissance flights.

Thousands of men and women came away from Greece by air. Thousands more were guarded as they made the journey in big ships and little ships. Men of the Imperial air forces in Greece scored perhaps their greatest triumph of those six months of tough campaigning, and though the R.A.F. suffered heavy losses, the enemy suffered far greater.

Greece had practically no air force, which explained the few aerodromes in the country. But the few machines she had were flown with wonderful skill and such undaunted bravery that the whole air force became known among the Imperial forces as the "suicide squad". They flew on reconnaissance machines which they knew were too old, virtual death-traps when in combat with a group of the latest type of Nazi fighter, but they were all they had—"and", they said, "reconnaissance has to be done." Greek pilots were acknowledged to be as brave and daring as the Poles, who are among the finest air-fighters in the world.

German Strategy in Libya

Hardly could it be said that the Empire's weakness in the air indicated a lack of strategical sense. The British Govern-

ment itself reported the remorseless movement of vast German forces through Hungary, Rumania and into Bulgaria or towards the Croatian frontier of Yugoslavia, until at least forty German divisions, five of which were armoured, were massed on the scene. The object was plain: to pulp Greece the better to control the Balkans and deliver a shattering blow to the foundations of the Empire.

Never at any time, it is estimated by military experts on the spot, were there more than 100 R.A.F. machines operating over Greece—about one-thirtieth of the Nazi force. A few British fighters and ground crews were stationed on one or two aerodromes; but the long-range heavy bombers attacked Italy from aerodromes in Britain and assaulted the enemy in Greece from bases in Egypt.

Experts calculated that one-quarter of the fighter force which won the first great aerial Battle of Britain would have defeated the Nazi air force operating in Greece.

Perhaps the most amazing thing about the campaign is the fact that with complete mastery of the skies, the Nazis could not prevent evacuation. It is also remarkable that greater casualties were not inflicted on our forces in the narrow gorges and valleys where, confined to one winding road, they were easy targets—much easier than when sprawled over a desert, where they are as difficult to hit as convoys at sea, and where camouflage is a comparatively simple matter.

On the other hand, the R.A.F. fighters were of little value as an advance striking force against the armoured divisions, because machine-gun bullets alone have little effect on tanks. Shell-firing cannon, at least, are necessary if any impression is to be made. We knew that the only type of aeroplane which can give almost certain results in attacks on small moving targets are dive-bombers. We had none.

Partly because the Germans knew well enough what our position was in the air, they knew that if they reopened the Libyan front when they did, with its threat to Egypt, they would reduce the margin of fighter and bomber strength we could afford in the Balkans to a point where it could not seriously threaten the issue of the battle.

Hitler began to reopen the Libyan campaign towards the end of March—just when he was preparing his attack on Greece.

Conclusions

Did Britain wake up too late to the importance of the Albanian campaign in the general pattern of the war? It was a question which was raised in the House of Commons in the closing stages of the British Imperial evacuation from

Greece: Epic of Too Few against Too Many 137

Greece, and it is likely to be discussed for a long time. Were the British authorities, in October, 1940, so preoccupied with creating new divisions for Britain, so obsessed with the island-fortress state of mind, that they dared not run the risks of boldly releasing more aeroplanes, more equipment, more men to help the Greeks, who so nearly threw the Italians into the sea? Or, properly assessing the true value of the Albanian campaign, were the British so strained industrially and in other ways—by their commitments in the Middle East, for instance—that the number of men, the amount of material and war equipment of all kinds, including aeroplanes, they supplied to Greece represented the absolute maximum—and the best—they could spare?

Look at Italy's main lines of communication with Albania and Greece—the ports of Durazzo and Valona. A total of half-a-dozen wharves and jetties: Durazzo with four modern quays, Valona with a couple of jetties. Through these slender arteries all the Italian supplies had to pass. At the end of the Greek campaign almost half-a-million Italian soldiers had passed through these two ports.

No one believes that the British Government gave less than it could when it finally decided that it could manage to spare troops for Greece. What is asked is whether it could not have done this earlier. It is not maintained that the half-dozen jetties should have been blown into the sea by the Royal Navy or the Bomber Command; only the Government knew how much risk it could take. What is pointed out by the critics is that *if* Durazzo and Valona had been put out of action by the Fleet or the Air Force, or both operating together, the Greeks would have walked over the Italians at leisure, since they would have been cut off from supplies and reinforcements in men and material. Then, it is argued, the *bloc* that Mr. Eden and Sir John Dill tried to achieve at the last minute would have had more of a chance of creation, because the political, psychological and strategical results would have been immeasurable.

In this respect it is perhaps worth asserting that if the Greeks had not won the signal successes they did against Italy, whose fighting force, quantitatively and qualitatively, was so much superior to their own, the rising in Yugoslavia against the pact with Germany would never have occurred. If anything at all encouraged the peoples of Yugoslavia to have faith in their arms, it was the spectacle of ill-armed Greece throwing out the Italians, neck and crop.

Casualties

The number of British Imperial troops withdrawn from Greece was estimated at 45,000, or about eighty per cent.

Australian casualties on land were between 3,000 and 4,000. New Zealand losses were believed to be between 100 and 200 killed, between 500 and 600 wounded, and approximately 800 missing.

Among those who reached the beaches, but were not evacuated, there was a small percentage of Anzacs. As General Freyberg observed in his report to the New Zealand Government, the loss of stragglers is inevitable in such a confused campaign. Of the 500 casualties at sea, a few were Anzacs.

The remaining casualties, by far the bulk of them, were suffered by Great Britain.

German casualties are impossible to calculate with accuracy : but it is known that they exceeded those of the Allied Forces by many thousands, and it is believed that they may have amounted to 40,000-50,000. The Nazis went so far in their efforts to conceal the casualty lists from the world, especially from the German people, that Hitler, in a review of the campaign, named only two armoured divisions, one mountain division and the Adolf Hitler Division as having taken part in it!

Similarly, what the Italian losses were in the whole Greek campaign cannot be computed with complete accuracy, but they were far heavier than the German losses.

It was officially announced in London that Italy had lost 582,000 men in land operations in Libya, East Africa and Albania up to the end of June, 1941, composed of 310,000 prisoners and 272,000 "other casualties". Most of the 25,000 prisoners taken in Albania, however, were released when Germany invaded Greece.

Yugoslavia's Contribution

The fact that Yugoslavia, fighting heroically, but ill-equipped, was crushed from the air without any real means of striking back adequately, does not detract from the solid contribution her resistance made to damaging Hitler's plan and his time-table.

There is reason to believe that the disposition of German troops in the Balkans in March was such that the main German army in Bulgaria was in the south-east corner, a smaller army in the south-west corner ready to push down to Salonika at the right time. Hitler had already secured sufficient control over Yugoslavia, he thought, to be sure that she was then as subservient as Rumania or Bulgaria, that a drive against Turkey and Russia from Bulgaria, through Greek Thrace, would not be threatened from Yugoslavia, however slightly. It was reasonable to suppose, certainly,

that had he been given the signal, Field-Marshal List, in charge of the German forces in Bulgaria, could have moved the large army southward into Greek Thrace, swinging it eastward into European Turkey, taking from behind the Turkish force which was then drawn on a line Adrianople-Kirk-Kilis.

Syria, at that time, was rapidly being controlled by the Nazis, and the Nazi agents were well aware of the plotting going on in Iraq, where Rashid Ali brought off his *coup d'état* on April 3rd. If Germany's army had marched into Turkey simultaneously with the revolt in Iraq, and Nazi air-borne troops in great numbers had been landed in Syria, as they could have been for all Vichy France would have done to stop them, the consequences for the Allies might well have been very hard indeed. Turkey, to begin with, would have been cut off from supplies which she might have counted upon from Britain. One section of the Nazi forces, continuing its sweep along northern Anatolia and being ferried over the Black Sea in Bulgarian and Rumanian ships from Rumanian and Bulgarian ports, would have taken Russia by surprise from the flank, where, as subsequent events have suggested, she was less well prepared than she was on the whole Eastern front.

While this section was moving north towards the Caucasian frontier to grab the Russian oilfields of Baku and Batum, another section was to be sent through Iran to advance into Russia up the east side of the Caspian Sea, and yet another army was to have driven through the Ukraine at exactly the same time—a pincer movement.

Accompanying this manoeuvre was to have been another distinct movement—an advance on the Suez Canal from Libya, the British Imperial forces in Egypt to be weakened at the same time by another Nazi army marching southward from Syria, Iraq and Palestine.

But before it could be brought off, Yugoslavia upset the apple-cart by repudiating the agreement with Germany and installing a Government (just a week before Rashid Ali seized power) which was prepared to fight. This meant that a hostile force was in the rear of List's armies and had to be crushed. To do this, dispositions of the German forces had to be altered; and since the Allied resistance throughout Greece was much greater than Hitler had allowed for, the whole plan of a flank attack on Russia and the chance for a full utilisation of Rashid Ali's revolt to distract the British, together with the use of the Syrian air bases, had to be missed.

At least, this is the view of some international militarists : and subsequent events after the Nazis had been fought to a standstill in their frontal assault on Russia—the switching of the main German attack in August to the south towards

Odessa and the Black Sea ports and the increased Nazi pressure on Iran in the same month—seemed to give colour to it, because these events suggested a reversal to some such plan.

General Simovitch, Prime Minister of Yugoslavia, in August, when giving an estimate to his own people of the situation in March, said :

" The attack against Turkey, the Near East, and Russia was postponed by the events following upon March 27th, when Yugoslavia became Germany's chief enemy. In taking up the fight against Germany, Yugoslavia took upon herself the greatest risk that a country could take. She staked her very existence. But apart from the moral blow which affected the prestige of the rulers of the Reich, Yugoslavia frustrated the plans of the German General Staff, compelled it to lose time, and thereby saved Turkey and the Near East, and made impossible the envelopment of Russia from the south and the attack on it from the rear over the Caucasus to the east of the Caspian Sea, and forced Hitler to limit himself to a frontal attack."

Mussolini's Misfired Blitzkrieg

As a footnote to the Allied campaign in Greece a reference to the purely Italo-Greek campaign which preceded it is warranted because of the several widespread errors which exist about it. Italy, it is believed, had made no preparations.

This has been, of course, the official Italian thesis; after the reverse in Albania, a famous Stefani *communiqué* of December 3rd, 1940, excused the Italian failure : " If Italy was not prepared! for war in Greece, this only proves Italy's peaceful intentions when she made her just demands." Now, there is exactly as much truth in saying that Italy was not prepared, as in saying that her intentions were peaceful or her demands just.

Mussolini, himself, in his speech of February 24th, 1941, dismissed the story of an unprepared Albanian campaign :

" The last British rampart in the Balkans was Greece, and it is Greece which would not renounce the British guarantee. ' It was necessary to face *up* to her, and on this point there was absolute agreement in all responsible military quarters. Italian soldiers in Albania were superb, writing pages of glory worthy of legend which have struck the whole world. Greek losses are very high."

By the words " all responsible military quarters " the Duce merely meant in the first place Marshal Badoglio, at the time Commander-in-Chief of the Italian Army, commonly believed

Greece: Epic of Too Few against Too Many 141

in Britain to have resigned because unwilling to be made the scapegoat of the Italian venture in Greece. Yet, for once, we may believe Mussolini. As early as June 25th, 1939, Marshal Badoglio had declared to a Committee of Albanians that "Italy would work for the expansion of the Albanian frontier."

He had been preparing since then for the attack on Greece. Two days before the attack, whilst Marshal Badoglio was still Commander-in-Chief of the Italian Army, General Zanini, commanding the Ferrara mountain infantry division, issued the following order:

"For nineteen months in this rough and virile land of Albania we have been tempering our arms; our hearts are turned towards an object which is henceforth near. Impelled as a single fascio of energy and will-power, all—infantry, Blackshirts, gunners, engineers, Italians and Albanians—we turn our gaze towards Epirus. We will revive the laurels of the Ferrara division. With this conviction I launch the battle-cry which will lead us to victory: 'Our day has come—we must vanquish.'"

The special maps of Greece with which the Italian would-be invaders were supplied had been printed by the Geographic Military Institute in 1939, the year of the occupation of Albania, and bore the eloquent inscription—*Dotazioni Cartografiche di mobilitazione* (Chartographic equipment for the mobilised troops).

It is nevertheless almost incredible how many people in Britain and elsewhere, even amongst those who are usually informed, appear to believe that, in spite of nineteen months during which the Italians were "tempering their arms in the rough and virile land of Albania", the Albanian campaign was unprepared. One responsible periodical, usually carefully edited, even said, "Numerical superiority enabled the Greeks to reach out for Italian flanks and turn them." The author admits that the Greeks had "few tanks and next to no aircraft and were deficient in anti-tank weapons", but goes on saying, "To make up for their deficiencies in numbers, the Italians had a great superiority in mechanised formations and in aircraft." Now, this is an astounding statement. Not once during the whole Albanian campaign did the Greeks have numerical superiority. When the campaign began, on October 28th, the position of the two armies was exactly as follows.

In the Epirus sector the Italian army corps of Tsamouria, composed of the Ferrara, Centaure and Sienna divisions, of three cavalry regiments (6th, 7th and 19th), of the 3rd regiment of Grenadiere and eighteen batteries of the 26th regiment of

heavy artillery, was faced by a single Greek division not in full strength.

In the Pindus sector the 3rd " Julia " division of Alpini, strengthened by one regiment, one machine-gun battalion and a great force of mountain artillery, was faced by a single Greek regiment not in full strength and a single battery of artillery.

In the Koritsa sector the 16th Italian army corps, composed of the 19th " Venezia ", 49th " Parma " and 29th " Piemonte " divisions, of three Albanian battalions, of the machine-gun battalion No. 101, of fourteen batteries of heavy artillery and a regiment of tanks, was faced by a single Greek division and one brigade, both not in full strength.

This shows that at the beginning of the campaign the Greeks were fighting in the proportions of one to six. The position improved progressively, concurrently with mobilisation, but the Italians had been constantly flowing huge reinforcements by sea and by air. So strong were the reinforcements brought to Albania that the Greeks had in their hands Italian prisoners belonging to twenty-four different Italian divisions and to several independent units. In fact, never were the Greeks in relation to the Italians in a stronger proportion than two to three.

As the grim menace on the Bulgarian frontier increased and they were forced to divert more troops in that direction, the numerical problem became more acute. And not only were the Greeks constantly inferior to the Italians in numbers, but also in rations, in equipment, in armament, in transport. They had no tanks at all, except those captured from the Italians. Besides, the Italian troops were mainly semi-professional formations, crack Alpini divisions among them, and Bersaglieri, the shock troops of the Italian army, while the Greeks were conscripts or reservists.

In these circumstances why did the Italian campaign, so carefully planned and prepared for months, fail so conspicuously? The Greeks do not, certainly, claim to have been supermen, nor to have achieved miracles. There are no miracles in war.

The explanation which is the most likely one may strike you as a little peculiar. The Italian High Command had been strongly influenced by the German triumph in the Low Countries and France. They planned for Greece an overpowering, sudden, scientific attack on German lines, with strong firing-power, planned and timed to the last detail. The machinery was perfect. Unfortunately it was too precise and not robust enough to operate in the rough, mountainous and primitive Albanian country. Some details did not work

Greece: Epic of Too Few against Too Many 143

" according to plan ", and for this reason the too-elaborate machine failed altogether.

On the other hand, the Greek success was due to the mobility and diversity of the Greek tactics, well adapted to the nature of the terrain and the spirit of initiative of the Greek soldier. It affords a striking example of the success of a small, light, mobile force over a much more numerous enemy hampered by his very numbers and his heavy equipment.

In a study of the Albanian campaign, all the more impressive as it was written before the Libyan victories, Colonel Vasco de Carvalho, a well-known Portuguese military critic, expressed these views on the Greek successes and the Italian failure :

" Only three battalions of Greek troops were guarding the twenty-eight miles of the Pindus front, which, for this reason, was chosen by the Italians for the main thrust. The first days of the war were in the nature of a minor 'Blitzkrieg', and the Italians advanced thirty-seven miles in three days to Metzovo.

" For some time the position was critical. The Greek 8th Division on the left wing was threatened seriously by this advance. The Greek High Command decided not to wait for full mobilization concentrations, but sent every unit when ready to the Pindus front. So successfully was this plan executed, and so resourceful and independent were the Greek commanders, that within a few days the Italian forces, consisting of one Alpine division, one regiment, and one machine-gun battalion, were cut in three isolated groups in the Pindus valleys. As it was not possible to relieve them by air or land, the force was annihilated. So little did the Italian High Command realize what had happened that stores were dropped on to the Greek troops near Metzovo in the belief that the Italians were there.

" Although the Italians were outmanoeuvred it is conceded that the troops fought very bravely, this accounting for the few prisoners captured. The fighting qualities of the Italians were generally good in the first weeks of the war, though a weakening of morale was noticeable as the campaign proceeded. The reason for the Italian debacle is the dependence of Italian troops on a rigid battle organization. Weight of metal is the Italian tactic for winning offensive actions as well as defending positions. In fire-power the difference between the sides was three to one in favour of the Italians. Relying upon the density of fire of their many machine-guns and mortars, the Italian troops are generally at a loss when this is

penetrated. The Greeks put clever tactics and skilful use of terrain, coupled with bravery and dash, to counteract their deficiency in weight of metal.

¹⁴ Frequently the Italians stubbornly defended their positions as long as their curtain of fire had not been penetrated. However, once the curtain had been pierced the Italians fled or surrendered. The success of the Greek troops was largely due to the weakness of the rigidity of Italian tactics when faced with brilliant strategy backed by competence and bravery down to the lower ranks."

The obvious conclusion from this is that the Italians were anything but unprepared. Their attack against Greece had been conceived and launched as a major operation. If they failed, this is due to various reasons, but certainly not to lack of preparation.

NOT DESERT
RIFFS: GREEKS
IN THE SNOW
Wearing white capes
as camouflage, Greek
troops, in action,
slowly advance in a
forward mountain
position.



HORSEMAN OF THE HILLS

Up in some of the high, wind-swept hills of Greece and Albania no vehicle could be hauled: only men, horses and mules could thread the paths, cross the clamorous torrents, defy the black, viscous mud—frequently only men. A Greek despatch rider halts at a forward post.



Chapter III

Libya: Britain's Own *Blitzkrieg* that Destroyed an Empire

"Wavell is the best General the British have and he is very, very good."
—Germany's Marshal Keitel.

"A good General has a touch of the gambler."
—General Wavell.

"Tobruk has been the scene of a most stubborn and spirited defence by the Australian and British troops under the command of the Australian General Morshead."
—Winston Churchill, House of Commons, May, 1941.

"THE Tigers of Tobruk"—as General Morshead's men became known in the Middle East—holed up in the fortress on April 10th, 1941, just in time to throw themselves across the path of the Nazis' lightning advance from Benghazi. It was there at Tobruk that the Nazis, in Mr. Churchill's words, struck "a prop, a hard and heavy prop, not the less important because, like all these desert operations, it was on a small scale".

Australian, British and Indian soldiers were inside the fortress's fortified lines. The Germans swirled around this rock in a wave, rolled on across the yellow desert until they came into contact with large Imperial forces guarding the frontiers of Egypt and securely based on the road, railway and sea communications. There they came to a stop, and there they still were on November 18th, 1941, when British, New Zealand, South African and Indian troops were launched by General Auchinleck on the second Libyan campaign.

Only too well aware that they were now a besieged garrison, the Imperial troops set about making themselves as impregnable as possible. It is always easy to die in war. It can be done very cheaply. Morshead's men decided to die as expensively as any soldiers have ever died.

Besieged

The Nazis did not realise this. With that usual rousing enthusiasm of theirs, which has so often caused them to confuse claims with aims, they declared several times in April that the garrison was doomed; that there was no hope of the fort holding out for more than a few hours; that the garrison would be forced to try to leave by the sea; and that in so doing they

would be blown to smithereens by the Nazi guns. By the middle of July, hundreds of good German soldiers having been killed in the meantime as a result of sorties from the fortress, the Nazis were wailing that Tobruk was an impregnable fortification—despite the fact that although it had been in Italian military hands for years, Imperial troops (with Australian sappers cutting the first strands of barbed wire) threw out the Italians on January 22nd, 1941, within thirty hours !

There can be few desert garrisons, marooned and besieged, that have fought more fiercely against such determined and sustained attacks. Tobruk, a moderately good port, is the main naval base of Libya. Because of this it has comparatively long lines of fortifications arranged in inner and outer loops, and when the Italians were there it was manned by about a division. It is the second town on the road from Sidi Barrani to Derna. An idea of the strength of its defence is obtained when it is realised that the outer ring of defence works is between twenty-five and thirty miles long. Positions for the concentration of heavy guns are numerous, and lend themselves easily, naturally, to defence.

When the Nazi armoured force and motorised infantry, sweeping from Benghazi, pushed the last of the retreating British Imperial Force into a town whose defences only a few weeks before had, they assumed, been pounded to pieces by the invading British Imperial Force, they believed they had sealed the doom of the force. Yet within six weeks of the day they were cornered, Morshead's men were so confident of defying the Nazis and of ultimately playing a vital part in clearing them from Libya that they found time to amuse themselves in quiet hours by bringing out a most vigorously worded news-sheet, and, despite the great discomfort in which they were forced to live, they got together small concert parties, even a band, which now and again played in the town's square. Not that there was much time for any sort of recreation, however : mostly, night and day, it was a case of fighting and of strengthening the defences.

Indeed, so nervous were the Nazis of General Morshead's policy of raiding in sorties well outside the British defences of Tobruk that in August they were illuminating the desert by night with searchlights, sweeping the ground with bright, strong, groping beams of light, trying to find out if the British, Australian and Indian patrols were again preparing to charge one of their outposts ! Dive-bombers were used unavailingly (a hundred in a single daylight attack in September) in attempts to break the defenders' morale. Meanwhile, day by day, tanks, guns, aeroplanes and supplies from the factories of the British Empire and from America continued to arrive in the

Middle East; and the British were planning and organising for the next and second great forward movement from *Egypt* which General Auchinleck had designed to cripple the Nazis, just as his predecessor, General Wavell, had designed the first forward movement to destroy the Italians. Before this second campaign was launched, however, the majority of the Imperial troops holding Tobruk, including the 9th Australian Division—in all, about 15,000 fighting men—were withdrawn by the Royal Navy. They were replaced stealthily in August by fresh British and Polish soldiers : so that in the second offensive there were practically no Australians, but a great number of New Zealanders. On November 17th, 1941, too, British forces in the Western Desert were constituted as the Eighth Army, a move which carried a stage further the reorganisation of the forces in the Middle East—begun with their division into a Western Army, comprising the forces in the Western Desert and the British troops in Egypt, and an Eastern Army, comprising the troops in Palestine and Syria.

The Desolate Desert

Stately camel-trains, a dark, picturesque frieze on the rippled ridge of a high sand-dune bathed in soft moonlight; gaudy Bedouin chiefs, gorgeously robed, holding court in palatial encampments; an odour of romance, as strong and alluring as the fragrance of frankincense, permeating everything. . . .

To some this may still be the mental picture they have of North Africa, a picture which they watch on the screen of their subconscious mind to the soundless accompaniment of music with lingering strains like "The Sheik of Araby". It is a Hollywood picture, a romantic novelist's picture. It is soft, tempting, deceptive, delicately perfumed. All harsh lines have been erased. Yet in North Africa harshness predominates.

So little rain falls in North-east Africa—Libya, Egypt and the Sudan—that it is, broadly speaking, the driest patch in the world. Along the hills at the edge of the Red Sea and skirting the Mediterranean coast a sparse, scrubby vegetation exists. Inland for hundreds of miles the territory is as naked as rock. Nothing but desert covers North-western Sudan, the whole of Western Egypt, all of Libya. Rocky mountains divide it from the French Sahara, which is farther west. A huge triangle of heaving sand, bare rock and gravel, it runs for 1,200 miles along the Mediterranean coast from Cairo to the Tunisian hills, and for more than 1,000 miles south to the Sudan.

No one knows how many people in peace-time live there. No one knows how many live even between Alexandria and the Libyan border, although it was estimated just before the outbreak of war that roughly 70,000 composed the population.

Almost all of those were Bedouin, wholly nomadic or half-and-half settlers and rovers, who stay a while in one place, raise a few cattle, grow a crop of grain, then move on to another place to, repeat the performance.

Modern communications are few. A single railway line runs from Alexandria to Mersa Matruh; from Mersa Matruh to Sidi Barrani there is a fairly good tar-sealed road. Until the war began, only a track ran from Sidi Barrani to Solium, on the Egypt-Libya border, a track which the Italians helped turn into a road after they had crossed the border and taken Sidi Barrani. But from Bardia, on the Italian side, to Benghazi and beyond there is a fairly good tar-mac road, and a few inter-linking roads between Derna and Benghazi. In a sentence, modern communications are confined solely to the outermost fringe of the entire area. Desert tracks alone criss-cross the desert.

All the way from Alexandria to Cyrenaica, the coastline is flat. Generally speaking, the beaches rise fairly abruptly to a solitary range of sand-dunes which, over centuries of time, have formed from the fragments swept inshore from the dazzling white limestone reefs offshore—reefs that in most places along the coastline protect the beaches.

Wind erosion is largely responsible for the curious, harsh, drab features of North Africa, and this range of coastal dunes is not the least interesting. Brilliantly white, the sand is not very deep. Underneath is a porous rock. In winter, rain penetrates the sand and collects in the porous rock to a depth of two or three feet. Centuries ago the Romans built stone aqueducts to catch the water, and although they had long since fallen into disuse, clogged and hidden, British Royal Engineers, rediscovering some of them, actually used them for the partial supply of fresh water to sections of the British Imperial Forces.

Usually behind the coastal dunes is a mile, perhaps five in rare places, of earth which permits some cultivation. Above this strip of earth is the rocky escarpment and the desert plateau. Rain falls inland from the coast for about thirty to fifty miles. Beyond that is desert where rain falls occasionally in a few years and where nothing grows.

Escarpments are sometimes more than 1,000 feet high, falling away for scores of miles in rocky terraces. Westward from Solium the plateau crowds closer to the sea, especially along the coast of Cyrenaica, cliffs marching right down to the water's edge in several places.

Inner and Outer Deserts

When people refer to the "Western Desert", they really

mean the outer band, about 150 miles deep, of the North African desert, a band stretching southwards along the west bank of the Nile and westwards along the Mediterranean coast. The term originated in the 1914-18 war to distinguish it from the treeless, arid, flat Sinai Desert, which was referred to as the "Eastern Desert". Behind this outer band (or outer desert, as it is sometimes conveniently called) there is the inner desert. Greatly different in character, it is in the inner desert that there are mighty sand-dunes, the real Sand Sea. It is here, when the winds howl, that the whole landscape heaves and moves, billowing like the Atlantic Ocean in a hurricane.

Oases, dotting the outer desert, have encouraged caravan traffic for centuries. An absence of oases in the inner desert has so discouraged exploration that it is only in recent years that anything has become known about it.

By far the greater part of the military action has occurred in the outer desert. Queer tricks played by wind erosion during thousands of years have produced weird effects on the landscape. Apparently endless plains of brownish pebbles alternate with squat-looking hills of black or white rock, while one plateau of broken grey stone follows another with dreary monotony, perhaps here and there covered with patches of stunted scrub where gazelles run, or gashed by deep *wadis*.

A blue and yellow and brown and grey land. The sun pours out of a cloudless blue sky. It blazes powerfully, month after month, sucking out all colour in the land, bleaching, withering, drying, burning everything. Visibility is tempered only by a quivering heat-haze rising from the baked earth and by the tangible sand-fogs that rasp your face, eyes and hands like fine emery paper.

So much sand and earth has been blown away over the centuries that deep depressions have been created, so deep that water has been uncovered. Around these oases, caused by water-bearing stratum being exposed by the wind (a task which would require a great deal of labour and a long period of excavation with the most modern gear), date-palms cluster, giving a spindle shade, a rare touch of green. Temperatures can fluctuate rapidly, more quickly than they can in Melbourne and Adelaide in a heat-wave, where they sometimes drop twenty degrees in half an hour. In the outer desert, however, there are less violent changes than in the inner desert, because of the nearness of the sea, which has a steadying influence for some miles inland.

Only in the outer desert is there dust. A moving mechanised army breaks up the porous rock, crumbles the surface, grinds the pebbly plains, shatters the crust of the tight-packed clay pans, pulverising them to an ankle-deep layer of dust wherever

it goes. The prevailing mild north wind sweeps it into your eyes, your food, helps it sift through your clothes and cake the sweat on your body. Enemy aeroplanes, alert many miles away, can easily spot the tell-tale dust-clouds enveloping convoys. Sometimes, when the wind swings away suddenly and blows from another quarter, a storm whips the dust into a reddish-brown fog. The wind moans across the desert, ripping tent-pegs from the ground, flattening the tents, tears the strong canvas strips pegged and buckled to the sides of motor lorries for the protection of the men sleeping under them.

To a modern motorised army the terrain presented by the outer desert is not very difficult to traverse. Striking advantages are that there are no rivers to ford, no mountains to climb, no bridges for a retreating enemy to blow up : and while the wear and tear on vehicles, including tanks and Bren-gun carriers, is tremendous, speeds of twenty and forty miles an hour can be averaged in places.

Unquestionably, the chief disadvantage is not lack of water, since in most operations sufficient can be carried, but the ease with which a convoy can lose its way on featureless, arid stretches. Frequently, for hundreds of miles, there is absolutely nothing that can be used as a landmark to aid navigation. When it is remembered that concentrations of motorised troops must be carried out largely at night, the columns moving forward without lights to avoid detection, it is easy to appreciate the difficulty of keeping to the correct route for hours at a time. The stiffest physical barriers offered by the outer desert are sudden, high dunes and the rather abruptly rising cliffs of some of the great escarpments.

Pendulum

Warfare in the Western Desert had already proved what the British, the world's real masters of desert warfare, already knew: that successful operations can be conducted only by relatively small numbers of highly equipped troops working to a scientifically prepared plan, every piece of which must fit and dovetail precisely. Mere numbers do not count. Bulk is frequently a grave danger, not an advantage. Violent oscillation can mark the fortunes of a large army tackled by a small, concentrated force.

Mussolini's grand Imperial Army in Libya suffered disaster because General Graziani did not fully appreciate this, any more than, apparently, he or Mussolini appreciated* the tremendous advantage which General Wavell knew he could derive from the Royal Navy's mastery of the sea. When General Wavell, with incredibly tiny, concentrated forces, began delivering his *blitzkrieg* against joints in the twenty-five-

mile front of the Sidi Barrani position, disaster smote nearly 200,000 of Italy's men, sprawled in glittering array along the North African shore from Sidi Barrani to Benghazi.

Both Graziani and Mussolini, at least, knew that basic principles controlling an advance are secure lines of communication for food and ammunition and a constant water and oil supply. Partly because of supply difficulties the Italian forces, advancing into Egypt, were held up at Sidi Barrani. They had experienced British air and sea attack as they advanced down the defiles of " Hell Fire " Pass, just above Solium, out onto the narrow clay and gravel coastal plain. It had underlined the importance of these basic principles, but it did not stop them. They pushed on, shoving advance units of the Army of the Nile back over the Egyptian border—on reaching which the British retired, according to plan, to Mersa Matruh. A railway from that point stretched behind the British. Supplies were assured.

No railway stretched behind the Italians at Sidi Barrani. Only a road with a bad surface on the stretch between Solium and Sidi Barrani. So Graziani was obliged to halt at Sidi Barrani, to fling out a wide curve of " perimeter " camps, to consolidate his advanced striking position, and to re-surface large sections of the road. Sidi Barrani was to be made the spring-board for the final attack on Egypt.

Dunkirk to Mersa Matruh

The British retreat from Dunkirk had a dramatic effect on the position in the Middle East. It was accentuated by the collapse of France and the decision of Marshal Pétain to ask, on June 17th, 1940, for armistice terms.

Worse was to come when General Nogues in North Africa and General Mittelhauser in Syria, after holding the British High Command and the world in suspense for days, decided to obey Vichy's orders and capitulate : worse, for this meant that the Syrian bastion to the north of Egypt was down, that greater Italian land and aerial forces were immediately released for work against the western frontier of Egypt, and that, with the French Fleet out of action, the routes to Britain through the Mediterranean were doomed to be more uncertain, more dangerous. On top of this, of course, was the fact that the British force in the Middle East was numerically inadequate to meet the new situation, there was a chronic shortage of material of all types, from tanks and aeroplanes to machine-guns, and the reserves of fighting material were alarmingly low, in some cases entirely non-existent.

General Wavell recognised that the loss of a vast quantity of material at Dunkirk meant that supplies for the Middle

East would probably inevitably be reduced until the position in Britain had been made fairly safe, and that while he waited for reinforcements of men and equipment to arrive his best plan would be to prepare to make a real stand, in the event of an Italian attack, at Mersa Matruh. Nevertheless, General Wavell placed small covering forces along the Egyptian-Libyan frontier.

The reason for choosing Mersa Matruh was that it was easy to supply, being the terminus of the railway from Alexandria. Solium, on the frontier, was of almost no use : its small harbour had no facilities for supplying a force and it lacked water, which is necessary in quantities if troops are to be concentrated for any considerable length of time.

Despite seemingly insuperable difficulties, the plan was executed, and by October 28th, when Italy, intending quickly to help the Axis dominate the Balkans, struck at Greece, a steady stream of men and gear was arriving in Egypt. It was a stream swelling so rapidly that it enabled General Wavell to make plans for his attack against Marshal Graziani.

Not that Graziani had overlooked this possibility. Certainly, the Italian espionage system in Cairo had failed to let him know the exact strength of General Wavell's forces, but he did know that his force greatly outnumbered his enemy's, in men, aeroplanes, transport and guns.

Graziani also knew that Mersa Matruh had been established as an advance striking post by the British in 1935, when, during the application of sanctions, war between Italy and Britain seemed not impossible. Accordingly, one of the first things he ordered, as he began to move across Libya towards the Egyptian frontier, was intense aerial bombardment of Mersa Matruh. To combat these raids, the British turned the place into a honeycomb of underground caves and dug-outs. Everything—from sleeping quarters for the garrison to offices and casualty clearing stations—was underground. Fresh water was brought by sea from Alexandria monthly; hundreds of gallons of sea-water were condensed daily. The defensive strength of Mersa Matruh was increased from June. Anti-tank ditches, minefields, concrete pill-boxes were among the bulwarks.

" Offensive Patrols "

From the moment war was declared by Italy (June nth, 1940), British patrols, especially mobile patrols from the 7th Armoured Division, were active on the frontier. Simultaneously, the opening phases of the air war were marked by R.A.F. raids on Italian military bases, aerodromes and harbours in Libya. The Italian air force replied with raids on Solium, Sidi Barrani and Mersa Matruh. Although they had a much

smaller force, the British did not let the initiative pass from the R.A.F. from the opening raids. Generally, the British and Empire pilots showed greater dash, a keener relish for a fight, more deadly accuracy in bombing.

One of the first spectacular jobs allotted to the military patrols was the cutting of gaps in a 400-mile barbed-wire fence (twelve feet deep and between five and six feet high) running along the Egyptian-Libyan frontier from the sea. To pedestrians or camel- and donkey-riders the fence was a formidable obstacle, particularly as it was dotted with fortified strong points, manned by native troops. Graziani had built it to prevent Libyan natives, desiring to escape, from getting into Egypt. Here and there along this remarkable fence was a gap, just wide enough to allow a car to pass, guarded by a garrison.

Within three weeks of Italy's declaration, Lieutenant-General Wilson was able to say that the British patrols had so broken the fence that it offered no hindrance to operations :

" Our object was to destroy the frontier posts which were garrisoned by Italian officers and Libyan troops, and render them uninhabitable, leaving the situation fluid, and giving scope for our mechanised patrols.

" In spite of the heat, the lack of water and the sand-storms, our operations have been so successful that our patrols have been operating deep into enemy territory. It is a guerilla campaign."

It was never intended that these patrols should attempt to hold the frontier against an Italian advance. Their tasks were to collect information about the enemy's intentions, to test the strength of his formations, to spy on his movements, to harry him constantly and keep him alert day and night, to make him fear always that a surprise attack was imminent, to baffle him and prevent him from feeling any certain security in mere numbers.

Brilliantly, daringly, they achieved each of these objects, even though the stifling heat and the pitiless glare of the sun made it impossible for them to operate some days. A great many of their surprise manoeuvres were carried out at night, when they struck panic into the heart of many an Italian camp, approaching it stealthily, delivering their blow rapidly, destroying and killing, withdrawing and vanishing into the night, too elusive to pursue.

Throughout July, 1940, the British conducted offensive patrols with amazing success, capturing high Italian officers, including a general, and many native troops, destroying strong points and cutting communications. No counterpart to these British patrols was provided by the Italians. Whenever they

moved forward into the open desert it was invariably in strength, Italian reconnaissance parties always being in columns heavily protected by tanks.

Gradually, however, Graziani gathered his force at Bardia, where, as R.A.F. reconnaissance machines reported, concentrations continued steadily, despite the constant bombing by the R.A.F. and the shelling by the Royal Navy of the long lines of communications stretching behind Bardia, and Italian reinforcements were detected moving forward to the Solium area. At least two divisions were on the move towards Bardia as reinforcements by the end of July, and an Italian brigade* re-took what was left standing of Fort Capuzzo, only twelve miles from Bardia, after the British had dealt with it.

The Attack

Throughout August General Wavell believed Graziani was about to launch his attack against Egypt, although he knew the Italians were worried because of the persistence with which the British cut their vital water-pipe line, interfered with their supplies, and by the strength of the British naval blockade, which was making reinforcements from Italy uncertain. Yet by the end of August at least four complete Italian divisions, and elements of a fifth, were close to the Egyptian frontier.

Consequently, General Wavell, aware that there was a need for overhauling the armoured fighting vehicles that had been in operation for so many weeks, if they were to be in first-class order to meet the Italian onslaught (and aware also that there was then no reserve of tanks), ordered the withdrawal of the armoured brigade. He replaced it with infantry, which included the Coldstream Guards, the Rifle Brigade, the 1st Hussars, two batteries of the Royal Horse Artillery, a squadron of the Royal Armoured Corps, and a section of a medium artillery regiment. Over a line of sixty miles this thin force was spread along the frontier from the Solium area to Maddalena, between Solium and Jarabub.

Graziani launched his attack in force from Bardia on September 13th, 1940. During the six weeks preceding the advance the almost absurdly small, audacious, brave British force emulated the tactics of its predecessors, harrying the enemy, even moving silently right up to well-held forts like Capuzzo, manoeuvring through the barbed wire, striking hard suddenly, and disappearing into the night. Frequently at night they cut down telegraph poles, rupturing the Italians' communications.

Heavy artillery protected the Italians as they moved against the high escarpment above Solium, where, until they had been ordered to withdraw, the British had lain. Simultaneously, other Italian columns moved through Halfaya Pass (after-

wards to become more familiarly known as Hell Fire Pass), down the escarpment in the direction of Solium. As they retreated, the British ripped up the coastal road, planted land-mines liberally and salted all the fresh water.

The spearhead of the Italian advance was composed of two divisions, supported by a great number of guns and more than two hundred light and medium tanks. The front line of two divisions was supported by a second of two divisions. A fifth division was held in reserve, besides the famous Maletti mobile force.

Since it was not known whether the Italian force would advance all along the coastal road, or, splitting, make a sweep to the south, the British force was divided. On the narrow coastal front were detachments including the Coldstream Guards, British artillery and a company of Free French. The rest were in the south, prepared to delay a flank attack which never came.

As the two Italian divisions moved along the coast they were preceded by motor-cyclists. Their main job was to act as decoys for the British fire so that the Italian commanders would know where enemy artillery was concealed. After them came the main columns. First there were groups of tanks, then guns on lorries, then infantry in lorries, the soldiers armed with the latest type of quick-firing guns. All of these columns zigzagged down the two straggling coastal paths, moving cautiously, yet courageously—for the R.A.F. pounded them with bombs and the British frontier covering forces poured a withering fire at them, sometimes at point-blank range. It took the Italians four days to traverse the fifty-six miles between Solium and Sidi Barrani, a collection of houses and an aerodrome. When they arrived there on September 16th, the British forces had withdrawn farther eastward.

Initiative—and Over-Caution

A British High Command criticism of the Italian advance, considering the enemy's tremendous superiority in all branches of arms and men, was that it was over-cautious and too slow. It was considered a tactical error not to have made use of such vast numbers at least to try to entrap the small British forces in an encircling flanking movement to the south. On the other hand, great initiative was shown by the Italian motor-cyclists, and by the artillery groups. Both moved with great speed. The outstanding characteristic of the artillery was its mobility. Mounted on heavy lorries, the guns were frequently fired directly from the lorries with astonishing quickness: frequently, too, they were hauled off the lorries and swung into action with the same surprising speed. But it was found that the fire was often inaccurate.

The attack was on Nazi lines. Tanks made the forward thrusts, usually moving in groups of three to five, escorted by a dozen or so gun-lorries. Infantry, brought up in lorries, occupied the ground cleared by the tanks. Accompanying the infantry were field-guns, anti-tank guns, anti-aircraft guns and machine-guns. Havoc was caused every few miles as these groups ran into mine-fields, which hindered the advance and presented excellent targets for the British artillery, cleverly placed to take advantage of just such scenes of confusion.

By the time Graziani's force occupied Sidi Barrani it had been rather severely mauled. Between the outbreak of the war in June and September 16th, 1940, the Italians admitted losing 3,500 men. The British had suffered 150 casualties. Apart from killing a great number, they had captured 700 prisoners and many guns, tanks and lorries. The Italians had 2,000 casualties inflicted on them in their advance from Solium to Sidi Barrani.

The British General Staff expected Graziani to move almost at once along the fairly good metal road from Sidi Barrani to Mersa Matruh, thence along the coast to Alexandria. They never imagined he would be unwise enough to stay longer than necessary, perhaps three weeks, at Sidi Barrani, which was open to devastating attack from the desert, sea and air.

Apparently the losses were greater than Graziani had anticipated, in view of the fact that he had come up against no fortified positions, but had been met only by advance patrols. At all events, he halted where he was not expected to halt (because it seemed to the British purposeless that the enemy should advance in so strong a force so far and not boldly exploit his gains), and set about digging-in and consolidating his new position by creating new defences, bringing up fresh supplies and reinforcements. He threw out a number of strongly defended camps. They were swung in a rough semi-circle within a radius of fifteen to twenty miles of Sidi Barrani.

Still, the Italians officially hailed the capture of Sidi Barrani as a great victory on the road to the destruction of British power in the Middle East. A typical Italian propaganda statement was : " The British say we will never get to Mersa Matruh, but this is something we deny. The roads have already been made and we are marching towards our objective."

Yet no move was made to march. True that at first a short halt was justified because of the attacks on lines of communications ; but excuses were put about. The weather was said to be too hot. The road between Solium and Sidi Barrani had to be properly made. Repairs to fourteen wells, destroyed by the British at Sidi Barrani, were taking longer than had been expected. And so on.

The British High Command could hardly believe their eyes. It seemed incredible, too good to be true, that Graziani should let slip through his fingers his one great chance of dealing a smashing blow at the small British garrison in Egypt. For meanwhile the steady streams of men and material were converging on Alexandria. British gear which needed overhauling was repaired. While British mobile patrols sought skirmishes with the Italians, playing a cat-and-mouse war with them, General Wavell planned his stunning counter-stroke.

As a surprise it was perfect. It caught the enemy entirely unawares and confounded military "experts" everywhere, even in Berlin, where it was said : "Neither of the parties can carry out a surprise attack in the Egyptian Western Desert because of the natural obstacles in the desert, and because the preparation of mechanised forces for a big offensive on a large scale cannot be concealed."

Arm-chair experts in various parts of the world just *knew* this was true 1

As a prelude to the attack, the Royal Air Force and the Royal Navy bombed and shelled Maktila and Sidi Barrani on the night of December 8—9th, the Navy using ships firing fifteen-inch shells. Fires were glowing in both places as, with the first light of dawn, tanks of the Royal Armoured Corps and infantry which included the Cameron Highlanders and other British and Indian Regiments went into action at various points.

Good and Faulty Strategy

Now, the Italian strategy in advancing so far and stopping, laboriously to build up their striking strength, was so faulty that it cost them the mightiest pillar in their Empire; and the British strategy in retreating to Mersa Matruh and developing a striking force was brilliantly successful, as events were soon to prove. Graziani had advertised not only his serious intention but also his method and had confirmed the British estimation of his weakness. To present the British with a perfect opportunity to reinforce their troops, increase their mechanised equipment and buttress the Royal Air Force with a few, but vitally important, machines was not an intelligent move. Simultaneously, the ill-starred Italian attack on Greece was giving the Royal Navy the use of valuable island bases, such as Suda Bay, in Crete, and other islands from which the Fleet could harry Graziani's lines of sea communication with Italy. On top of this a crippling blow was given to the Italian Fleet on the night of November 11th-12th, 1940, when three Italian battleships, two cruisers and two auxiliary vessels were torpedoed in Taranto harbour by the Fleet Air Arm. From that night the grip of the Royal Navy on the

Mediterranean was not to be broken by anything the Italians could do.

Surprise Attack

Winding behind the advance striking force at Sidi Barrani was that single, long, metal road. Italian engineers had improved it to the stage of a second-class highway. They marked it here and there with attractive monoliths, ambitiously inscribed as milestones on the road to the destruction of British power in North Africa.

General Wavell and his staff officers studied the Italian position from every conceivable angle. Spying patrols were sent forward to watch Sidi Barrani day and night in order, for instance, to infer from movements where tank traps were. R.A.F. reconnaissance flights yielded yards and yards of photographic evidence, which was studied minutely. Sorties tested the strength of the defences. Finally, it was agreed that the assault on Sidi Barrani could succeed if it were delivered as a shocking surprise, and supported by the Royal Navy under Sir Alexander Cunningham and the Royal Air Force under Air Marshal Sir Arthur Longmore. Just as the Taranto raid strengthened the Royal Navy's position, however, the attack on Greece split the power of the R.A.F. in the Middle East. It was, nevertheless, to be the first occasion in military history when a major military plan was to depend largely for its success on the co-operation of the two sister Services.

War correspondents in Cairo, a few of whom had only the day before been in the desert with the units of the Army, were summoned to Headquarters on the morning of December 9th. Sir Archibald Wavell, standing easily in front of his business-like desk, said : " Gentlemen, this morning at dawn our troops opened attack against Sidi Barrani."

It was the biggest military news story since Dunkirk. No one had even suspected it.

The surprise hit the Italians even harder. When General Wavell decided that the Italian positions at Sidi Barrani were faulty, he decided he could take the position by delivering five attacks, all of which were interdependent on each other's success.

Sidi Barrani is on the coast. A little way ahead of it was an outpost known as the Maktila camp. On a curve south-west was another camp, Nibeiwa, then another, Safafi. Between Sidi Barrani and Nibeiwa was a collection of forts, the Tanunar Forts. The Italians expected any attack to come from the front—to hit the Maktila camp. Actually, General Wavell delivered it from the side, switching his troops under cover of darkness to a point opposite Nibeiwa camp.

Capture

The attack was launched by a small number of tanks which had manoeuvred around to the west side, or the " back " of the camp, where the defences were weakest. Within a few hours the whole camp collapsed, General Maletti, the general commanding, was killed, and the camp captured. Lavish stores, and an amazing amount of guns, lorries, tanks and ammunition were found. Food was piled high, like the wine-bottles. The Italians had been living like peaceful fighting cocks.

Immediately Nibeiwa camp fell, the tank group re-formed and made straight for the Tammar forts, roughly in a line with Sidi Barrani, to isolate the Safafi camp. The Tammar position was more sprawled than that at Nibeiwa, there being groups of forts. Most of them were defeated the same day, but it was not until the next morning that the whole position was completely under the domination of British Imperial forces.

Meantime, Maktila, the fort in front of Sidi Barrani, was bombarded heavily by units of the Royal Navy to such good effect that hundreds of its soldiers were streaming back towards Sidi Barrani, not knowing that a general attack was being launched on the whole front and that Sidi Barrani itself was about to be attacked from the flank.

While the group of tanks advanced from Nibeiwa, another group moved towards the coast between Safafi and Nibeiwa, and hit out for the coast road behind Sidi Barrani to cut off retreat from Sidi Barrani to Buq Buq, to Solium and beyond. This manoeuvre was successful because yet another armoured force struck at the Italians in Safafi, which prevented them sallying forth from there to head off the British forces rushing for the sea. A great number of Italian soldiers eventually retreated from there across the desert to Solium, attacked as they scattered over a wide area by R.A.F. and R.A.A.F. machines. Eventually they were rounded up by mechanised cavalry. Sidi Barrani was captured after a brisk fight on December 10th.

Clockwork

Even Lieutenant-General R. N. O'Connor, in charge of the Western Desert operations, was mildly startled by the suddenness and completeness of the victory. The question for the British authorities then was how far they should go ahead with what little they had at their disposal. But it did not require much consideration. General Wavell himself, in his writings, has said enough to reveal that he believes in " the lightning attack, a quick rain of blows on a bewildered adversary and victory by a knock-out".

Once having started to push the Italians, and finding that the front crumpled to the touch of vigour and surprise, the forces of the Army of the Nile rolled on like clockwork, pinning the Italians to the road by the sea, never giving them a second in which to establish order out of the chaos that soon developed in the long, slender bottle-neck beyond Solium down which the British drove them.

Within three weeks (by December 28th) of launching the attack from Mersa Matruh, the British Imperial Forces had shattered five Italian divisions—including one Blackshirt and two Libyan divisions and an armoured column. Prisoners totalled 38,114, of whom 24,845 were Italian officers and men, and such a vast amount of material was captured that it was almost an embarrassment. Certainly the prisoners were.

Bardia was bombarded during the night of December 12th-13th by a heavy unit of the Mediterranean Fleet, preparatory to the land forces moving up; it was bombed by the Fleet Air Arm and shelled again by the Navy two days later. General Wavell had such a ridiculously small land force that he could not afford to risk heavy casualties, which might have been the case if Bardia, sturdily defended by 40,000 odd Italian and native troops, had been rushed.

By December 15th British troops were operating in Libya. Solium fell quickly, after a stiff resistance, like the frontier forts of Capuzzo, Sidi Omar, Musaid and Shefferzen; in the south another small British and Australian mobile force was moving rapidly across the border towards Jarabub, an important fortified village and oasis where the Italians had a strong camp and which lies about 200 miles south-west on £ line from Fort Capuzzo.

Next day forces began to close round Bardia. On December 18th Italian troops were spotted falling back towards Tobruk. Bardia was being surrounded on the following day, although the great attack that was to shake Italy by its startling result was not yet launched. Up to that day 31,546 Italian prisoners had been taken, including 1,626 officers, generals among them. Captured guns counted over the extensive battlefield of Sidi Barrani and during the subsequent advance into Libya totalled 329, including twenty heavy and forty-eight light anti-aircraft guns. It was a *deb dele*.

Charged Singing "The Wizard of Oz"

Bardia toppled on Sunday, January 5th, 1941. A mighty pillar of Fascism lay in the glaring yellow sands of Libya.

Italian casualties in Bardia in killed and captured amounted to 2,041 officers and 42,827 men. In addition, our forces captured or destroyed 368 medium and field-guns; 26 heavy

anti-aircraft guns; 68 light guns; 13 medium tanks; 117 light tanks; and 708 transport vehicles. It was interesting to note that the high degree of unserviceability found in the equipment, and more especially in the mechanical transport, resulted largely from our bombardment, but it also showed complete lack of maintenance during and after the Italian rout from Sidi Barrani.

Food and wine were raked together in small mountains. Topping the lot were gleaming Italian dress uniforms. Official papers were as thick as snow. A fortified town which the Italians had laboured for four years to make unassailable was captured twenty-four days after the first British shell was thrown into it by the Royal Navy.

Spearhead of the attack on Bardia were Australians. It marked the first great engagement fought by Australians since 1914-18. The sons had nothing to learn from their fathers in initiative, courage, or gallantry. Until the attack on Bardia, British mechanised troops had done most of the initial work.

What helped to make Bardia more difficult to capture than Sidi Barrani was partly the difference in the terrain. The chief difficulty, however, was the strong perimeter defence line of strong points joined by barbed wire. It needed much more cautious approach. Deep *wadis* slashed the ground, which was hard and rocky in places, honeycombed with caves. Artillery and machine-guns found fine defensive positions in the caves. As the invaders scrambled down into, and up out of a number of the *wadis*, approaching the town they were frequently liable to come under direct, intense fire. Chiefly, these posts were only silenced by tanks or infantry that could get in at close quarters. When this happened, the defenders, sometimes at a considerable distance, invariably put up their hands. They showed remarkably little fight, although until then they fought stubbornly.

Lying about, waiting to go into action, many a platoon of Australians sang, cracked jokes, jested. As they received their orders, several of them marched off singing, "We're off to meet the wizard, the wonderful wizard of Oz," and "... Come out, come out, wherever you are!" Some of them went through Bardia singing. As many as 2,000 Italians came out of one limestone cave.

Tactics

The plan for the capture of Bardia was almost identical in fundamental respects with the one employed to capture Sidi Barrani. It provided for the cutting out and isolation of the town by armoured groups, then the launching of the assault by shock troops.

The Times, in an editorial, stated :—

" Once again, with no surprise possible except in the direction of the actual thrust, the tactical skill displayed seems to have been remarkable. The manner in which the outer defences were penetrated night after night until the enemy's dispositions, his fortifications, and especially the nature and position of his tank-traps became an open book to our troops is particularly praiseworthy and encouraging. It was just in this manner . . . that German patrols prepared the way for the assault upon French forces last summer. In the last war Australian troops proved themselves superior to German in night patrolling, and it is now evident that the sons have inherited the skill and daring of the fathers."

Italian generals did not have second thoughts about deserting troops in the field the moment a solid attack was thought to be imminent. There was something ironically amusing about *communiques* issued from G.H.Q., Cairo, which observed :

" It transpires that on the night before Bardia fell the Blackshirt Corps Commander and his two Blackshirt Divisional Commanders deserted their troops, leaving the Regular Commanders to fight on. One of the Blackshirt Commanders has since been picked up with the bulk of his staff wandering north of Bardia."

Or,

" Yet another of the Blackshirt Generals who absented himself just before the capture of Bardia has been retrieved while trying to escape on foot towards Tobruk."

Rome wireless, commenting in English on the capture of Bardia, declared:

" The British were employing no less than a quarter of a million men. They were supported by a thousand aeroplanes and the whole of the Eastern Mediterranean Fleet.

" The defeat will not make any difference to the Italian people, who are of yeoman stock, quite different from the neurotic community found to-day in Britain."

The Italians in their official war *communiqui* stated :

" The last strongholds of Bardia which were still resisting fell on the evening of January 5th. The Italian troops during 25 days of siege wrote sublime pages of heroism and inflicted heavy losses on the enemy. Heavy losses in equipment, in killed, wounded and missing were also sustained by the Italians."

Key to Libya

Nevertheless, the speed with which the advance across Libya was carried out, the capture of one Italian stronghold after another, the vast numbers of prisoners taken and the few casualties suffered by our troops might well lead people to suppose that the military difficulties were slight, the enemy's powers of resistance or will to resist negligible, and the only real obstacles to be overcome those of distance, terrain and weather, great though these were.

This is very far from being the case.

The Italians started by fighting well. Their tactics were not the best for desert warfare, and before their advance into Egypt began the continuous successes of our patrols in minor engagements must have been discouraging to them. They were, in fact, depressed by their lack of success against our tanks. Undoubtedly, after the battle of Sidi Barrani their morale was seriously shaken, but they are a Latin race, quick to feel and to recover enthusiasm, and a single success on their part, a single blunder on ours, would have seen them with their tails up, prepared to resist to the utmost.-

When they fell back on Bardia this was no counsel of despair.

Bardia was the key to Libya, and Mussolini rightly described it as the bastion of the Colony and the bastion of Fascism. Graziani decided on holding Bardia because he believed it to be impregnable, and a study of the defensive works of the place shows that there is no reason to suppose that it would not have been impregnable if the disposition of the troops holding the posts had been sound, if the tactics employed had been suitable and if the sighting of their guns had been better. As it was, the strength of the redoubts was often nullified by bad sighting of weapons.

Bardia was, in fact, a very formidable nut to crack.

In the forward defences there was an anti-tank ditch which had to be bridged. Behind it there was a permanent wire fence twelve feet wide and very dense, with land-mines inside it and out. Behind the fence came the redoubts, set closely together, each completely surrounded by a cement ditch eight feet wide and six feet deep, with wire round this again, and with cement communication-trenches leading to dug-outs built with five feet of reinforced concrete and well stocked with ammunition. This was the outer line of defence.

Inside there was an inner ring of a similar type, and gun emplacements, machine-gun posts and pill-boxes on points of vantage. This enormously strong position was held by a garrison of 45,000 men; they were excellently equipped, had a mass of artillery of all sorts, with plenty of ammunition, and

their gunners were good men who always fought well, often serving their guns until they were shot down at close range or over-run by our tanks. There were, however, weaknesses in the Italian defences which we were able to discover and exploit successfully. What those weaknesses were must obviously remain secret.

Decisive Factors

Not only at Bardia, but in the other places held by the Italians, they were always numerically superior. They could at any time have concentrated at the part to be attacked forces far more numerous than those employed in the attack on that point. If they failed to do so it was because of the superior tactics of the British, which invariably took the Italians off their guard.

It is not too much to say that in every case the numbers employed by the British in the spearhead of the assault were, in that relative sense, very small, and they could not have expected or hoped that they would succeed in overcoming the defence but for certain factors which proved decisive.

The first of these was the co-operation between the Army, the Navy and the Air Force, which neutralised large parts of the defence. The second was the superiority of our tanks, both in their use and in themselves—their apparent imperviousness to Italian anti-tank-gun fire was fatal to Italian morale, and the brilliant work done throughout by the armoured division in hemming in the enemy forces gave them a feeling of claustrophobia which numbed any offensive spirit on their part.

Then there was the extraordinarily skilful planning of the campaign, which had been worked out to the minutest detail; the long and careful rehearsal of those plans by the troops, bold conception and bold execution, and the high morale of the men. Even so, there was no easy victory.

From individual instances reported at Bardia and elsewhere it is clear that very little was required—one bad mistake on the British part, one failure to maintain the time schedule—to tip the scale of success the other way. As it was, if mistakes were made, they were covered up by the dash and initiative of the officers and men engaged. The smallness of casualties bears no proportion whatsoever to the amount of active fighting involved or to its serious character: the plans aimed not at general success along this line, but at a knock-out blow delivered at a vital point; any fumbling, any reversion to old-fashioned methods, any failure to act up to the newly-evolved tactics of the *blitzkrieg*, would have involved the British in heavy losses; but success, if gained at once, was vital, and success was invariably gained.

That hard fighting brought the destruction as a fighting force of an army of 200,000 men at the cost of less than 2,000 casualties is the best tribute to the generalship, to the training and to the fighting quality of the Imperial forces.

Hats Off!

As the Prime Minister of Australia said, in congratulating the troops on their valour and success, it was a great compliment to the A.L.F. that General Wavell should have entrusted to it the initial assault which succeeded so dramatically that the final capture of Bardia became a matter only of hours. Actually, the Imperial Force fully occupied the town in the evening of January 5th. So taken by surprise were the Italians that untouched meals were found on many a table.

Congratulations, which will always be cherished by the A.L.F., flowed to Australia. Mr. Churchill cabled Mr. Menzies:—

"I send you the heartiest congratulations from all friends here on the magnificent manner in which the Australian offensive against Bardia has opened. The piercing of the western sector and the capture of at least 5,000 prisoners in itself constitutes a fine feat of arms, and is, I trust and believe, the prelude to ever greater success."

Viscount Cranborne, Secretary of State for the Dominions, cabled :—

"Heartiest congratulations on the memorable part played by the Australian forces in the victory at Bardia. By their courage and dash, they have added fresh lustre to their name, and rendered inestimable service to our common cause."

New Zealand, Canada and South Africa, through their Prime Ministers, expressed their congratulations; and in his turn, Mr. Menzies cabled Major-General Mackay, Commanding the A.L.F. at Bardia, through Lieutenant-General Sir Thomas Blarney, the G.O.C. :—

"We are all proud of you and send best wishes for a continuance of this brilliant success. Your long and patient training with great courage and resource have once more published Australia to all the world. We give you all three cheers."

Highlights

A tabulation of some of the highlights in the express-like advance from Bardia to Benghazi, via Tobruk, gives a vivid glimpse of the speed with which it was performed :—

January 1st—Activity all along the front is continuing.

More and more prisoners are being rounded up, herded into compounds. Sand hangs over them in clouds as they move about. (Ultimately, a great many of these prisoners are to be interned in India, South Africa, Egypt; a few to be brought to Great Britain.)

January 2nd.—An Australian Cavalry Regiment lost two men and three men wounded, besides losing three vehicles in an attempt to prevent enemy aircraft landing at Jarabub. Enemy casualties: seven Italians killed, one seriously wounded. We have only a small mobile force here, watching Jarabub. It is a strange place, dropped in the middle of nothing—but a priceless oasis.

To get to Jarabub from Mersa Matruh in motor convoys you move over vague desert tracks with a guide, bumping for more than a hundred miles at a stretch without seeing so much as a sprig of camel thorn. Coarse gravel sand whips your face. Occasionally you see ahead, just in time, a "white spot"—a patch of fine sand which in the desert, if you run into it in a heavy vehicle, is rather like running into a soft spot on a beach. The vehicle sinks into it, and you have to wait for someone to pull you out. You might have to wait a day. A wandering Bedouin on a camel cannot help you. Sometimes, a mile away, like a ship at sea, a lorry passes, but does not see you, though you wave frantically, as shipwrecked mariners do at the sight of a mast low down on the horizon.

Around Jarabub there is an acre of salty swamp. The white citadel stands gleaming above the rocky fort. It is just the sort of "lost patrol" outpost you see in movies about the Foreign Legion. Large pieces of rock have been used like bricks to build strongly fortified walls, with loopholes for guns. The walls run round the village. A rocky hill honeycombed with gun-emplacements and machine-gun nests is the Gibraltar of Jarabub. Flung out some distance from the village itself, there are strong points held by garrisons. Natives live there, families of them, and priests take great care of the mosque. It seems an impregnable place. Miles of barbed wire protect the fortified emplacements.

January 3rd.—Attack on the defences of Bardia begins at dawn, Australian troops penetrating the outer defences. We have gone ahead cautiously, setting off land-mines, springing all sorts of cleverly conceived booby-traps.

The heat is strong at times during the day, though quite cold at night. Some men wear great-coats in the day-time. Rain, which fell in torrents last week, has left the sand packed fairly hard, fine and gravelly sand alike.

January 4th.—Australian troops penetrate the outer defences, and have now struck in to a depth of two miles on a

nile-mile front in the centre of Bardia's defences. Ingeniously concealed land-mines and other novelties are ferreted out by our knowing sappers.

January 5th.—Bardia is captured. Australians expected more Italian air activity, more dive-bombing and dive-machine-gunning attacks; but the R.A.F. contribution, not as great as it would be but for the drain on our bombers for work in Greece, has succeeded excellently in pinning the *Regia Aeronautica* to the ground, humbling it to the dust. Mastery has been gained over the much-vaunted Italian force.

January 6th.—According to official computations, the R.A.F. has now made about 2,000 bombing raids, 700 of them being in Libya. Nearly 600 Italian aircraft have been destroyed; less than 100 British machines. In the Western Desert alone approximately 200 Italian aeroplanes have been smashed completely.

January 7th.—The total British and Australian casualties in Bardia are estimated at less than 600. The Indian troops continue to play a conspicuous part. Obviously, Graziani is wondering whether he can make a successful stand at Tobruk. We do not intend that he shall.

January 8th-15th.—Methodically, the advance on Tobruk is maintained, while the R.A.F. heavily bomb the town. Tobruk's aerodrome, El Adem, is captured (January 6th) with forty aircraft damaged by the R.A.F. While preparations for the reduction of Tobruk are proceeding, our mechanised forces are now (January 9th) operating west of the town.

Australian patrols (on January 13th) are obtaining useful information about enemy wire and are near trenches at Tobruk (*sic*).

January 16th-21st.—The Australian Divisional Cavalry Regiment, less one squadron, with one troop of a Field Regiment (25-pounders) at Melfa, watch Jarabub and tracks in the desert running north.

January 18th.—Australian artillery is effectively hitting petrol and ammunition dumps in the south-east area of Tobruk's defences. Five enemy bombers over Jarabub did not land, but the Australian Cavalry Regiment (watching Jarabub) report that bombs dropped in their quarter without, however, doing any damage.

January 19th-22nd.—Around Tobruk the net tightens. Early this morning (January 21st) an attack was launched on Tobruk; the operations are proceeding satisfactorily. Shortly after noon, Imperial troops, actively supported by the Royal Navy and the Royal Air Force, successfully penetrated both the outer and inner defences of Tobruk to a depth of over five

miles on a broad front. Many prisoners have been taken, including one Italian general. The Italian cruiser *San Giorgio* in Tobruk harbour is in flames, as are also a number of dumps of stores, petrol and the like.

Dusk on the 21st found our attack had penetrated the defences of Tobruk to a depth of eight miles, and our forward troops had firmly established themselves in positions directly overlooking, and within three miles of, the town itself.

Shortly after midday on the 22nd, Australian troops entered Tobruk. Mopping-up operations in the western sector of the perimeter are proceeding. The remainder of the defences are in our hands. We have got it.

January 23rd.—Tobruk was captured last night. Among the thousands of prisoners, a Corps Commander, a Divisional Commander, two other generals, an admiral and a number of senior army and naval staff officers. About 200 guns of all calibres have been captured with quantities of other military materials.

Our casualties are under 500—amazing fact.

January 24th.—Advance elements of the Australian forces are tackling the enemy with whom they have caught up about three miles east of Derna. A column of Italian medium tanks is dispersed, two being captured and four destroyed.

The Australian Cavalry raided the enemy post immediately west of Jarabub and the garrison withdrew to Jarabub. Jarabub is a tough coconut.

January 25th.—Bardia made a big difference to our supply problem, but Tobruk virtually solves it. The Royal Navy is taking aboard Italian prisoners by the thousand, taking them back to Egypt. It clears the roads and saves us wasting men guarding them, although they are docile enough. The Italians are in such long, grey-green crocodiles that you can jump in a car at some spots and drive for a mile passing men all the way, kicking up dust-clouds as they march. Out over the desert you see other small dust-clouds—prisoners too. Dotted about among them are their deserted tanks and lorries in scores.

Perhaps one of the greatest worries General Wavell had in attacking Sidi Barrani was how to supply with water our troops advancing that seventy-five miles. They set off with only a five days' supply. Now there is less worry about water. The Navy is mimping it in hundreds of gallons. If the surprise tactic had not brought success at Sidi Barrani, lack of water would have compelled the Commander to break off the engagement.

The extraordinary pace of the Australian attack, as a tour of the place by our soldiers shows, probably reduced the

enemy's chances of carrying out successfully his demolitions. It is in pretty good order.

January 26th.—One Australian Brigade group is in an area ten miles south-east of Derna with one forward battalion overlooking the town. Late in the day our forward troops came in contact with the Italians.

January 27th-29th.—An Australian Brigade is in action close to and south-west of Derna. Our pressure is increasing hourly.

January 30th.—Australian troops capture Derna. The capture is completed before noon. Preparations to move further west are already in hand. Fighting in Derna was among the stiffest yet encountered.

Italians fought well before they were forced to surrender or were killed. Many of them died at their posts. A thin veil of sand already covers the faces of the dead. They lie on their backs or on their sides, huddled up in queer postures, legs doubled up backwards under them, their fingers crooked as if clutching something. Sand sifts quietly over them, filling up the cracks in their boots, filling up the creases in their uniforms, tinges their beards yellow or grey. Sometimes their appearance suggests sandstone effigies. It is the same everywhere.

We are going to roll on. General Wavell believes strongly in maintaining the greatest pressure on the enemy. All Italian positions in the immediate vicinity have been evacuated.

The Australians covered the ninety miles from Tobruk in less than eight days. They sped from arid wasteland to the fertile, verdant fringe of the province of Cyrenaica. Palm trees wave, coolly inviting, in the dazzling white streets. The curse of thirst has vanished. Water is plentiful. Ahead, the ground is not easy to travel over, but spirits are high. Success is a tonic.

Already the armoured units have moved south-west to Mekili, striking inland, cutting across country to a point south on the coastal road below Benghazi, while other forces are ready to go on by the northern coastal road. By forking off towards Mekili, the armoured force is going to make a big loop south-west over the desert and try to cut off the Italians' southward retreat from Benghazi.

January 31st.—The Australian Brigades in Derna area are given orders to push westwards. Progress is hindered by demolitions which the Italians have made in a determined effort not to be caught in a trap, as most of their comrades have been in retreating. This is a big change in Italian strategy. It is also of the same spirit of the defence of Derna: dogged. These Italians are good fighters.

An Australian Brigade is ordered to proceed to Mekili

to cover the field-service depot being formed there, also the landing-ground and water resources. Meantime, an Armoured Division based on Mekili is patrolling to north, north-west and west.

February 1st-4th.—Australians catch up with some Italians only ten miles south-west of Derna.

Forward elements of an Australian Division advancing west along the coast road entered, at 4 p.m. on the 3rd, Cyrene, the old capital of the province of Cyrenaica. They had advanced nearly 400 miles from the railhead at Mersa Matruh in fifty-six days, in which time their Division had defeated the Italians in four big actions.

Here, in the western region of Libya, there are extensive areas of red, volcanic soil, ideal for farming. Dotted along the coast are scenes reminiscent of Australia. Attractive pastoral pictures are composed of white farmhouses—a little bigger than those east—a cottage or two, yellow haystacks, new crops, ploughed and tilled fields, straight roads. In the fields Italian farmers work as the British Imperial troops go by. Now and again an Arab passes, calm.

A good bitumen road runs between Bardia and Benghazi, linking the big towns Tobruk, Derna, Cyrene. Just here, around Derna, this road ribbons its way across huge *wadis* precipitously. The Cyrenaica main road is a fair example of roadmaking. And could anything be more beautiful than Derna, so artistically planned?

Italian resistance at Barce is stiff. It ends on the night of the 4th. It is a large, white, clean town, standing on a plain which is obviously very fertile. Farmsteads are dotted all over it, a regular patchwork-quilt effect as you look down from the escarpment. It is cold; rain is on the way.

February 5th.—An Australian mechanised cavalry squadron—using Australian-built and British-built carriers—which has been the vanguard of the Australian advance from Derna, has so urged on the Italians that at times the enemy achieves such an increase in the speed of his withdrawal towards Benghazi that the Australians frequently lose contact with him—temporarily. Demolitions by Italians, including bridge-blowing, hold them up sometimes.

This squadron went ahead from Derna to deal with Italian rearguard actions and to eliminate strong outposts of smaller towns—rather, villages—which lie at points between the bigger, more well-known towns. All these small towns, crowded with civilians, have given the Australians stirring welcomes. Perhaps what has helped a good deal is the fact that in many of them, the moment the Italian garrisons began to withdraw, the Libyan Arabs started looting. At Benina, a

large airport roughly ten miles east of Benghazi, a small Italian patrol put up a stiff fight.

Fires are burning in Benghazi, which has been raided by the R.A.F.

The Italians are flying the coop at Benghazi. Crowds of civilians are streaming away, too, in buses and cars and on foot.

But the R.A.F. are watching them. So we have known for some hours that they are trying to get out of the trap we are preparing for them. They are trying to make their way to Agedabia, following south along the coast road. A signal has been flashed to a portion of the Armoured Division, under General Creagh, based at Mekili. He is now rapidly covering the 150 miles across inhospitable country in record time. They are in the desert in heavy, clumsy, bone-jarring vehicles; it is excessively warm, a sand-storm blowing.

Sand is flying in clouds, sticking to your eyes, mouth, driving in your ears, up your nostrils. Have a drink and there is a yellow film on your mug of water before you have finished pouring it out; also water is scarce in this spot. They drive tirelessly, as if nothing can stop them: It is a wild race, the wildest of the whole campaign. They intend to win. The plan is that one unit should cut the coastal road about ten or fifteen miles farther north than the other. The force that is to branch to the north is to be the striking force. It is to hit about where the Italian leading columns will be. The force going towards the south will be something in the nature of a second line, a barrier to block any vehicles or infantry that pass through or round the striking force to the north.

Afternoon: and both forces reach the sea, the one to the south, the striking force to the north. Between the striking force and Benghazi are columns of lorries and infantry and guns and tanks—roughly 12,000 Italians. A battle begins between the striking force and the Italians. Gun-flames flash in the evening. It is to prove to be one of the greatest tank battles yet fought.

February 6th.—Benghazi is captured. It falls like a ripe plum to an advance Australian Brigade, including battalions from Victoria, New South Wales and Western Australia, supported by a New South Wales artillery regiment and an armoured force. A magnificent advance; a thunderbolt. Nothing could have been better. The Australians, rightly, are acclaimed. The great tank battle to the south continues, few Australians in the north being aware that it is going on.

There is no fight for Benghazi. All that happens is that the Australian Brigadier from his headquarters—a Durnt-out shell of an aerodrome at Benina—sends a group of four officers and

a handful of soldiers to Benghazi to tell the city's elders that the Imperial troops are coming. The little khaki group trundle off in three machine-gun carriers, a white flag of truce flapping from a stick.

Arabs, some colourfully dressed, pass them, their donkey-carts crammed with tables, curtains, boxes. The Arabs are going away from Benghazi. Most likely they have looted the gear in the donkey-carts. They salute, raising their hands solemnly in the Fascist style, which for them is much the same thing as it is for an Englishman who raises his hat to the Prime Minister in token of his esteem: a mark of respect, not an indication of Fascist sympathies.

So this is Benghazi. A vision of blue sea, white paint, green vegetation. Nice place; cool, palm trees everywhere; pleasant, glistening buildings; smart, like a town on the Riviera, French or Italian. Population: 65,000, including many Italians.

In waddle the three machine-gun carriers, the soldiers alert. No shots are fired at them, but odd rifle-fire is heard. There is an acrid smell of smoke from a few burning buildings, but things look fairly normal. Shopping, apparently, is being done; a few people wag a hand, a few others raise a cheer. Special constables who met the group on the outskirts of the city take them to the civic dignitaries. Everything is very polite. The Mayor agrees to visit the Brigadier. He goes at once, smiling.

Next morning, at nine o'clock, so the Brigadier tells them, the British Imperial forces will enter Benghazi to accept formally the surrender.

Precisely at nine o'clock the next morning the Brigadier enters Benghazi, preceded by a company of Victorian infantry in trucks. Thousands of Arabs, Jews, Greeks, Italians and others are gathered in the neat, small square, lined with white two- and three-storey buildings, where the Town Hall is situated. New South Wales infantry-men march into the square. All the soldiers wear their great-coats, grey with dust. A great burst of cheering and clapping as the Brigadier arrives in the square. He goes up to the Mayor and the civic fathers and tells them that Major-General Mackay will not be able to arrive until later to take command of the city.

So the citizens are told to go about their work as if nothing had happened. Soon, our soldiers are filling the cafes, drinking coffee and wine, eating cakes, bread and biscuits and butter.

February fif.—Crunching into the Italian line of retreat towards Tripoli, below Benghazi, a portion of the Armoured Division, on the evening of the 5th, gave the Italians the surprise of their lives. The British force broke into the

Italian line one hundred odd miles south of Benghazi, at Beda Fomm.

But the Italians had more than 100 medium tanks, a great many light tanks and more than 120 field-guns and anti-tank guns, there being about twenty more field-guns than anti-tank guns. The Italians attempted to break out, making persistent attacks with their tanks and guns, thinking they could pulp the British.

So complete was the surprise that the Italian commanders admitted, after the battle, that they had considered the possibility of their being attacked along the southern route, but had ruled it out as impossible in the time. Accordingly, the Italian force attempting to retreat to Tripoli was surprised in column of route with precautions only against armoured cars—not tanks. Finding their one means of escape cut off, the enemy delivered attack after attack with great dash and force.

The battle at Beda Fomm between these khaki (British) and dark-green (Italian) iron crabs went on until nine o'clock this morning. But the British tank armour was too strong for the Italian gun-fire; and the British tactics were incomparably better. The Italians made a great many serious mistakes about which, naturally, the British military authorities are silent.

Imagine a treeless, almost featureless desert, flat, reddish and rocky in patches. Over this the battle was fought. The battlefield was as flat as a calm sea. The tanks churned over it in groups, in waves, their guns blazing. Artillery and tanks alone dominated the scene. Motorised infantry was there but it had no very large part to play.

Prisoners just walked away, wandering among the sand dunes, out of range of the guns, until they were rounded up to-day. There are thousands of them. All the Italian attacks were repulsed. At least sixty Italian tanks were destroyed.

General Creagh's men are highly-trained specialised soldiers; they were hand-picked for just such a job before the campaign was launched from Egypt. While the battle was in progress, more and more Italian armoured units arrived on the scene, trundling along from the general direction of Benghazi. The British cruiser and light tanks behaved wonderfully, attacking and mopping them up. The British, in this great battle, showed themselves masters of tank warfare.

An Australian Brigade group, after their splendid advance along the northern route, arrived on the Italians' rear just as the action closed.

General Tellera, Commander of the Italian Army in Cyrenaica, who fought the battle from a tank, refusing to

believe his stronger forces could be defeated, died from injuries received in the battle. Senior Australian officers attended his burial in Benghazi. Marshal Graziani's second-in-command in Libya, General Bergonzoli ("Electric Whiskers"), was among the several generals and other high-ranking officers captured.

Now, here this morning, the whole area is quiet. The scene reminds you of a gigantic junk-heap, littered with stationary wheeled vehicles and silent guns. Apart from the tanks that were battered to uselessness and those whose crews surrendered, there are hundreds of lorries. Dead Italians loll in the driving-seats of some of the vehicles.

All over, bar the shouting, practically. Natives clap hands, salute British and Australian officers, wave rags and handkerchiefs. Tired troops look forward to a little relaxation and to spending their money. Not yet, though. Push on to the Cyrenaica-Tripolitana border first.

Note the day's *comntuniqud*, issued from G.H.Q., Cairo:

"Benghazi surrendered yesterday. By brilliant operation, British armoured forces moving south of the Jebel AkkLar established themselves astride the Italian lines of communication leading southwards from Benghazi.

"At the same time, Australian troops advancing from Derna gave the retreating enemy forces no respite. Demoralised and out-manoevred, the enemy were unable to put into effect plans for the defence of Benghazi."

And the next day's dry eulogy of General Creagh's battle against time in the race from Mekili, skirting the wild, stony Jebel Akdar country:

"In the operations leading up to the capture of Benghazi, a British armoured formation made a forced march of 150 miles in thirty hours, brushing aside resistance en route, to close the enemy's last line of retreat. Surprised by the speed of this brilliant exploit, the enemy, endeavouring to withdraw from Benghazi, found themselves finally hemmed in.

"Numerically superior Italian armoured forces, supported by infantry and artillery, then made determined efforts to break through our cordon. Every attempt was repulsed with heavy losses to the enemy. After sixty of their tanks had become battle casualties, the enemy finally ceased fighting."

Patrols reached the frontier between Cyrenaica and Tripolitania on February 8th—just when the Australian Prime Minister, Mr. Menzies, flying from Australia to Britain via the

Middle East, arrived among British and Imperial troops at Tobruk to congratulate them on behalf of the people of Australia, and himself to be greeted by the spectacle of an Australian soldier's " digger " hat waving at the head of the town's tall flagpole. There was no Australian flag at hand, so one of those famous slouch hats was pegged to the cord and run up instead.

Causes of Campaign's Success

The appointment of a British military governor of the Province of Cyrenaica brought to a close the first Libyan campaign. It will take its place among the great military achievements of all time. As an example of co-operation between a British Imperial Army, the Royal Air Force and the Royal Navy it is outstanding and superb. As a whole it was, in the fullest sense, a dazzling Imperial achievement—a fact which was emphasised by the British Government soon after its close in appointing General Blarney, then G.O.C., A.I.F. in the Middle East, to the position of Deputy Commander-in-Chief of the British forces and Imperial forces in the Middle East under General Wavell, and by the knighthood conferred on Major-General Mackay, who, as General Officer Commanding a Division, played an important part in the campaign.

Success was undoubtedly due in the first place to General Wavell, who was responsible for general strategy; but he insisted that due credit be given to his subordinates and collaborators, General Wilson, commanding the Army in Egypt, General O'Connor, in charge of field operations, and General Creagh, commanding the Armoured forces, who worked out the scheme of the land attack and put it into operation.

Details supplied by General Wavell show how much was due to the Armoured force which played so large a part in this lightning war.

This truly historic success is all the more significant when its causes are investigated, for it was no fluke. It was due to three factors. First, the absolute moral ascendancy of our troops; second, the excellence and thoroughness of their training; and third, the standard and quality of their equipment.

From the outset of the war against Italy the Armoured Division seized the initiative and lost no opportunities of attacking and carrying the war into the enemy's country. In the early days British armoured units penetrated into thousands of square miles of hostile territory, surprising the enemy's outposts, interrupting his columns, harassing his communica-

tions, and generally making him feel insecure and hesitant in spite of his superiority of ten to one in numbers and of twenty or thirty to one in guns.

If British armoured units appeared, even in small numbers, to threaten the Italian line of retreat, the British moral ascendancy was such that the Italian's first impulse was to exaggerate the strength of the forces engaged, and fall back on the defensive, instead of using their superior forces to break through. This British moral ascendancy was the keynote of our subsequent operations.

Italian Losses

Within seven days of launching his counter-attack, General Wavell had (by December 16th) swept the Italians out of Egypt despite the fact that the Italians had been consolidating their position in Egypt for three months. The British had captured approximately 40,000 prisoners, enormous stores, large numbers of tanks, lorries, guns and ammunition of all kinds, while they and the Free French sustained less than a thousand casualties, mostly through wounds, and lost comparatively no equipment.

By the time Bardia was captured, eight Italian divisions and one armoured group had been destroyed. Prisoners totalled 80,000, including nine generals and 3,250 officers. Thousands of the enemy were killed. Captured material included two hundred tanks, more than eight hundred guns, 1,300 machine-guns, besides motor lorries and other vehicles, stores, ammunition and gear of all kinds. The British had lost less than 1,500 as casualties, only a few of whom were killed. The advance into Libya was less than a month old!

At the battle of Beda Fomm the British took 20,000 prisoners, captured two hundred and sixteen guns of all kinds, one hundred and twelve tanks, 1,500 lorries and a small mountain of ammunition and stores. British losses in men and material were almost unbelievably light.

Between December 9th, 1940, and February 8th, 1941 (sixty-two days), British and Anzac troops captured 133,295 prisoners and a total of 1,300 guns of all descriptions. The amount of ammunition was almost countless, stores were in high stacks, and tanks and motor vehicles were in hundreds.

Greatest Desert Tank Battle

An important historical fact about the Libyan campaign is that it was the first occasion on which two fully mechanised armies had opposed each other in the desert. Dramatically, this fact was crystallised in the unforgettable battle of Beda Fomm. In itself, the battle was remarkable because it was

"WHO SAID
•HITLER?"

A breezy snapshot of
an Australian sapper
and a British Royal
Engineer, sharing a
pneumatic drill,
strengthening the de-
fences of besieged
Tobruk.



THE WRECKED
AND SILENCED
GUN

Over the Western Desert, the British Imperial motor lorries whirr, churning the sand, rolling on to Benghazi, passing one quietened Italian gun-post after another.



fought in complete contradiction to military text-books. Tactically, it was as unorthodox as Commodore Harwood's handling of the Battle of the River Plate.

Two British officers can take credit for it—General O'Connor, the Corps Commander, who was responsible to General Wavell for the advance from Sidi Barrani to Benghazi, and General Creagh, commander of the Armoured force.

The plain fact is that the battle was never planned to take place in the circumstances in which it did finally. It just happened. This meant that Staff College rules went by the board, and the outcome had to depend wholly on the degree of brilliance of the leadership, courage and individual initiative.

After the fall of Tobruk, and as the Imperial troops were motored through Gazala, General O'Connor believed that the Italians were falling back rapidly in order to make a stand at Benghazi. So he decided to send the Australians on round the northern coastal road for a frontal attack on that city, and to despatch the Armoured force, under General Creagh, in a long loop south-west across the desert *via* Mekili to catch the Italians in the rear.

The Armoured force was to appear approximately one hundred miles south of Benghazi, cutting the road. This was to be a comparatively leisurely trip for the Armoured force; they were to take their time, since it was believed there was no great hurry, and partly because it was known that the barely-defined route was one of the worst imaginable. It was expected that General Creagh's force of tanks and supply lorries would stay at least a week at Mekili to help build up a depot of supplies, and that other depots would be established *en route*.

No sooner had the Armoured force ambled into Mekili than a wireless message was signalled to General Creagh telling him that the Italians were pouring out of Benghazi. Hopes of a leisurely advance collapsed. Within an hour the Armoured force was grinding its way over rock, clay and sand, frantically seeking the faint trail, men straining their eyes behind the celluloid eye-shields they wore. A howling sandstorm was moving across the desert. The irony of the situation was that only the previous day, a patrol which had been sent out to scout the country returned, bone-weary, to report that it was "hopeless country".

Everything in the vehicles was sacrificed for things absolutely essential for fighting. Every superfluous ounce was stripped from them. "Give us enough petrol and ammunition," declared General Creagh, "and we will starve if necessary."

That was the spirit in which the advance column moved off—detachments of the Hussars, Royal Horse Artillery with anti-

tank guns, a rifle regiment, and R.A.F. armoured cars. A few hours behind it lumbered the main column. It included the 11th Hussars and the Rifle Brigade.

A stranger sight could not be imagined in a desert.- The great columns lurched and ploughed and bumped for mile after mile. Dust curtains obscured the horizon. They were veils of varying thicknesses. Sometimes it was almost impossible to see through them. Visibility was frequently reduced to a few yards. Supply lorries strayed from the columns, got lost, and miraculously looped back to another part of another column.

No one knew the exact route. Only the general direction of the drive was common knowledge. Navigation was tricky not only because of the sketchy maps and the sandstorm, but also because of the absence of landmarks. Discomfort abounded. Sand, dirt and flies. Visors on the tanks quickly clogged. When the men put their heads over the top to see to steer, the sand flayed them. Boulders, loose rock, ragged, undulating land were all around them. Speed in places was reduced to two miles an hour.

A Hundred Minutes to Spare

The advance column struck the escarpment above the road from Benghazi soon after noon on February 5th. The first men to look down on it had their hearts in their mouths. Were they too late? A glance excited—and satisfied. Traffic was running normally. The wild race had been won. It was a sign that the retreating army had not yet got as far as this. How far away they were, however, could not be guessed. The news was flashed to the main column. The advance force, concealed, waited and watched. They were almost above Beda Fomm.

Time proved that the British had won the race by exactly a hundred minutes. As the hundredth minute ticked by, the head of the advance Italian column came into sight, innocent of the surprising danger ahead. But in that hundred minutes General Creagh had signalled his orders, planned his attack. The British advance column was told to meet the Italian advance column head-on, another section was to move along and strike towards the rear, while other sections were to pound the flanks.

The Italian column was enormous, stretching for ten to twelve miles, and composed of heavy, medium and light tanks, armoured cars by the score, machine-gun carriers, motor-cycles, buses commandeered in Benghazi for the special purpose of moving the remnants of Mussolini's proud army into the

safety of Tripoli. The main British force had not arrived when the advance column attacked, opening fire with artillery directed at the leading vehicles. These shots flung the head of the column into confusion and brought the first part of it to a sudden standstill, toppled lorries blocking the way.

Hopelessly outnumbered in infantry, tanks and artillery, the British hung on like terriers at the heels of a stampeding herd. So mobile were they, striking here and there with lightning rapidity, that their audacity and courage undoubtedly gave the bewildered Italians the impression that they were being attacked by a much superior force.

Wherever the Italians turned to break through, they were countered, even if it was by only a single tank, a thin line of infantrymen or a machine-gun. In parts, the Italians fought well: out generally they lacked leadership (General Tellera was killed on the first day), and the rank-and-file, unlike the British, showed no initiative. On the evening of the second day the battle was almost over. Thousands of Italian soldiers wandered among the litter and the debris, waiting to be rounded up as prisoners.

War Maps for Commanders

In helping to make a war map for General Headquarters, pilots of the Royal Air Force Army Co-operation Squadron risk their lives, often lose them, in a way few other pilots of the R.A.F. are called upon to do.

Enterprise, audacity and fortitude are three prime essentials. Without these the daring reconnaissance flights over the enemy's fortified positions at apparently suicidally-low altitudes, with cameras automatically photographing the whole area, could not be made.

In all offensive operations it is necessary to have as much information about the positions in front of you as it is possible to gather. Consequently, reconnaissance flights are as commonplace as patrols. New discoveries, such as fresh concentrations of troops, different dispositions, are reported and pencilled on the staff maps*

But when a strongly fortified town like Bardia, Tobruk or Derna is to be assaulted, a fortress in which most of the advantages lie with the defenders, then, if thousands of lives are to be saved, the R.A.F. Army Co-operation Squadron has to exercise all its daring and courage in low, steady flights on rigidly set courses that criss-cross the whole area, to secure the vital photographic evidence. Pilots unhesitatingly perform this most dangerous work in the face of every shell the enemy can hurl into the sky.

However, such reconnaissance flights can only be made

about forty-eight hours before the attack is to be launched. If they were made earlier, the chances of the enemy making alterations in his defences would be considerable.

As soon as the pilot returns to his base from his exciting exploit, experts develop his reels of film. Maps are roughly sketched—and in the case of Tobruk both the developed film and the rough map were flown straight to British G.H.Q., Cairo, where they were printed. Within a few hours the printed maps were flown back to the British base in the battle-field for distribution to the various commanders.

Orders for the attack on Tobruk were influenced by the discoveries made on a close examination of the photographs, particularly of the position of minefields.

Indispensable

With the fall of Solium, the British were able to ship supplies to the Imperial and Allied troops, including water, although it was hazardous unloading the ships not only because bad weather easily affected the operation, but because the Italian air force frequently bombed it. Nevertheless, the main responsibility for servicing the army rested with the Royal Army Service Corps, the Cinderella of the Service so far as publicity is concerned, which performed remarkable work in an unspectacular way. The value of its work may best be judged from the fact that if it, and the directorate of supplier and transport, had failed to support the advancing army, there would have been disaster instead of victory.

Food, petrol, ammunition, water, in the early part of the campaign, were carried forward in face of every handicap from the railhead at Mersa Matruh in motor lorries. At all hours of the day and night, the truck-drivers from Britain, the Dominions, India and Cyprus were on the road. Nothing stopped them.

Similarly, the Royal Engineers, whose function in any offensive operation is the removal of obstacles, the maintenance of road communications, and the boring, drilling, draining for water, worked miracles in all three fields. No matter how badly the retreating enemy had blasted hair-pin roads, the Royal Engineers had them ready for traffic within a few hours.

Miles of water-piping, tons of specially prepared stone and bitumen for remaking and sealing roads were their stock-in-trade. Italian lorries, captured, were used to shift these materials.

As in Greece and Crete, those responsible for the mechanical maintenance of the vehicles, from tanks to light lorries, did their work well—so well that they had quiet satisfaction

in realising, at the end of the first Libyan campaign, that although the vehicles had been employed without rest for nearly eight months, there was an absolute minimum of mechanical breakdowns. A notable achievement, in view of the fact that on long-distance patrols they covered half a million miles over rough country, much of it uncharted, and varying from rocky outcrops to seas of sand. It is the more remarkable when it is realised that a large number of the vehicles are classed as veterans.

The Nazis Arrive

Not at any time, however, were the British authorities unaware that the forces in Cyrenaica were dangerously small, or that-if the Nazis, more resolute and bolder than the Italians, got a foothold in Tripoli with an armoured force the position might easily become serious. This is exactly what happened. The Nazis did arrive in Tripoli from Sicily, and soon pushed over the Cyrenaica frontier.

The first intimation of their presence was given in an official *communiqué* issued from G.H.Q., Cairo, on February 27th, 1941 :

" Advanced elements of our mechanised forces encountered west of El Agheila, and drove back, a reconnaissance unit of armoured fighting vehicles, believed to be German."

Next there was a similar skirmish in the same place on March 3rd. Three days later three Dorniers bombed and machine-gunned the Australian Infantry Brigade column twenty miles south-east of Derna. Gradually the bombing of British Imperial troops by enemy machines was increasing. Indeed, from the third week in February until the beginning of April the story of operations in Libya is a history of bombing of British troops by enemy aeroplanes.

Jarabub fell to Tommies and Anzacs on March 21st. While the more important operations were continuing in Cyrenaica, it was decided not to attack, but to maintain a small force merely to watch and to harass. It was under observation only by light reconnaissance troops. With the close of the campaign a detachment of British and Australian troops was detailed for the task of attacking and capturing the village. They launched the attack early on March 20th, and the Italian garrison capitulated within thirty-six hours. It was a hard, short, stubborn fight. Including the garrison commander, about 800 prisoners were taken. There were comparatively few casualties: ours were approximately sixty. British artillery and a detachment of Royal Engineers supported Australian infantry. German bombers tried to help the Italians hold

out, but most of the bombs fell wide of the targets, exploding in the sand.

As the Australians swept beneath the white arches, on through the town, the rocky outposts having been silenced by the artillery or the defenders having come out and surrendered, life quickly returned to normal. Arab women, wearing vivid reds and purples, with earthen jars on their heads, walked unconcernedly through the village; a few worshippers stood gossiping on the steps of the mosque. Italian soldiers lay dead at many a gun-post. Outside, behind the barbed-wire entanglements erected by the Italians, the Australians in their shorts, some with pith helmets but most of them in their slouch hats, began to dig graves for the Italian dead. The Libyan natives, in a mixture of clothing, stood watching on the parapets, haranguing each other.

Next day the prisoners were crammed into lorries, and long convoys started out across the vague desert tracks for the sea.

Still, this amounted to no more than a very small incident: the British were planning how best to counter the presence of the Nazis in Tripolitania.

Withdrawal

German air detachments were established in Sicily, and the Vichy Government, to say the least of it, was not a strong opponent, even at that stage, of a German plan to use French territorial waters for a blow at the British. The British knew well that through Sicily Marshal Keitel could reinforce any front he might decide to establish there (taking advantage of the strain the Greek campaign was throwing on the Royal Air Force and on the Royal Navy to carry out his reinforcement) far more easily than could General Wavell with his principal base at Mersa Matruh. Refitting of the British armoured force, for example, could not be done in Benghazi.

Two things, among others, were clear when it was realised that General Rommel was in charge of the German armoured force in Tripolitania: (1) if our forward posts, which were very lightly held, were determinedly attacked they would have to be withdrawn; (2) the German tactic was to detain in North Africa and in the southern Mediterranean as many as possible of the units of the British Imperial air, naval and land forces that might be of help in the Balkan region.

In a sense, the moment was not vastly different from that when, after the fall of Tobruk, the British authorities had to decide whether, with such a small force, to push on to Benghazi or to halt- The decision to push on, because it was rightly believed that the back of the Italian resistance had actually been **broken** with the fall of Bardia, had been amply justified:

the whole Italian army had proved to be ripe for the sickle and had been cut down.

Now a series of strategic withdrawals, beginning at Benghazi, with a determination to inflict severe losses on the Nazis whenever possible, might easily prove to have the same excellent results in this phase of the first Libyan campaign. General Wavell decided in favour of a policy of elastic defence. From then on the object of the British tactics was to spoil the German movement—designed as a diversion from the Balkan theatre and to encourage the Duke of Aosta to fight a little longer in Italian East Africa—by playing for time, employing our slightly weaker effective force to this purpose.

Consequently, on March 24th, a small German detachment was permitted to occupy El Agheila, from which our standing patrols had been withdrawn. From this point the Nazis, assisted by Italians, began a steady advance, aided by aeroplanes, while we manoeuvred for time, simultaneously hitting hard where we could.

Blows

Advanced elements of British Imperial forces were, on March 31st, in contact with German infantry and mechanised units in the Mersa Brega area, about thirty miles along the coast towards Benghazi from El Agheila. More Nazi armoured and mobile forces, however, were advancing north and north-east from El Agedabia on April 3rd, and our light armoured force, unable to check them, withdrew towards El Abiar, thirty miles east of Benghazi; and Benghazi itself was evacuated after all demolitions had been successfully completed.

On the escarpment east and north-east of Benghazi, the position of the 9th Australian Division (under Major-General E. J. Morshead) quickly became untenable. Its withdrawal was ordered while an Australian Anti-Tank Regiment, with an Indian Motor Brigade (less one regiment), moved to Mekili to stop any enemy advance by the desert route across country.

Describing the withdrawal from Benghazi, the official *communiqué*, issued from G.H.Q., Cairo, on April 4th, said:

" In the face of a determined advance by strong Italo-German forces disposing numerous tanks, and in pursuance of the policy so successfully adopted at Sidi Barrani of waiting to choose our own battle-ground, our light covering detachments have been withdrawn to selected concentration areas.

" In the course of this withdrawal, the town of Benghazi has been evacuated after all captured **military stores** and equipment had been destroyed. Benghazi is **inde-**

feasible from the military point of view and it has not been used by us as a port.

" As in the autumn of 1940, the enemy is evidently seeking a propaganda success at *the* expense of stretching still farther an already extended line of communications.

" In their withdrawal, our troops have already inflicted on the enemy considerable casualties in personnel and in tanks."

Deterioration

Soon after the evacuation of Benghazi it was recognised that against the heavier German-Italian armoured force and motorised infantry, our lighter forces could not hope to make a long stand west of Tobruk. A Brigade and an Australian Division were ordered back to Tobruk. In fact, when, by April 7th, strong German-Italian forces advanced on Meki, crossing the desert by the western route, the position generally in the Western Desert greatly deteriorated. British Imperial rearguards, whose sole rôle was to delay the enemy advance while our main concentrations were being completed, were heavily engaged by numerically superior forces. An Australian Division withdrew to the Gazala area west of Tobruk on April 7th, closely followed by the enemy, but when, two days later, it was about fifteen miles west of Tobruk, the losses it had incurred during the withdrawal were seen not to be heavy (about 150 personnel), whereas the losses it inflicted on the enemy, including a number of German tanks, were considerable. During that day, April 9th, an Australian Infantry Brigade and an improvised armoured unit landed at Tobruk.

Despite this, however, during the course of the whole withdrawal to Tobruk, which extended over a period of several days, a number of members of the Army of the Nile were lost to the enemy as prisoners. The Germans claimed in their *communiqués* that they had captured 2,000 prisoners: this figure would not be impossible, it was pointed out at the time, under the conditions in which the encounters took place.

Nazis' Audacious Success

How the Nazis succeeded in defeating the Imperial force in the south of Cyrenaica is not known exactly, for during the withdrawal three senior British officers were captured by the Nazis—Lieutenant-General P. Neame, V.C., Lieutenant-General Sir Richard O'Connor and Major-General M. D. Gambier-Parry. Neither is it known precisely how these generals were caught.

The belief is, however, that on April 8th, having decided

to move to new headquarters from their Advanced Headquarters, they set out in staff cars. Apparently they reached a village ten miles west of Derna soon after darkness, and were driving along the coastal road towards Derna when a traffic jam was caused in the long line of lorries ahead. As it was, progress had been necessarily slow. A detour into the desert was made, but this route was also choked with lorries; so they made a second detour. Here a German motor-cycle patrol, operating from Mekili, coming upon them suddenly, promptly held them up at the point of Tommy-guns.

It was a dangerous area in which to take risks. The Nazis were pressing closer all the time. Already their bombers, raiding the roads along which our motorised troops were withdrawing, trying to hold us up, were nearly as numerous as our own. Skirmishing took place at several widely separated points; on April 12th, for example, encounters occurred with enemy mobile troops in the vicinity of Gazala, El Adem, Tobruk and even Bardia.

The speed with which the Nazis were driving towards Tobruk with their advanced armoured striking forces matched that of our drive to Benghazi. It momentarily bewildered a watching world. It was as sudden and stunning as the recoil of a big gun.

Explaining it in the Commons (May 7th), Mr. Churchill—noting that it was the fall of Sidi Barrani that settled the fate of the Italian troops in Cyrenaica—said :

" They [the Italians] did not possess command of the sea, they were beaten in the air, and no course was open to them but to be pinned against the sea and destroyed in detail at Bardia, Tobruk and Benghazi.

" The same thing, with important modifications, might well have happened to us when the German armoured forces defeated, dispersed and largely destroyed our single armoured brigade which was guarding the advanced frontier of the Province of Cyrenaica.

" There are no exact accounts of what happened at Agedabia and Mekili. The generals have been taken prisoner through running undue risks in their personal movements—risks which they could run against the Italians, but not against the Germans.

" The remnants of the armoured brigade are now fighting in Tobruk. Events are moving so fast, people have so much to do and the intensity of the war is such that there is not much time to be spared to dwell upon the past. But there are certain broad features which will interest the House.

" It may surprise the House to learn that the Germans' armoured force was not much larger than our own. But tactical mistakes occurred, and with very little fighting our armoured force became disorganised.

" However, the troops we had in Benghazi only amounted to a division, and this division, by a rapid retreat, gained the fortress of Tobruk in good order and unmolested, and there joined the large garrison. There, a month ago, it stood at bay, and there it stands to-day.

" The Germans, as we now know from the examination of prisoners, had no expectation of proceeding beyond Agedabia. They meant to engage our armoured troops and create a diversion to prevent the despatch of reinforcements to Greece, while they were bringing over larger forces from Italy and Sicily and building up their supplies and communications, but when they won their surprising success, they exploited it with that organised, enterprising audacity which ranks so high in the military art.

" They pushed on into the blue—I might say into the yellow ochre—of the desert, profiting by their easy victory, as they have done in so many countries, and for the morrow they took, in this case, little thought either what they should eat or what they should drink. They pushed on until they came up against Tobruk. . . . So long as the enemy have a superiority in armoured vehicles they will have an advantage in desert warfare, even though at the present time the air forces are about equal. . . ."

Definition of Error

Answering a question—how Was it that this very large number of Germans got across to Libya without our Intelligence or generals knowing about it?—Mr. Churchill replied :

" Perhaps they did know about it; or perhaps the numbers were not so very large, after all. It depends on what you call 'very large'. At any rate, our generals on the spot believed that no superior German force could advance as far across the desert towards Egypt, as soon or as effectively as they did; and, secondly, that if they did advance, they would not be able to nourish themselves.

" That was a mistake. But anyone who supposes that there will not be mistakes in war is very foolish. I draw a distinction between mistakes.

" There is the mistake which comes through daring, what I call a mistake towards the enemy in which you must always sustain your commanders, by sea, land or

air. There are mistakes from the safety-first principle, mistakes of turning away from the enemy; and they require a far more acid consideration.

" In the first belief to which I have just referred our generals were proved wrong; the second has not been decided. It has not yet been seen how the forces that advance will fare in the desert fighting, with all its chances and hazards, which still lie at no great distance before us."

Tanks against Tobruk's Tigers

Within a fortnight of the Nazis breaking across the Cyrenaica border, a strong mixed German-Italian force was besieging Tobruk, while advance elements, swirling round the fortress, rushed on across the desert to storm Bardia and Solium with heavy armoured cars and motorised infantry. After our troops had smashed the water installations and everything else of value, Bardia was captured on April 13th, the British Imperial forces retreating over the Egyptian-Libya border.

Next day about twenty German tanks began an assault on Tobruk's outer defences and, with Genpan infantry supported by heavy machine-gun fire, infiltrated the perimeter defences west of the road El Adem-Tobruk. In the engagement that followed, fifteen of the German tanks were knocked out of action by our tank and anti-tank batteries. Nowhere did our troops give, thus succeeding in localising the attack. When the Nazis retreated they left 263 prisoners and 100 dead. Our casualties totalled 100, and we lost two cruiser tanks and two others were damaged. Examined by interpreters, the German prisoners said they had all been badly shaken by the British artillery fire and that they were all short of food—not a surprising fact, for the British Imperial troops during their advance had supplemented their rations with what they could buy or were given en route, and the Italians retreating before them then had slaughtered or driven off as many cattle as they could, in order to leave the Imperial troops as little as possible. Consequently, everything the enemy was eating now either had to be brought with him across the desert or taken by him, where he could find it, on the way.

Angered by their repulse, the Nazis apparently signalled for aid from the *Luftwaffe*, seemingly believing that short, sharp dive-bombing raids would crush the resistance of Morshead's men. Overhead, shortly afterwards, forty German bombers appeared and heavily raided the fortress, dive-bombing it and bombing it from a great height. Bombs fell in the port, but no damage was done to the shipping; so accurate was the anti-aircraft barrage put up by the defenders that four of the raiders were shot down—a costly raid—and the others were driven off.

The "Tigers' " First Big Raid

From that time onwards the British Imperial Forces fought increasingly strong defensive actions at Tobruk and in the area of the forts on the Egyptian-Libya border. Whenever there was an opportunity, they showed a readiness to take offensive action. Even the *communique* issued by G.H.Q., Cairo, as early as April 17th, described how

" One of our patrols successfully penetrated an enemy position outside the defences of Tobruk, capturing seven Italian officers and 139 other ranks. A further attack on the defences of Tobruk was repulsed by artillery fire. The enemy again suffered heavy casualties.

" During yesterday's operations a total of twenty-five officers and 767 other ranks were captured. In addition over 200 enemy dead were left on the field.

" In the Solium area our patrols have continued their vigorous activity. In one encounter a considerable body of the enemy was surprised and sustained severe casualties."

The first really big, highly successful raids carried out by Australian troops occurred on the night of April 21st-22nd, when seventeen Italian officers and 430 other ranks were captured, while our own casualties were slight. But it took until the beginning of June for the Germans to begin to appreciate fully the fact that the garrison could not be blasted out of its fortress, that it could not be taken, that it had not the slightest intention of surrendering. It was then that Goebbels, excusing the combined German-Italian force's inability to take it, characterised it as an " impregnable " position.

General Morshead had, indeed, made it a great entrenched fortress from which he hammered the flank of the Axis forces in Libya, breaking up many of their concentrations for attacks on the Egyptian frontier with hurricanes of shells. And while he was doing this, the British Government was doing everything it could to give the Middle East Command what it chiefly needed—superiority in tanks, armoured vehicles and aeroplanes. The Government desired, at all costs, that Tobruk should stand firm—a Gibraltar washed by a tide of German-Italian armoured forces, a bastion from which, when the time arrived, the enemy could be rolled back, reeling under our hammer-blows, a valuable and highly offensive outpost.

Tricks of all sorts were used by the Nazis to lure or ambush our patrols. When these failed, they began dropping booby traps into the fortress. For instance, they dropped a number of small aluminium canisters resembling shaving-sticks or pocket-camera film containers which exploded when those who found them began to unscrew them to see what was inside.

Throughout the summer the garrison grew more confident, and continued to inflict an increasing amount of damage on the enemy, who, by the end of August, was showing such distinct signs of nervousness that not only was he lighting up patches of the surrounding desert at night, so as to give himself some protection from the sudden, lightning sorties that rushed him at all hours, but he was revealing a marked disinclination to come to grips when some of our patrols approached. In a grand-scale effort to break through the south-west perimeter on May 1st, General Rommel used sixty tanks and, as a spear-head to the assault, launched several dive-bombing attacks; but a counter-attack by the defenders forced the enemy to withdraw, after losing four tanks in minefields, at least three by "Molotoff cocktails"—bottles filled with petrol which, when flung at them by a group of concealed soldiers, drench the tanks in flame, forcing the occupants to throw open the doors and either come out with their hands up or with their guns blazing—and another four knocked out by our own tanks. We lost three infantry tanks, four cruiser tanks and an additional five infantry tanks by mechanical failure.

Everything the enemy tried failed to break the resistance of the defenders. It was an epic resistance. Nothing will prevent it from being recorded as one of the most magnificent outpost defences ever written in the martial history of the Empire. The valour of Morshead's men equalled that displayed in any of the heroic exploits in the long annals of the history of fighting.

First Anzac V.C.

The first Anzac to win the Victoria Cross was Corporal John Hurst Edmondson, Australian Military Forces. The citation of the award stated that on the night of April 13-14, 1941, a party of German infantry broke through the wire defences at Tobruk and established themselves with at least six machine-guns, mortars and two small field-pieces. It was decided to attack them with bayonets, and a party consisting of one officer, Corporal Edmondson, and five privates took part in the charge. During the counter-attack Corporal Edmondson was wounded in the neck and stomach, but continued to advance under heavy fire and killed one enemy with his bayonet.

Later his officer had his bayonet in one of the enemy and was grasped about the legs by him, when another attacked him from behind. He called for help, and Corporal Edmondson, who was some yards away, immediately came to his assistance, and in spite of his wounds killed both the enemy. This action undoubtedly saved his officer's life.

Shortly after returning from this successful counter-attack Corporal Edmondson died of his wounds. His actions throughout the operations were outstanding for resolution, leadership and conspicuous bravery.

Man-Hunts in the Inner Desert

They called the highly trained, venturesome, common-sense band of men who roamed the inner desert, cheating death in the heart of the vast, heaving, burning Sand Sea where no help could reach them if their vehicle broke down, or if they fell a victim to sunstroke in the sizzling glare—members of the Long-Distance Patrols.

The dash of the leaders and the determined tenacity of the troops are largely the measure of the value of the long, painstaking, individual and collective training which they had undergone, and of their physical fitness and powers of endurance. The extent to which British Imperial troops were ready to withstand fatigue and incredible hardship may be gathered from the work of the Long-Distance Patrols, which, under Lieutenant-Colonel Bagnold, and a handful of Englishmen whose peace-time hobby had been exploring considerable sections of the Libyan desert, scoured it in all directions.

These patrols were composed of picked officers and men of the Royal Armoured Corps and of the New Zealand forces, later augmented by volunteers from other British units and Rhodesians. Six weeks after the start of the war they began operations, shooting up convoys, destroying petrol dumps and stores, and generally making life a misery for the isolated Italian desert garrisons.

Italian control of the inner desert at the outbreak rested in what was known to the Italians as the southern territories command. Headquarters were at Hone, the oasis farthestmost west in the string of oases known as the "oases of the 29th parallel", which stretches across the desert from Jarabub, near the Egyptian-Libyan frontier, on a line north of the centre of Libya. Possession of another chain of oases from Benghazi, stretching inland in a south-easterly direction, let the Italians penetrate for 800 miles into the interior. Kufra, Uweinat, Buseima, Kebabo are oases large enough to have their names printed in most atlases. A point the British had to bear in mind was that only 900 miles of desert divided the Italians from their East African possessions. Landing-grounds at Kufra and Uweinat enabled the Italians to reinforce their air force in East Africa from both these places. So far as mechanised raids were concerned, their bases gave them a chance to raid the French possessions in the south-west and

the British bases in the south-east, or to occupy the Egyptian oases of Dakhla and Bahariya, for example.

Sdnd, Sand, Sand . . .

It is everywhere in this region. As far as the eye can see there is nothing but glistening rollers of sand. Mountainous dunes are numberless feet thick in shifting white sand. Between the oases, for hundreds of miles, there is no water, no shade—nothing but sand. Here are some of the greatest sand dunes in the world. On windless days they lie smooth as silk. Where there are symmetrical ripples they look like water-marked satin. When the winds blow, the whole world seems alive and flying. Sand flows past in thick, stinging, solid clouds.

Into this region the Long-Distance Patrols penetrated, operating in country where sections were unmapped. They moved as separate units. Each was capable of travelling for more than 200 miles, being self-contained in petrol for that distance. Each carried food and water to last many weeks. Each knew that if their vehicle broke down in the sand dunes their chances of coming out alive were almost negligible. For in the early part of the war no long-range British aeroplanes were available for reconnaissance over the inner Libyan desert: and, in any case, there were no landing-grounds in British hands.

Units of the Long-Distance Patrols struck into the inner desert from the south-east in Egypt, driving westward into Libya, aiming at the main Italian route from Benghazi to Kufra. Once on the routes over which Italian armoured cars passed, the British units, separated by hundreds of miles, operated independently, harrying the enemy. Progress across the dunes was mostly slow; in places, however, steady speeds of thirty miles and more were maintained. Only experts could find those spots in the sand which had a hard enough crust to permit of fast travelling. Once misread the signs—the direction of a ripple on the sand, the colour, the texture of the packing—and the vehicle would flounder, axle-deep. Not everywhere can these hard patches of sand be found. Many a day only a few miles were covered.

Most of the units were allotted a reconnaissance cruise of 1,000 miles. Each prowled the desert, hunting the faintest tracks, looking for sign of the enemy, afraid not of being outnumbered but only of being spotted and bombed by patrolling Italian aircraft. Large isolated camps were attacked unexpectedly at night, the Italians, never dreaming the British were within miles, being thrown into violent confusion by the swift attack. Before they could recover from their surprise,

the handful of British and New Zealand men, ten or twenty strong, would have disappeared into the wondrously silent, starlit night, shot through weirdly by the flames of the fires they had started.

All over the south-eastern section the patrols harried the Italians, laid mine-fields on the main routes, spied on them, and gradually affected their morale. Prisoners said they were plagued by the uncertainty at night, never knowing when the British would hit them, being suspicious, even alarmed by all strange noises.

By December, 1940, the patrols had finished their work in the east and began the even more hazardous task of moving west, right across to Fezzan, away in the south-western corner of Libya, 1,200 miles from Cairo. To avoid detection, the units struck across in a line which side-tracked the well-known wells, and made for the Tibesti Mountains, 10,000 feet high, where they were joined by a Free French detachment.

Italian garrisons in the south-west were convinced they would never be called upon to go into action, since an armistice had been signed with the French in West Africa. So certain were they of this that when a British raiding-party arrived at the gates of the stone fort of Murzuk, a perfect, Hollywood-looking set, Italian soldiers, taking it for one of their own parties, saluted! All the garrisons in this region, as in the south-east, soon became electrified by the Allied raiding-parties, which, burning dumps and stores, intercepting supplies and worrying every encampment they came across, broke up the enemy's resistance.

Moore's March

Stories of gallantry in Libya, as in other campaigns, are too numerous to mention, even to list. Many of them remain unrecorded. But a tale reflecting the spirit of determination of British Imperial troops, and in which there figure an Englishman, two Scotsmen and an Anzac, epitomises the qualities of endurance and comradeship common to all.

It is the story of four soldiers, survivors of a Desert Patrol, who set off to walk nearly 300 miles through the Libyan Desert rather than be captured by Italians. They were Trooper Ronald Moore, of Tahapi, New Zealand; Guardsman. John Easton, of Edinburgh; Guardsman Alexander Winchester, of Glasgow; and Private Alfred Tighe, of Manchester. Two of them were wounded. Their desert path led them across the burning heart of the Libyan desert. All they had with them was a two-gallon tin of water and a small pot of jam. The sun was pitiless.

They were members of the famous Long-Distance Patrols.

INSIDE BE-
LEAGUERED
TOBRUK

British and An-
zac troops, at-
tacking the
enemy from their
fortress, captured
so many German
and Italian pris-
oners that they
had to create a
great barbed-
wire prison camp.
Prisoners in the
camp.





YOUTH MEETS YOUTH

A young Anzac soldier chats with a young Nazi soldier, a prisoner of war, in the Western Desert.

They raided Mazouk across 700 miles of enemy territory early in January, 1941. Their unit was returning from that exploit and was on a north-easterly course towards Kufra Oasis, lying many miles south-west of Jarabub. Old camel routes run here over an utterly lifeless plain of rock and shimmering sand, empty of vegetation. In the olden days Arabs dug a well at a place known as Sara and at Bishara along the way south of Kufra for the benefit of caravans; but these wells had been blocked by Italians against a possible attack by the Free French from French Equatorial Africa.

Desert Encounter

In low hills miles north of Bishara Well the Patrol encountered a mobile enemy force accompanied by three aeroplanes. In the fight the British commander and his truck were captured, three of his other vehicles were shattered by gunfire and bombing from the air. Outnumbered and defenceless against air attack, the survivors withdrew under the orders of the second in command, leaving several Italian dead.

A New Zealand corporal was killed at his gun, and in making a tally of the British, the Italians concluded that another four men had been destroyed with their trucks, and they did not bother with them.

But these four had escaped. With their weapons useless, they were hiding among the dunes. Moore, a trooper of the New Zealand Cavalry, was wounded in the right foot, Easton had a bullet wound in his throat, while Tighe was suffering from an internal injury.

The Trek

Next day, February 1st, the Italians departed, and all that the four survivors discovered among the burnt-out wreckage was the tin of water, but no food whatever. They were faced with two alternatives : they could walk what was, to them, the comparatively short distance of eighty miles north-eastwards to Kufra and give themselves up to the Italians, or keep their freedom at the expense of almost certain death, by attempting to walk 290 miles, following the car-tracks along the way they had come, with the slender chance that they might be picked up by some Free French party. They chose not to surrender.

Under Moore's leadership, they set out, taking turns at carrying the precious tin of water. That day an Italian aircraft flew over them, but apparently did not see them. On the third day they found a 2 lb. pot of plum jam, dropped off one of the trucks on the journey northward. They ate all of it there and then.

Tighe became very tired on the fourth day, on the fifth eventually persuaded his comrades to leave him and go on, as he felt he was hindering their progress. Before going, they poured out his share of the tiny water supply into a bottle which they had picked up. Not until after they had gone did Tighe find that the bottle had contained some salty substance which made the water undrinkable.

A violent sandstorm arose on the sixth day, but Moore, Easton and Winchester still managed to follow the fast-disappearing car-tracks to a ruined hut at the spot known as Sara. They found no food, but with the motor oil which had been abandoned there, they managed to bathe their feet and to make a fire to warm themselves at night. They had walked 130 miles.

Next morning they plodded on towards Tekro, still 160 miles away. By now the tracks had almost entirely disappeared over long stretches of the route. Great difficulty was experienced in finding them. Meanwhile Tighe, who had struggled on through all that seventh day, managed to reach the hut by nightfall, but was too exhausted to go farther. He found one match in the sand, and with this and the oil made a fire, without which he would probably have died that night.

Rescue—and Death

In the evening of the ninth day a French patrol, fresh from a reconnaissance of the enemy position at Kufra, found Tighe at Sara. He was still conscious, and although he had been alone and without water for four days, his first thought was to explain that his three companions were ahead of him. Although a search party was organised, it was impossible to follow tracks in the dark.

Coincidentally, two French aircraft spotted Moore and Winchester on the same day. By now the water had been drunk and Easton was lagging behind. The aircraft dropped food and a bottle of lemonade, which was all the pilots had with them. Neither Moore nor Winchester noticed the food, and the cork popped from the lemonade bottle on impact with the ground, so that only half an inch of it was left.

After this, the two men went on independently—Moore ahead. Finally, on the tenth day another search-party found Easton about fifty-five miles south of Sara, and Winchester twelve miles farther on. Neither could walk; both were lying exhausted in the sand.

But when the party came up with Moore, seventy miles south of Sara and 210 miles from his starting-point, he was striding along, swinging arms, perfectly clear-headed and

normal, waving to them without stopping, as if to an acquaintance. Probably he would have reached Tekra in two more days. He estimated he could last as long as that. A shell splinter was lodged in his foot. A great spirit and the fact that it was cold alone made the journey possible. In summer it is unlikely that a man could live without water for more than three days in the desert.

Because of the ragged wound in his throat, Easton could scarcely swallow when he was found. He had suffered continuously. When, with great exertion, he managed to drink a few drops of sweet tea, he was heard to say, a little smile flickering across his face, "I don't usually take sugar with my tea." Shortly afterwards he died, despite the doctor's attempts to revive him. To the end he displayed courage and fortitude.

A few weeks later the other three finally reached Khartoum. Tighe and Winchester recovered, and Moore, from the day he was found, suffered hardly at all from any after-effects. His determination and inspired leadership have won for him the Distinguished Conduct Medal.

Wavell

General Wavell is a rare military genius; in the First Total War he is one of the Empire's few men of destiny. Because he feared Churchill, knowing his worth, Hitler fought for years with everything in his quiver of hypocrisy and deceit to discourage British political parties and the British people from believing that Churchill was the man they should have as a leader in a crisis. A more direct tribute to Wavell was paid by the German High Command. Marshal Keitel said significantly: "Wavell is the best general the British have, and he is very, very good." Yet some people were ready to suspect that when General Wavell, in July, was transferred to India, exchanging posts with General Auchinleck, who succeeded him as Commander-in-Chief, Middle East, he was either temporarily out of favour or had in some way been found wanting. Never was suspicion so ill-founded. When, within two months, he was acknowledged to be the man behind the military moves for the (if possible peaceful) occupation of Iran, the true meaning of the change in commands was seen by the world.

He is one of the few British generals who speak Russian fluently. Between 1918 and 1939 he had visited Russia about half a dozen times. Unlike most visiting foreign military officers, he was impressed by the Russian's idea of war operations. Of all the generals who watched Russian parachutists in operation for the first time, he alone saw in it a great deal

more than a military stunt. His favourable report on the Russian innovation lies in Whitehall. He was the first British general to use parachute troops.

His imagination is not purely military. Widely read, with several articles in the *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, a liking for the classics, he is highly intelligent, reticent to the point of being monosyllabic, and possessor of a very original mind. A great bulk of his writing on military matters suggested clearly that he believed in the *blitzkrieg*, in the lightning stroke, that he was not enamoured of the tiring, drawn-out, slogging type of warfare that characterised the Great War. He proved it in Libya. Allenby, whom the original Anzacs will never forget, is his military hero.

A more unostentatious, unobtrusive man it would be difficult to find. He misses little. In the Great War, in which he rose from brigade major to Allenby's Chief of Staff, he lost his left eye at Ypres; but he sees twice as much with one as most people see with two. He flies from one station to another, has frequent detailed discussions with his commanders, to whom he invariably gives full praise for their part in any successful operation, chats with the men themselves. Everyone in his heterogeneous Imperial Army of the Nile admired him. The Anzacs paid him the highest tribute they could when they told visiting Australians and New Zealanders: "He's got the goods. He's a great chap, too." To realise that until France collapsed the Allied arrangement was that the British force in the Middle East should amount to little more than a garrison whose commander, Wavell, should be under the supreme command of General Weygand, is to appreciate the enormity of General Wavell's task, and the brilliance with which he discharged it, in planning to launch from Mersa Matruh six months later an attack which was to end in the toppling of Mussolini's African empire. There is nothing to eclipse it in martial records.

Australian Commanders

An interesting fact is that there were practically no regular officers from either Australia or New Zealand (or from any other Dominion, for that matter) attached to the B.E.F. for experience's sake during the campaigns in France and Belgium. The explanation is that almost as soon as war broke out, the few Anzac officers undergoing courses of instruction or on attachment to British regiments were recalled to their respective Dominions, just as was the case with most regular officers of the Canadian and South African forces.

As a result, there had to be sacrificed that valuable period in which first-hand experience of the unprecedented job of

helping to manoeuvre the largest British army of mechanised and motorised troops ever moved so far by sea and land could have been gained. The recall of regular officers and other technicians at the time was, of course, sensible and prudent: there was no guarantee that the war would not spread immediately to the Far East. A few Dominion officers were with the British Army in the front line in France, but they belonged to the British Army.

But whatever was lost in actual experience in France in the first Continental campaign of the war was compensated for in the Middle East, where, before they went into action, the Anzacs trained intensively with all the latest weapons, besides studying the most modern anti-aircraft measures, which the British Army is constantly improving, the creation of anti-tank obstacles, traffic control, and billeting and feeding and generally servicing an army.

Australia has three divisions in the Middle Eastern theatre. They are the 6th, 7th, and 9th Divisions : and form part of the 1st Australian Army Corps. Naturally enough, there has always been a wish that when the Australian Expeditionary Force becomes big enough, as it will by mid-1942, it should be divided into two Army Corps, so that the whole should constitute an army. This could only happen, however, if the Force was gathered in one theatre of war, and at the end of the second year of the First Total War this seemed a most unlikely event.

Originally, Australia raised and sent to the Middle East one division—the 6th Division. General Blarney was appointed its G.O.C. Later, when the 1st Australian Corps was formed, General Blarney relinquished command of the 6th Division to accept command of the Corps. Major-General Mackay then took over command of the 6th Division, which he held until after the first Libyan campaign, when he was appointed G.O.C. Home Forces, Australia. He was succeeded in command of the 6th Division by Brigadier (now Major-General) E. F. Herring.

After General Blarney was appointed G.O.C, A.I.F., Middle East, and Deputy Commander-in-Chief of the Imperial Forces to General Wavell (now General Auchinleck), Major-General John D. Lavarack was appointed (June, 1941) to succeed General Blarney as G.O.C, 1st Australian Corps, A.I.F. Lieutenant-General Lavarack, who was first commissioned in the Royal Australian Artillery in 1905, and who, among his notable duties, attended the Imperial Defence College in London, 1928, and was Chief of the Australian General Staff, 1935-39, is 56. He was born in Brisbane.

Major-General Henry G. Bennett, G.O.C, A.I.F., Malaya,

is also in command of one of the divisions stationed in the Far East.

Major-General Leslie James Morshead (9th Division), aged 52, will always have his name associated with the great siege of Tobruk. He was born in Ballarat, Victoria.

Major-General Henry D. Wynter, born in Winterton, Burnett River, Queensland, was in charge of the several thousands of troops who came to Britain in 1940. They stayed in Britain some months before going to the Middle East to join the remainder of their Division. Major-General Wynter greeted the King when his Majesty visited the troops' camps and met and chatted with many of the soldiers who were destined to take a great part in the defence of Tobruk. Ill-health in the Middle East forced Major-General Wynter to return to Australia in February, 1941—a great misfortune, for he is recognised as one of the most brilliant soldiers in the Commonwealth. Major-General Morshead took over his command of the 9th Division.

Chapter IV

Iraq: The Truth about Hitler's Ill-starred Plot

" In Heaven, Allah is supreme; on earth, Adolf Hitler."

—Nazi-inspired slogan among Arabs, 1941.

REVOLT in Iraq in 1941 lasted twenty-eight days. The upstart Prime Minister, Rashid Ali, ordered the shelling of the British on the aerodrome at Habbaniyah on May 2nd. Leaders of the revolt were in headlong flight to Iran when the armistice was signed on May 31st. It was inspired by the Nazis, who bolstered up Rashid Ali.

This revolt was to dovetail into a larger, two-part subdivision of the main plan for the domination of the world. The aim of the first part was to cut the British Imperial communications with India, the Far East, Australia and New Zealand by seizing that narrow, muddy ditch, 103 miles long, winding over the Egyptian sands and through which pours a vast proportion of the wealth of the Orient and of the Southern Hemisphere—the Suez Canal. The aim of the second part was to capture, or in some way to deprive Britain of the oil resources of Iran and Iraq.

Part of the German plan was given outright by the *Frankfurter Zeitung* (quoted in *The Times*, May 7th) :

" The end of the Balkan campaign signifies only a step, although an important step, towards the next goal.

" This goal is clearly Mosul, which, when taken, would provide a fresh source of anxiety for England."

The Germans appeared absolutely sure of success. They had good reason to think they had a chance, at least. As well as Britain, they knew there were three dangerous points in the Empire's armour in the Middle East. Vichy influence and pressure on Syria had created one; Hitler's discovery and nurturing of a group of quislings in Iraq was another; and the third was the steady infiltration of Germans into Iran.

Seizing Power

Rashid Ali effected a *coup d'etat* on April 3rd. Perhaps more important than the fact that this is branded as an " unconstitutional " means of acquiring power in Arab States, is the fact that it is a decisive means. He was a former Prime

Minister and, apparently irritated by his failure to keep his Cabinet around him and writhing because of his supersession a few months earlier, he plotted against his successor, General Taha el Hashimi. Taking advantage of the temporary absence of the Regent, Emir Abdul Ilah, and of the Parliamentary recess, and with the assistance of a small band of ambitious military officers of the Iraqi Army, including some principal officers, he deposed the Regent, and turned out the Prime Minister. It appeared to be an ideal moment so far as embarrassing the British was concerned: they were deeply engaged in the Balkans and were occupied in Egypt, Libya, Abyssinia and Eritrea, and were watching Syria and Iran with considerable uncertainty.

It was suspected immediately in London that the *coup d'état* was engineered with some degree of Axis prompting. The diplomatic correspondent of *The Times* (April 5th) decided :

" The interest taken in the *coup d'état* by the Italian Press is explained by the fact that Sayid Rashid Ali el Gailani, the Prime Minister, who resigned on January 31st, had refused to break off relations with Italy in spite of the Anglo-Iraqi alliance and British representations, with the result that an Italian Minister remained at Baghdad.

" This policy led to the resignation of General Nuri Pasha es-Said, the Foreign Minister—in spite of Sayid Rashid's declarations in the Iraqi Senate (on January 7th) that he had no differences of opinion with his colleagues—and to other resignations.

" But General Taha el Hashimi seems to have been equally unable to persuade his colleagues to agree to break off relations with Italy or to keep . . . generals of the Iraqi Army at the capital from interfering in politics.

" Sayid Rashid Ali intrigued with them, and it is more than possible that his efforts to overthrow the Government have been assisted by the former Mufti of Jerusalem, who has become quite a feature in the Iraqi political landscape and is believed to be also dabbling in Syrian affairs."

Since the true reason for the *coup d'état* was the desire for power on the part of the schemers, their excuses for their action did not bear scrutiny. They were incredibly lame. One was that the Emir " had courted allegiance to himself against the interests of the young King Feisal II ", who is six years old, and whose father, King Ghazi, was killed in a motor-car accident in 1939 in Baghdad; another that the Emir " worked against the interest of the Army and national unity ".

The only persons who believed these charges were those who made them or wanted to think them true.

" *Military Tyrants* "

Emir Abdul Ilah, on May 3rd, in a proclamation issued in Palestine, describing the usurpers as a band of traitors, did not mince words in saying what he thought of Rashid Ali and his *clique*. He put it this way :

" A group of military tyrants, aided and abetted by Rashid Ali and other ill-disposed persons bought by foreign gold, have by force thrust me from my sacred duties as guardian of my nephew, your beloved young King.

" Under their evil sway the noble land of Iraq has been poisoned by falsehood and lies and brought from the blessings of peace to the horrors of venomous war."

Not that Rashid Ali showed his anti-British feeling straight away. Far from that; he shook hands with them, smiling engagingly, while figuratively sharpening on the sole of his shoe the knife with which he was going to stab them. He broadcast a message to the effect that he would fulfil his country's international obligations, especially the Anglo-Iraqi Treaty of Alliance. But this neither caused surprise nor threw the British off their guard, since they knew he could hardly say anything else, whatever his intentions, until he had consolidated his position.

To test his intentions, of which they were gravely suspicious, the British Government notified their desire to open the line of communications through Iraq for British forces in accordance with arrangements made with the Iraq Government a year ago under the terms of the Anglo-Iraqi Treaty. He agreed, and British troops were landed at Basra without incident by April 19th. A warm welcome was given them by the local population, who have happy memories of British and Indian soldiers in the Great War.

When, however, some days later, the despatch of a further contingent was notified, Rashid Ali said he was unwilling to grant permission for further British troops to arrive in Iraq until those who had already arrived had passed through. But the British Government insisted on its Treaty rights. It landed more troops at Basra, an action which was followed by a menacing concentration of Iraqi troops round Habbaniyah, and a local Iraqi commander conveyed to the British officer commanding at Habbaniyah a provocative message that no flights or troop movements at the aerodrome would be allowed, under threat of bombardment!

Representations on the part of the British authorities to

secure the withdrawal of the Iraqi troops were disregarded, despite the fact that there was reason to believe that a considerable section of the Iraqi population deplored the anti-British policy adopted by Rashid Ali and would have welcomed a restoration of the friendly relations.

Instead of withdrawing the troops, Rashid Ali reinforced them on May 1st. Early next morning they opened fire on the cantonment, obliging the British forces to take the necessary counter-action on the land and in the air.

German and Italian propagandists like to try to show that the fighting in Iraq and the anti-British feeling were nationwide. Anybody listening to their broadcasts during the few sharp encounters would have supposed that a war was being waged between the Iraqi nation and the British, instead of a rebellion by an armed minority against the lawful Government of Iraq. But, however desperately the Nazis and Fascists try to paint it as a series of battles and bloody victories, they cannot really turn what was, in essence, a British police action into a great war. In view of the terms of the armistice alone, this pretence falls to pieces.

The Clash

At the time Rashid Ali opened fire, the British forces to whose presence in Iraq he objected were all at Basra. At Habbaniyah there was only the normal peace-time staff of the aerodrome and with them some hundreds of women and children evacuated from Baghdad. It was a very small force. Being in an allied country, the cantonments were not organised for defence against attack. Rashid Ali's force also was small, for only a few of the Iraqi Army could be persuaded to take part in his treacherous action, but it did include artillery, tanks and armoured cars, and it had taken up in advance favourable positions on high ground overlooking the aerodrome. To the fire of these guns the only possible answer for the garrison to give was the use of bombing aircraft, which had to take to the air under direct artillery fire.

At Basra, also, hostilities began on May 2nd. The large British force there drove back the small rebel detachment which attempted to attack, and occupied the docks and air-**Port**. On May 3rd and 4th the Habbaniyah aircraft were busy **holding down** the rebel forces on the desert plateau and bombed the Rashid aerodrome near Baghdad, destroying there nearly thirty Iraqi aeroplanes. On May 3rd Rashid Ali's forces occupied without resistance the fort and rest-house at Rutbah. During **that** day and the next three days there was no fighting **of any kind at Basra**—on May 6th further troops arrived from **India** and were disembarked without incident.

But on the night of May 4th and 5th the Habbaniyah garrison, which had been reinforced by guns and a small number of troops flown up from Basra, successfully raided the trenches occupied by Rashid Ali's troops, and during the day of May 5th kept the position under constant anti-tank and machine-gun fire; reinforcements on the road from Baghdad were bombed, and suffered severely. As a result of this, the rebel force withdrew during the night of May 5th-6th. On the retreat they were harassed both by British aircraft and by the ground troops. Many were killed; the British captured six guns, one tank and ten armoured cars.

Part of the Iraqi force withdrew to Ramadi, part to Falluja. Near Rutbah on May 6th one of the British patrols encountered four armoured lorries containing Iraqi soldiers, destroyed one and captured two. An R.A.F. machine which had made a forced landing near Hit was burnt and the crew captured. When, on May 7th, the British forces at Basra occupied the commercial part of the town, there was no opposition, but a certain amount of resistance was encountered in the bazaar area. In spite of this, the total British casualties numbered less than ten. The bazaar was occupied on the morning of May 8th, and two days later the situation in Basra was returning to normal. Dock labourers were all back at work. In the north British forces advancing from Transjordan occupied Rutbah almost without resistance.

Iraqi Air Force Decapitated

During all this time the R.A.F. had been so active both in reconnaissance work and in the destruction of aircraft, particularly on the Rashid aerodrome at Baghdad, that by May 13th the Iraqi air force had practically ceased to exist. The only hostile machines were a few German planes which made an occasional appearance. In the south the small force that accepted orders from Rashid Ali, numbering in all only about 1,000 men, had withdrawn to Qurna and along the Baghdad railway to a point some no kilometres from Baghdad.

British Imperial forces from Transjordan arrived on May 17th at Habbaniyah, and within forty-eight hours the attack on Falluja began. The rebel troops were bombed from the air and withdrew, and British ground forces entered the town unopposed; twenty-seven officers and nearly 300 men were captured, together with quantities of stores and equipment. At Basra the civil administration of the town was entrusted to a council composed of local notables.

Rashid Ali's forces at Falluja on the night of May 21st-22nd attacked British positions with infantry and light tanks. They were driven back and two tanks were captured; in the

course of the fighting the rebel force lost a number of killed and wounded and was heavily bombed by our aircraft during its retreat. A little later, on May 24th, there was a minor patrol action on the Tigris, north of Basra, in which British troops were successful.

British Imperial forces, which had been delayed in the north by floods on the road, reached Khan Nuqta, half-way between Falluja and Baghdad, on May 26th. They had a slight brush with the rebels and captured an officer and ninety-two men. On May 28th an advance force reached Kadhimain, and on the same day forces advancing from Basra arrived at Mugheir, or Ur, junction.

There was still some resistance both at Kadhimain and in the area between Baghdad and Ramadi, but the back of the revolt was broken, its leaders were in flight and on May 31st the armistice was signed.

Armistice

Clearly, operations were throughout on a small scale, no large forces being employed. The British, at the beginning of the rebellion, had very few troops in Iraq : Rashid Ali could not use the whole of the Iraqi Army because the bulk of the officers and men were not prepared to follow him in his rebellion. The British were, therefore, fighting, not against the armed forces of Iraq, or against the Iraqi nation, but against a relatively small section with which the nation as a whole was not in sympathy. This being so, it is not surprising that the Iraqi forces misled by Rashid Ali never seemed to have their hearts in the business.

Only once, at Falluja, did they attempt a serious offensive. At Habbaniyah they had superior numbers, better weapons and a much stronger position; but they never attacked, and they fled when they were themselves attacked by Imperial ground forces, after being bombed and shelled, leaving behind them a great deal of their equipment.

The whole sad business would have ended far more quickly if the British had not been held up by floods, which made communications difficult and hindered the advance of troops : that advance was never stopped by enemy action, nor was it delayed at all by any opposition on the part of the civilian population.

The real character of the troubles is brought out by the **preamble** to the Armistice signed by the British Commander and the Iraqi representative. The policy of the British Government, it says, is to refrain from any infringement of the independence of Iraq as defined by the treaty between the **two** countries, and to assist His Highness, the Regent, to

restore a legal form of government, and to enable the Iraqi nation to resume its normal and prosperous existence. There has been no change by the British Government in its policy towards Iraq, because it realised that the deplorable events did not spring from any hostile feeling on the part of the Iraqi nation or from any divergence of interests between that nation and Britain, but were simply engineered by a small political party for their own ends.

The general belief is that Rashid Ali's revolt was timed to synchronise with the Axis penetration of Syria. If this is so, he either revolted too soon, or the Nazis (and Rashid Ali himself) completely under-estimated the British capacity for quick action. It is probable that it was a great surprise to the rebels to discover the speed with which a strained British Imperial Army in the Middle East could find enough reinforcements to rush to the scene and to stamp out the revolt. Rashid Ali's *coup* was strongly condemned in Turkey, and none of the neighbouring Arab States gave him any assistance.

As a revolt it was a spectacular flop. As a potential threat to British Imperial security in the Middle East it was serious, comparable only to a similar threat which was at that moment racing to its climax in Iran.

Chapter V

Syria: How an Audacious Nazi Coup was Forestalled

" Inhabitants of Syria and Lebanon ! . . . I come to put an end to the mandatory regime and to proclaim you free and independent."

—General Catroux, beginning the march into Syria, June 8th, 1941.

" French soldiers, comrades of yesterday's fighting, associates in the victory of tomorrow, we have orders to penetrate this territory which you are guarding. This is the only means of saving it from German domination."

—General Wavell, on the same occasion.

UNDOUBTEDLY, one of the most curious campaigns ever fought in British military history was the one in Syria in 1941. British Imperial and Free French forces were compelled to go there (on June 8th) because of the steadily increasing penetration by the Axis (with the connivance of Vichy), just as the British, pushing up from the south, and the Russians, pushing down from the north, had to move into Iran on August 25th because Nazi infiltration had increased to dangerous proportions.

Vichy France, that shameful, sycophantic, dishonoured segment manipulated by a collection of double-crossing politicians and an anti-British admiral, headed by a wooden puppet as weak as ever Hindenburg was in the hands of Hitler, knew as well as Britain that from the British strategic standpoint the fronts in Libya and Syria are interdependent. On each side of the Suez Canal the British had to fight and to anticipate the enemy's plans. Although the distance from Damascus to Tobruk is about 450 miles by aeroplane, movements on the outskirts of either area had to be considered by the British as part of a single operation.

Far from doing anything to prevent the Axis Powers using Syria as a base from which to attack, or divert, the British, Marshal Petain's Government did nothing, thereby doing a great deal to encourage the Nazis: Petain, of whom Mr. Churchill wrote in his book *Thoughts and Adventures* (1932) that in France on March 26th, 1918, British officers " were aghast at his cold resolve, announced two days before, to break contact and leave them, if need be, to be ' thrown into the sea ' "; the same Petain of whom Lord Vansittart wrote in the *Sunday*

Syria: How Nazi Coup was Forestalled 207

Times (August 17th, 1941) : " I do not envy the ghost of Pétain the scorn that awaits him across the Styx; even in the last war the great Marshal (Foch) had seen the yellow streak in the little Marshal."

Menace.

Hitler's keenness for a foothold in Asia Minor was to be glimpsed, among other happenings, in von Papen's negotiations in Ankara, and in his failure overwhelmingly to reinforce through Tripoli his solid mechanised force which had won such a quick victory in Cyrenaica, and which was being held up at Tobruk. Under the cloak of Vichy France's nominal control of Syria, he hoped to work there with a free hand to establish a bridgehead, and although the swift collapse of the revolt in Iraq was a severe blow, he obviously did not despair, because German "tourists" continued to arrive in Syria after Rashid Ali had fled from Iraq. And in spite of belated, almost transparent, Vichy denials, it was extremely likely that Germany would soon have effective command over the whole French Mandate.

What this would have meant, as a menace to Britain's entire Near Eastern position, is clear enough. Had the Germans obtained a firm footing in Syria they would have isolated Britain from her ally Turkey, whose position as a neutral would have become very grave. Not only would German air bases in Syria have completed the encirclement of Egypt and put the British fleet in the Eastern Mediterranean, together with Allied shipping in the Red Sea, in jeopardy; but it would have been extremely difficult to hold Cyprus, or to protect Iran or Iraq. And Suez would have been in danger from the east as well as from the west. Merely by organising air bases, the Nazis could have raided all the Middle East bases. Had they brought in land troops, which they could have done either by air or, after overcoming Turkish resistance, by land, they would have threatened Britain's position in Iraq, Palestine and Egypt.

Vichy had already had ample warning. In its declaration of July 1st, 1940, the British Government stated that it would not allow Syria or the Lebanon to be occupied by a hostile Power, or to be used as a base for attacks upon those countries in the Middle East which Britain had pledged herself to defend. Yet here was Pétain, who had so recently declared that honour forbade France to undertake anything against her **former** allies, taking measures whose effect could only **be to permit** Germany and Italy to gain fuller control over **this vital** Mediterranean territory.

In deciding, with General de Gaulle, **to occupy Syria, the British Government had to consider the political no less than**

the military aspects of the campaign. They knew that Nazi, Fascist and Vichy propaganda would probably seek to make the most of a British and Free French promise of independence to the Syrians. Even if such a promise won the Arab world, and the Syrians, it was recognised that it might easily be used by the enemy as an example of how ready the British were to give away pieces of the French Empire. It was difficult, too, to know what line of appeal to take with the French troops in Syria under Vichy's orders, just as it was difficult to gauge how strongly they would resist.

Psychologically, it was a tough problem. It was known that the French Army in Syria totalled 33,000, composed almost wholly of long-service Colonials, officered by French professional soldiers. Apart from the officers, the only white soldiers were the famous French Foreign Legion. Mostly the officers were pro-Pétainist, but the Army itself was not much interested in politics. Still, it was known that a strong and proper feeling of professional pride ran through the Army; and while a good deal of the information from Syria indicated that the French Army would not be found anxious to fight, that a *show* of force would give sufficient excuse for capitulating, it was afterwards concluded that it was actually this pride which caused a continuation of the fight.

Allied Forces March

During the Iraq troubles the Syrian aerodromes had been freely used by German and Italian aircraft operating against British Imperial forces in Iraq. German ground-staffs had been brought in by air, a certain number of German staff officers and military experts had already arrived. Axis agents, to be numbered by the thousand, not by the hundred, were active in Syria.

What the Allies had to do was to eliminate a very serious threat which was actually being implemented at the moment they moved, in the initial phase of their advance, across the Syrian frontier from Palestine and Trans Jordan before dawn on June 8th. No sooner had the Allies started, however, than the position changed dramatically: the Axis Powers, surprised before they were securely established, hastily evacuated Syria. The German ground-staffs were flown away in German planes, thousands of Germans and Italians crossed the Turkish frontier and, as tourists, took the train for Europe. German leaders and ground-staffs flew to the Dodecanese. Rome radio, on June 26th, announced the arrival in Sofia of no Italians from Syria; on June 28th 200 Italians reached Ankara, and 3,000 were reported on the Syrian frontier, waiting to cross. There had been no Axis army in Syria, but there had

Syria: How Nazi Coup was Forestalled 209

been the vanguard of an army. The fact that it was withdrawn suddenly did not make it any less necessary for the Allies to go forward.

Indignantly, Vichy protested that the Allies had no excuse for invasion. To assume that these protestations could not possibly have been Nazi-inspired would, of course, be to admit to the wearing of blinkers. Besides, the Allies could not withdraw, if they were to safeguard their future. Germany and Italy had shown their hand. At any moment the process of infiltration might start afresh. But this meant that the Allies had now to meet not an actual, but a prospective danger: and the need for quick (and, therefore, probably costly) action had passed.

The Syrian campaign was intentionally not a *blitzkrieg*, and its apparent slowness (although it lasted only five weeks) was, at the time, interpreted in enemy circles as a proof of weakness. In fact, it will stand on record as one of the most notable examples of war by manoeuvre.

From the outset, the political side of the campaign was emphasised. No sooner had the British and Free French forces begun to move under the leadership of Lieutenant-General Sir Henry Wilson and General Catroux, than squadrons of the Royal Air Force and Free French aircraft flew ahead, scattering leaflets over the fertile valleys of the Lebanon, over the oases of Syria. The appeal was that the French garrisons should join the Allies in expelling the Axis agents from the Levant and in promising the 3,000,000 Arab and Lebanese dwellers freedom and independence.

Simultaneously, a declaration was issued by General Catroux, on behalf of General de Gaulle, guaranteeing the liberty and independence of Syria and the Lebanon and undertaking to negotiate a treaty to ensure these objects—promises with which the British Government associated itself.

Advance

Like the advance from Mersa Matruh to Benghazi, the forward move by the Allied troops was one made in close co-operation with the Royal Navy and the R.A.F.

The first phase of the advance was confined to a direct northward push from British bases in Palestine and Transjordan. This necessarily followed the physical configuration of the country, in which the dominant feature is the double range of hills, Lebanon and Anti-Lebanon (Mount Hermon in the south), which runs north from the Palestinian border to Tripoli and Horns. To the east of these hills stretches the open country of the Syrian desert. Between them is the rich, green valley of the Beka'a. On the west the foothills of

Lebanon fall to the coastline. Along the coastline runs the Haifa-Beirut-Tripoli road.

Across the doule chain there is one fairly easy pass—that from Damascus to Beirut, where the railway runs up the Barada Valley to Reyak and the northern (Horns-Aleppo) line. North of the Lebanon there is a gap of open country from the eastern desert to the sea, via Horns and Tripoli. North of this again, a single mountain range separates the Hama-Aleppo plateau from the Mediterranean; but to the east the fertile land merges imperceptibly into the desert steppe.

The Allies' initial advance, therefore, was made by three columns operating simultaneously—one in the open country east of Mount Hermon, with Damascus as its first objective; one up the central valley between Hermon (Anti-Lebanon) and the Lebanon range in the direction of Rayak; and one along the coast road between the Lebanon range and the sea, making for Beirut.

Clearly the right and left columns had the more important objectives: the Syrian capital and the headquarters of the Vichy Government respectively. The capture of these was likely to decide the issue of the campaign. The function of the central column was rather to maintain contact between the other two and to prevent any possible outflanking movement by the Vichy troops; for its nominal objective, Rayak, could be taken from the flank, via Damascus or Beirut, as easily as by a frontal attack from the south.

The Vichy French had long recognised the probability of our advancing into Syria, and General Dentz had made his arrangements accordingly. He had under his command about 33,000 troops, comprising twenty battalions of Colonial and Foreign Legion infantry and eleven battalions of locally recruited *troupes spdciales*—Syrians, Circassians and White Russians. He also had a considerable force of artillery (upwards of eighty guns) and ninety tanks, and a small air force, which during the operations was largely reinforced from North Africa. About 2,000 fresh troops also arrived by air during the campaign.

Order of Battle

General Dentz retained detachments in the north at Aleppo and Tel Kotchek, and somewhat stronger forces on the line Deir es zor-Palmyra-Homs-Tripoli: but his main defences had been organised on the line Kiswe (south of Damascus)-Rachaya Al Wadi-Jezzin-Sidon. On the coast he had a second line on the Damour River. The bulk of his troops were holding these prepared positions and advance posts down to the Palestinian frontier.

Syria: How Nazi Coup was Forestalled 211

General Wilson's order of battle on June 8th was as follows : The eastern column was formed of the 5th Indian Brigade with one Field Regiment of the Royal Artillery, a squadron of the Royals, and elements of the Transjordan Frontier Forces. On their right were the Free French, under General Catroux, and beyond them Colonel Collet's cavalry.

The Indian Brigade with the Royals captured Der'a, Sheikh Meskin and Ezra on June 9th; the Free French passed through them at Sheikh Meskin and pushed on towards Kiswe, where they were held; Colonel Collet's force reached Kiswe on June nth, but the position was too strong for frontal attack.

In the central sector was the 25th Australian Brigade, and with them the Royal Fusiliers. The latter captured Kuneitra on June 9th, and the Australians, starting from the Metulla salient, took Merj Ayun on June nth, after heavy fighting on the frontier, and then advanced north to Nabatiyeh. On the coast was the 21st Australian Brigade with the Cheshire Yeomanry (horsed) on their right flank. The Yeomanry brushed aside Vichy opposition at Ras Naqura (the frontier), and with part of the Australian brigade pushed inland through the hills towards the upper valley of the Litani, occupying Mazra'est ech Chouf and Mrousti, north of Jezzin. The rest of the 21st Brigade, although delayed by demolitions at Iskanderoun, captured Tyre on June 8th and advanced to the Litani River at Kimiye. Here the bridge had been blown up, and stubborn resistance was offered by the enemy.

On the night of June 8th-9th the Royal Navy landed a sea-borne detachment north of the Litani, in the face of heavy and well-organised opposition, and on June 10th the Australians crossed the river and advanced five miles up the coast beyond its mouth.

Up to June 13th, therefore, progress on all points was fairly good. Then Vichy resistance stiffened. They had used the Allies' attempts at parleys to withdraw their forward troops to the main lines of defence : they were probably encouraged by the Allies' failure to secure an immediate success at Damascus, where Kiswe was proving a formidable obstacle, and a flanking movement by tanks had forced the Free French to withdraw; and they were certainly embittered by the fact that the Free French were in the field against them.

Enemy Counter-Attacks

General Dentz counter-attacked strongly on the night of June 15th-16th. On the east, taking advantage of their superiority in armoured fighting vehicles, they drove two mechanised squadrons of the Transjordan Frontier Force out of Ezra and recaptured the village. Kuneitra was heavily

Anzacs into Battle

attacked by their armoured fighting vehicles and infantry, and the garrison of the Royal Fusiliers was compelled to surrender after exhausting its ammunition. In the centre, Merj Ayun was heavily bombarded, and on June 15th Vichy troops gained a foothold in the town which was hotly disputed by the Scots Greys. On the coast, by clever use of mortars and tanks, they held up the advance south of Sidon. It was a temporary setback only, for by June 17th Kuneitra had been retaken by the Australians and the Queens' Royal West Surreys, and Ezra by a mixed force of the Free French and Transjordan Frontier Force. An attack on Merj Ayun on June 17th was only partially successful, but farther north, in the Jezzin area, the British inflicted severe casualties on the Vichy forces and captured several armoured cars.

Jezzin itself had been captured by the Australians and the Border Regiment on June 15th, though it was not held for long; on the same day the Kiswe position was evacuated by the Vichy troops; and Sidon fell to combined action by the Australians of the 21st Brigade and the Royal Navy. On June 18th the 1st Australian Corps H.Q. took over command of the Syrian operations.

On the extreme right of the Allies the desertion of considerable numbers of Druze cavalry weakened the Vichy position; yet the citadel of Suweida held out till the "cease fire". Meanwhile, however, the attack on Damascus made progress. The 5th Indian Brigade, with the Royals, advancing along the foothills west of Kiswe, took Mezze, after heavy fighting, while the Free French, after an unsuccessful attempt on Jebel Kelb, advanced towards the town by way of Al Quadem and threatened to outflank the Vichy forces. They entered Damascus on June 21st.

A Vichy column moving out from the town along the Beirut road was attacked by the R.A.F. and lost thirty-six of its motor-transport vehicles.

In the central sector, where the Staffordshire Yeomanry and the Scots Greys were with the 21st Australian Brigade, a "platoon commanders' battle" continued round Merj Ayun. Here the British Imperial troops were north and west of the town, while the Vichy forces were dug in in the town itself and held the hills to the east and along the Hasbya road. On the coastal sector the Allies had advanced to positions just south of Damour, the Australians holding the general line Jezrin-Ras Nebi Yunus with Yeomanry patrol on the flank.

Famous British Regiments' Advance

Meantime, another factor was being brought into play by the British. From Iraq a column consisting of Household

Syria: How Nazi Coup was Forestalled 213

Cavalry, the Wilts Yeomanry, the Warwickshire Yeomanry, the Essex Regiment, a Field Regiment of the Royal Artillery and part of the Arab legion, with R.A.F. armoured cars, was advancing across the desert. By June 22nd it reached Palmyra, a strong position defended with numerous concrete pill-boxes and resolutely held by a small but stubborn garrison consisting of a company of the Foreign Legion (half Germans and half Russians) and a Desert Company.

Part of the British force gradually encircled Palmyra, while patrols from it by-passed Palmyra and at Qariatein linked up with the Free French who had pushed up from Damascus. A second column from Iraq, the 10th Indian Division, advanced on July 1st from Abu Kemal towards Deir Ez Zor, and its patrols made contact with those of the Palmyra column at Sukhne, where the Arab legion under Glubb Pasha on July 1st accounted for seventeen Vichy armoured fighting vehicles from Deir Ez Zor.

On June 26th the Free French captured Nebk, and four days later repulsed a Vichy counter-attack and knocked out four tanks. The Leicesters and the Queens (who had captured Qatana on June 23rd) and the King's Own Royal Regiment had moved westwards into the hills to cut the Damascus-Beirut road, and were now holding the southern slopes of Jebel Mazar, which overlooks the road and railway. In the central sector the Australians re-occupied Merj Ayun on June 24th and British yeomanry patrols maintained contact with the French cavalry on the eastern flank.

So, on the desert side the position at the beginning of July was that a small Vichy force was hemmed in by the Druzes at Suweida and another by the Iraqi column at Palmyra, but otherwise the eastern desert was clear of enemy forces. Vichy still held the Damascus-Beirut road north of Jebel Mazar and the whole of the Beka'a down to Hasbaya and the Lebanon through Hasrout south of Bet Ed Din to the coast just south of Damour.

Here the 7th Australian Division controlled operations between the sea and the Merj Ayun area. On June 29th it had been reinforced by the 23rd Infantry Brigade, which included the Border Regiment and the Durham Light Infantry, who were engaged in the inland sector, while the 7th Australian Division itself was on the coast. General Dentz, on July 1st, was estimated to have still some 12,000 of his first-line infantry on the southern front, but he had suffered severely in armoured fighting vehicles and motor transport.

Obviously, on the Damour he had a defensive position of great natural strength and elaborately fortified, **but** it was open to flanking fire from the sea : he cOuld himself receive

no naval support, seeing that one Vichy submarine had been sunk already, besides two destroyers and the light cruiser *Le Chivalier Paul* damaged.

British Manoeuvres Succeeds

The first stage of the campaign—that of direct advance on either side of and between the mountain ranges—could have succeeded only at heavy cost against a determined enemy. It had been replaced by a war of manoeuvre which was soon to make General Dentz's position untenable. In the north, part of the 10th Indian Division cleared up the "duck's bill" salient between Turkey and Iraq, capturing Tel Kotchek, Kamchliq Masseche and Nisibin, and compelling the Vichy forces in the Jezirch area to fall back westwards, whilst the main force took Deir Ez Zor on July 3rd and Raqqa on July 5th to advance thence to Meskine and threaten Aleppo. Farther south, Palmyra surrendered on July 3rd, and the British and Arab troops pushed west, occupied Furqius on July 8th, and on July 10th had cut the Homs-Baalbek railway south of Horns.

While in the Damascus sector the 6th Division captured Jebel Mazar on July 10th, in the Merj Ayun sector there was little change. But in the hills to the west the Cheshire Yeomanry, advancing through rough country, overcame enemy resistance at Mrousti, and the 2/33 Australian infantry battalion recaptured Jezzín.

The crowning gain—the one which actually sealed the victory—was secured for the Allies when, on July 9th, the Australian troops in the coastal area, supported by a naval bombardment, outflanked and captured the whole of the Vichy line of defence on the Damour and advanced to Khalde, about five miles south of Beirut. Next day General Dentz requested Armistice terms; at midnight on July 11th-12th the "Cease fire!" was sounded in Syria.

At the time of surrender the Vichy forces numbered in all 26,000-27,000, of whom 11,000 were *troupes spéciales*. There were 2,000 prisoners in the Allies' hands, so that the casualties suffered by General Dentz's forces amounted to about 8,000. Virtually the whole of his air force had been destroyed by the R.A.F., either in air combat or on the aerodromes of Palmyra, Rayak, Beirut and Aleppo.

Wholesale Slaughter Avoided

Throughout the campaign the R.A.F. played a decisive part in co-operation with the land forces. On the coastal sector the army owed much to the effective support of the Royal Navy. Losses among the Allies were comparatively slight,

Syria: How Nazi Coup was Forestalled 215

not because there was no hard fighting (for in all three southern sectors the Vichy troops resisted strenuously and hard hand-to-hand fighting resulted), but because the forces engaged at any one time were relatively small.

General Wilson was far from possessing the local superiority of three to one which is often judged necessary for success in offensive action; he avoided frontal attacks, so far as possible, and trusted to a war of manoeuvre. When General Dentz asked for terms, only Damascus had actually fallen and the quadrangle formed by the two Lebanon ranges northward of the Damour-Bet Ed Din-Merj Ayun-Dimass line was still intact and held by a formidable Vichy force.

But the simultaneous threats to Beirut, Rayak, Horns, Tripoli, Hama and Aleppo made the whole Vichy position so hopeless that there was no course open to General Dentz but surrender. There had been no *blitzkrieg*, but, at the cost of a certain delay, all the results desired had been obtained with a minimum loss to the Allies and without that hardship to the civilian population of Syria which would have made so much more difficult the Allied control of the country.

Comment on the Moves

From the start General Wilson hoped that French resistance would not be determined, and from the outset there were parleys with the Vichy forces defending Damascus. Desertions from Damascus were in fact fairly numerous: but partly because of the slowness of the advance due to these considerations, partly owing to exhortations from the Vichy Government, opposition stiffened considerably, and the Allies' advance was held up on all three sectors. As it was politically desirable to retain the goodwill of the Arab inhabitants—the Allies had entered as friends of the Syrians—and therefore to spare their towns and villages as much as possible, action was further hampered, and the Vichy troops received corresponding encouragement.

At one moment the position looked far from favourable: the Allies were checked by the Kiswe defence south of Damascus, had lost ground in the centre owing to strong counter-attacks by the Vichy troops and their recapture of Merj Ayun, and in default of progress in those sectors were compelled to mark time on the coastal front north of Sidon. The evacuation of Damascus by the Vichy troops on June 22nd, the subsequent advance by the Allies from Qatana and seizure of the eastern end of the Anti-Lebanon pass, and the recapture of Merj Ayun on June 25th relieved the situation; and, meanwhile, the Allies had consolidated their position in front of the

Vichy defence line at Damour, preparatory to an advance on Beirut. By this time the threat to Palmyra had materialised.

Brilliant Tactics

As soon as the resistance of the troops under Vichy's orders stiffened, it was clear that a straight drive with frontal attacks on their prepared positions would entail heavy losses on both sides, which the Allies were anxious to avoid. Thus, the second phase of the campaign had to take on a different form : the northward advance was slower, and in each sector was achieved more by local manoeuvres than by direct attack. For example, on the Damascus front the capture of outlying positions forced the Vichy French to evacuate their prepared lines both on the western foothills at Mezze and in the eastern plain, resulted in the partial encirclement of Damascus. Yet in the course of all the fighting there only seven British shells fell in the suburbs of the city; only two civilians were killed.

On the coastal front, Sidon was taken after hard fighting, but after that the advance was effected less by frontal action along the coast road, than by the successive capture of the foothills outflanking the enemy positions.

In the centre, where the nature of the country was admirably suited to defence, the British captured Merj Ayun and advanced to Jezzin, but the Vichy troops remained in possession of Hasbaya and were subsequently able to retake Merj Ayun : here the British did little more than contain a considerable enemy force while real progress was made elsewhere.

But the main point of this slowing-up of operations on the original front allowed for the development of a wide-scale war of manoeuvre which was the distinguishing feature of the second phase of the campaign. The bulk of the Vichy forces were then concentrated on the defence of the south country along a line running from Jebel Mazar in the Anti-Lebanon through the Merj Ayun area to the sea-coast on the strongly fortified Wadi Damour. Beyond this line the Allied forces were pushing northwards, east of the Anti-Lebanon, to Nebq and Qarjatein.

By the time the column from Iraq, which on June nth crossed the Syrian frontier by Abu Kemal, forced Palmyra to surrender on July 3rd, contact had been made with the Free French pushing north from Nebq at Qarjatein; and while the main body of British troops pushed westwards through the Furqlus gap north of Anti-Lebanon towards Horns, a detachment from it branched north-east, and after eliminating a Vichy outpost at Sukhne, made contact with a second British column from Iraq, which, marching up the Euphrates, had on

Syria: How Nazi Coup was Forestalled 217

July 3rd captured Deir Ez Zor and was now advancing on Raqqa.

Outcome

General Dentz, three days before he initialled the terms of an armistice, faced a dreary prospect. He was outwitted. The Syrian desert had been virtually cleared, from the " duck's bill " between the Iraqi and the Turkish borders, where the railway posts between Demir Kapu and Kamichlie had fallen to yet another column from Iraq, to the Anti-Lebanon : only in Suweida was a Vichy force holding out, unattacked, but contained by Druze levies. From Raqqa a British column threatened Aleppo. Farther south another column was within striking distance of Horns, the possession of which would cut off the retreat of Vichy troops to the north and would give the Allies open access to Tripoli.

In the Anti-Lebanon the capture of Dimass on the Damascus-Beirut rail and road presaged the capture of the entire pass, and with that in their hand the Allies would hold the Beka'a plain with its railways northwards and westwards, and would take in the rear the Vichy forces in the Merj Ayun area.

In the Lebanon the Allies were five miles north of Jezzin, within reach of Bet Ed Din and its alternative road to Beirut. On the coast the Australians had worked round the eastern flank of Damour and captured the Vichy positions, taking some seventeen guns, tanks, armoured cars and prisoners.

It was obvious that the Vichy forces were completely outmanoeuvred and that further resistance would simply mean a useless loss of life.

The whole of Syria was conquered in the space of five weeks, at a minimum cost in life, in spite of determined resistance by Vichy troops, who fought gallantly in a mistaken cause. Its possession should be to the Allies a source of great strength. In the first place, they removed the standing threat of Axis penetration of their whole military position in the Middle East. They now have air bases from which R.A.F. machines can operate in defence of Cyprus. They have secured contact with Turkey, thus protecting an ally against encirclement. They have a continuous line of defence from the Turkish frontier to Libya, thus strengthening the British hold over the Eastern Mediterranean. Lastly, there is the chance to confirm the Moslem world in its moral support of the Allied cause.

Britain, together with the Free French, undertook to secure for Syria that independence which former French governments promised but never gave, and to support unity between the different Arab nationalists.

On September 29th, 1941, General Catroux formally proclaimed the independence and sovereignty of the Syrian Republic—an occasion which led to wild scenes of enthusiasm in Damascus, where red-tarbooshed crowds paraded the streets. A salute of 22 guns was fired. As General Catroux pointed out, Syria technically has been an independent republic for several years, but from September 29th the Syrian Government actually began for the first time to assume the practice, rights and prerogatives of an independent state. In those countries, such as Iraq, where Syria has special interests, the Government is now free to nominate diplomatic representatives; and it is also free to create its own military forces. Free France undertook to secure recognition of the republic by the other Allies. (Naturally, Syria's sovereign rights are subject to whatever reservations are dictated as being necessary by the war: for instance, her policy must conform closely with that of the Allies, and it will be the Allied Command which will dispose, as far as military needs require, of aerodromes, communications and the like.)

Colour

Moonlight played over an apparently unreal scene as the Allied forces first moved across the borders of Syria. Zero hour was 2 a.m. A bright moon, shedding a white softness, bathed the whole countryside in a cool brilliance. Long, spindly shadows of palm trees fell black across the desert; shadowy patterns of the tops of buildings and houses were dark on the streets.

Horsemen, crack desert troops, who could operate in places motor vehicles could never reach, clip-clopped through sleeping village streets, bridle, stirrup and sword jingling. Circassian riders rode out from the shadows of the streets into the moonlit hills like riders materialising from some vast, romantic novel. A force of English cavalry, the horses' heads tossing, bridles clinking, moved through here; Colonel Collet's rough-riders, who, with their leader, escaped from Syria only three weeks earlier to join de Gaulle's men, rode there; Glubb Pasha and his picturesque, deadly Arab Legion watched in the green-and-brown hills. These Bedouin warriors, some of them sons of the warriors who fought with Lawrence of Arabia in the Great War, are inured to physical hardships, heavily armed, highly trained.

A little earlier, before the shutters were put up in the shops and cafés of the frontier towns, people spent their evening normally, eating in the restaurants or in their homes, debating, talking trivialities, listening to music, smoking, afterwards strolling and watching the moon come up. When the noisy

Syria: How Nazi Coup was Forestalled 219

Bren-gun carriers trundled through this village and that, hundreds were rudely awakened : but generally everyone kept calm. Wherever they could, the Allies by-passed the villages and towns, moving through the valleys, or over the plains. So silently was the whole forward movement carried out that many Vichy French border posts were captured before the defenders were aware of what was happening.

The mood of the British Imperial troops was interesting to study. There was no hilarity, as there was sometimes before battles in Crete and Greece and Libya. Jokes at the enemy's expense were not noticeable. They did not relish war against the Frenchmen : they approached it rather as an unpleasant duty that must be performed. It was the same with the Free French. Little was said. It was mostly just waiting without comment for the order to march. When it came, when the men began to advance, a group or two of Australians sang rhythmically, in an undertone so that it sounded more of a rich humming, " South of the Border ".

A just pride in the achievements of the members of the Australian Sixth Division and of the New Zealand Division who took part in the Syrian campaign is felt by the peoples of the southern democracies. For some of these men had already met the enemy in three other campaigns—in Libya, Greece and Crete. And since the campaign against the Italians in Libya had been launched from Egypt in December, 1940, and it was now June, 1941, they were experiencing their fourth campaign in six months !

Of course, they were not entirely the same divisions : but the " veterans " in each division were those who had been able to escape from Greece and from Crete and get back to Egypt, where they formed the nucleus for the rebuilding of their respective divisions.

Litani River Battle

Some of the stubborn fighting of the campaign was in and around the region of the Litani River, en route to Sidon. The Vichy French line on this river was the strongest fortified line between the frontier and Beirut, the objective of the British and Australian troops advancing up the coast. Beyond the river there was only one other fortified line, not so strong as the river line, and a series of strong points and blockhouses.

Storming the river line was a feat, for the commander of the Vichy French forces had received orders to defend it "to the last shell and the last man ". Litani River is not wide, but it is deep, swift. The defenders were well armed, well protected and well concealed. A heavy concentration of

mortar and machine-gun fire threatened to pin down the Imperial attempts at advance across the river, whenever they were made. All the bridges had been blown up by the French. Despite this intense fire, a group of Scots and Australians did cross in ferries, although suffering considerable casualties, and they did dig themselves in on the opposite side. Alone, completely isolated from their main force, they hung on until nine o'clock that night. Protected by darkness, a stronger Imperial force launched ferries and, under a terrific hail of fire from the defenders, managed to reinforce their comrades.

Scrambling ashore, fixing bayonets, they charged sections of the line, clearing some areas; by midnight the Victorian brigadier who was in charge of the operation was sitting beneath a sweetly scented tree in a large orange orchard planning the next move—after the establishment of a pontoon bridge which Australian sappers on the other side were feverishly trying to get across the river before dawn. As the first red flushes appeared in the sky they had it in place. A battalion ran across the pontoon, then a light mechanised force.

That day the fight was hard, but the Imperial troops kept being reinforced by others crossing more pontoon bridges which they built as the day wore on.

Within three days they had advanced to the outskirts of Sidon (June 14th). Two days later they took it. There was no fighting for the town itself. General Dentz had ordered a withdrawal. Drinking a ceremonial glass of lemonade with the Arab mayor of the town, which was perfectly normal in a business way, the Australian brigadier asked how the people of Sidon felt about things. "We have had enough," the mayor said. "We are very grateful to you and to your soldiers for sparing the town." Only two persons had been killed in the whole operation of approaching and occupying the town. The townspeople showed their gratitude by thrusting fruit, beer and flowers into the hands of the occupying troops. And, later, as British and Australians marched through the streets on their way north to Beirut, shopkeepers ran beside them for a while, offering bananas and bottled beer carried in pails of water to keep it cool.

Heavily armoured medium Renault tanks, abandoned by Vichy forces, repainted and with their Vichy markings wiped out, were used by the Australians as part of the advance force moving on Sidon!

Australian Light Horse Ride Again

Horses played a very helpful part in the campaign.

In the hilly, even mountainous, parts of Syria, up on some

Syria: How Nazi Coup was Forestalled 221

of the rocky ridges and down in the precipitous gullies, no vehicle could manoeuvre. From garrisons in Palestine, where they had been doing tedious but essential patrol work, British cavalymen came on horses. They rode up out of deep stony *wadis*, along dry river-beds, trotted for hours through the short stubble and scrub, their saddles wet with sweat, their pith helmets hot beneath the sun.

In the 1914-18 war the Australian Light Horse made itself famous. Its name rang throughout the Middle East theatre of battle. In the First Total War the Australian cavalry oversea was mechanised: in Syria many of these Australian mechanised cavalymen were co-operating with British and Indian gunners and artillerymen, besides with their own.

When they sailed away from Australia, they were not wearing their attractive, dashing plumed hats, but had exchanged them for dark berets just as, being now members of a mechanised reconnaissance regiment, they had exchanged saddles for seats in a tank or a Bren-gun carrier.

Still, the ghost of the romantic, dare-devil Australian Light Horse was seen again, riding superbly, in Syria.

Around Merj Ayun, where the country is wild and steep, armoured fighting vehicles encountered such difficulties that at times it was impossible for them to complete their reconnaissance. What was needed were more horsemen. The Australian mechanised cavalymen were the solution: since a number of fine horses had been captured from the Spahis riding for the Vichy French, the Australians clamoured to ride them.

It was when a detachment was mounted that the phantom of the fearless, immortal Australian Light Horse rode again.

" Pearl of the Desert "

Damascus, " Pearl of the Desert ", fell to a clever enveloping movement by the Allies. Heavy fighting preceded its surrender. At the end, the Free French General Legentilhomme, his wounded arm in a sling, came in from the south; the British, Indian and New Zealand troops came straight in from the west, fighting and winning the battle for the stout fort, Gouruad, on the green-brown heights two miles from the ancient city; and Colonel Collet's Circassian riders wheeled in from the east, over the black lava country. In the west, guarding this beautiful place, glistening like a jewel in the desert, surrounded by richly watered meadows, cornfields, orchards and gardens, the Vichy forces manned a fort on almost every one of the heights of the low brown hills forming a chain there. Tanks and artillery actually broke the defences of Damascus*

Silencing these, and small forts at other points of the compass, the Allies moved into the city. Out came the mayor, a white flag in his hand, to welcome them. Mostly the streets were fairly empty, people being huddled in their houses, and the shutters were up on the shops. Soon General Legentilhomme was ensconced in the Government buildings. It was eleven o'clock in the morning.

Presently, after the parley with the mayor, small boys, full of curiosity, dodged into the streets. Then out came their parents. Very quickly after that, the population streamed into the streets to stand at the kerb, clapping hands occasionally in salute as the Allies paraded by. Suddenly, in "the street called Straight" mentioned in the Bible (Acts 9 : n), down went the shutters as the bazaars resumed business. An hour later, as the Indians, British and Austrians began to swarm into the city, you could hardly shoulder your way through the milling crowds.

Practically no damage was done to Damascus by the Allies. Hot water, telephones, electricity—all the other facilities were operating. Trams and buses were running; there was a babble of laughter and noise at night as the inhabitants celebrated "the end". Supplies of flour, kerosene, petrol and a number of other commodities were already low, and arrangements were made to replenish them from Palestine, Iraq and Australia (flour). Bright electric lights thrilled the troops : it was the only town they had been in throughout all the fighting where there was no black-out.

Yet five miles away isolated pockets of Vichy French troops were counter-attacking Allied forces. A few days later German bombers flying over the capital dropped, bombs indiscriminately, damaging property, killing and wounding several people—a fact which made it necessary to introduce a black-out.

Glubb Pasha

Most colourful figure in the campaign, undoubtedly, was the man about whom little was heard—Major John Bagot Glubb, a Cornishman, aged 42, known as Glubb Pasha, head of the Arab Legion, a force of some thousands of picked Arabs. This famous Legion was founded in 1921 in Transjordan as a kind of desert police force, paid by the British. Recruitment has always been made very difficult: it is regarded as an honour among Arabs to be a member of it, for courage, cleverness, fine physique, perfect marksmanship, great knowledge of the desert are essential qualities.

Major Glubb, joining a Desert Patrol as leader ten years ago, is now in charge of the Legion. He dresses like the

Syria: How Nazi Coup was Forestalled 223

Arabs, eats their food, fights and sleeps as they do, talks to them in their language. It was one of Major Glubb's patrols that led the British reinforcements to Habbaniyah, Iraq, during the revolt of Rashid Ali. Apart from the valuable advice the Legion's guides were able to give the Allies, detachments of them assisted in the Syrian campaign, moving towards Aleppo from Iraq.

Until it was revealed during the Iraqi revolt that it was partly mechanised, it was thought that the Legion was a horse and camel force. It has anti-tank and anti-aircraft units and Bren guns. Blockhouses, which it controls, are dotted at points across the deserts. It has been of great value in bringing law to remote parts of Arabia, in checking looting and damage to property.

Air Clashes

Pilots of the Royal Australian Air Force distinguished themselves over Syria. One of the most exciting *communiqués* issued by the R.A.F. during the campaign dealt with a remarkable fight between a squadron of the Royal Australian Air Force and six Vichy machines near Palmyra.

Flying high, escorting R.A.F. bombers on an expedition designed to blow up Vichy stores, petrol and ammunition dumps near Palmyra, and the railway line at Rayak, the Australians spotted a group of American Glenn-Martin bombers. They identified them as Vichy bombers. Immediately a small force of Australians peeled off and roared down to the attack.

When the Australians came out of their 400-mile-an-hour dive, the whole group of Vichy bombers—six of them—were plunging to the ground in flames.

Already the Australians, flying American machines of the latest types, had plagued the Vichy air force, machine-gunning motor convoys and machines on the ground, despite strong anti-aircraft defences, besides shooting down raiders in various parts of the three sectors.

"Flying over parts of this country is just like flying over parts of the bush and desert at home," an Australian squadron leader said.

They wore tropical kit and were brown as berries. Beneath them, as they flew, vast expanses of hill and plain unfolded, harsh contours mellowed by dust curtains, haze and the height at which they flew. In the wild, inhospitable Jebel Druze the dwellers, living in slate-grey stone houses, scratch a meagre living from a wilderness of stubble and stone. Sometimes, when they flew low over the tiny, straggling towns, Druze women on the flat roofs and balconies smiled; in white

flowing headdresses, Druse men in the narrow alleys sometimes saluted with a wave. Inhabitants in this remote area mostly hate the French; so much so that after the armistice was signed, the Vichy garrison there waited until the British cavalry brigade arrived in order that they might withdraw under the protection of the British, whom the Druse men like.

A imitation for Indians

Admiring the British soldiers' ingenuity, doggedness and dash, the Anzacs admired the same qualities no less in the Indians. The heroic defence at Mezze, on the Damascus-Beirut road, which the Indians put up in the face of overwhelming resistance will always be remembered. To get them out of the houses in the suburb in which they were holding off the Vichy forces, the French had to charge with tanks and, bringing up heavy artillery, fire at point-blank range.

Nothing daunted the Indians. A company of half a dozen men would at once attack a force outnumbering them by ten to one. They scaled the heights around Damascus with the ease of mountain goats. Neither heat, choking dust-clouds, short water ration nor fatigue seemed to bother them. They fought at night as easily and successfully as they fought in the day. "They seem to see at night like cats," a Tasmanian gunner said. "And they are always very polite, like discipline, and always smile."

Sometimes, as they entered a town, they would see lying dead at their posts huge, big-boned Senegalese, sprawled with Frenchmen in the blue uniform of the Foreign Legion, and would salute the brave dead.

Views

Lord Croft, speaking in the House of Lords, August 6th, 1941:

"I have read a suggestion that these operations were conducted tardily, and that we were fighting without that frightfulness which is associated with German *blitz* campaigns.

"But the whole campaign for the conquest of this country so strong in natural defences took exactly five weeks, and we were fighting numerous picked and well-equipped French troops on their own ground, in equal strength to the attackers, on practically every occasion, which were led with resource and considerable military skill.

"I can imagine no folly greater than that of bombardment of the Holy City of Damascus, or ruthless war on

SCALING THE
HEIGHTS IN
SYRIA

Australian troops, climbing to occupy a commanding tactical position during the Allied move forward in Syria, get a panoramic view as they pause for a rest.



Syria: How Nazi Goup was Forestalled 225

the civilians of Syria, for, apart from moral considerations, we have got to hold this country and live among the Syrians until the war is over.

"As a result of our clean fighting methods and our scrupulous efforts to avoid needless suffering to innocent people, I believe we have won—and we certainly deserve—Syrian goodwill, and this may well be reflected throughout the Arab world and the whole of the Middle East.

"The terms imposed by Sir Maitland Wilson were in keeping with the conduct of the whole campaign. Wounds there were bound to be, but they have been staunched, and, as we hope, healed by a truly wise and liberal recognition of the special character of this struggle in preserving that country from Nazi domination as a jumping-off ground for attack on Egypt from the north.

"Once more British, Dominion, Indian and Free French troops of all arms have emerged with great credit and honour. Once more we utter our thanks to the sister Services for denying the possibility of reinforcements and supplies to the enemy, and giving the Army close support. Once more we can say that the architects of these military successes have displayed master minds of strategy and an excellent tactical application in exploiting the strategic plan."

General Sir Iven Mackay, arriving in Australia, August 22nd, 1941:

"The Australian attack at Damour clinched the Armistice in Syria."

Units which took part in the campaign, in addition to the Australian Infantry Battalions, were :

Household Cavalry Regiment.	Queen's Royal West Surrey
Royals.	Regiment.
Scots Greys.	King's Own Royal Regiment.
13th D.C.O. Lancers (India).	Leicestershire Regiment.
Wiltshire Yeomanry.	Border Regiment.
Arab Legion.	Essex Regiment.
Warwick Yeomanry.	Durham Light Infantry.
Cheshire Yeomanry.	1 Punjab Regiment.
North Somerset Yeomanry.	Rajputana Rifles.
Staffordshire Yeomanry.	Frontier Force Rifles.
Royal Artillery.	Frontier Force Regiment.
Royal Australian Artillery.	Gurkha Rifles.
Royal Engineers.	Trans-jordan Frontier Force.
Royal Fusiliers,	

Iran

Exactly six weeks after the "Cease fire !" was sounded in Syria, the British and Indian troops, under General Wavell, made an entry into Iran simultaneously with the Russians. Pleas to the Iranian Government to eject large numbers of Germans already holding key positions in the country had failed. It was the only answer left to Nazi intrigues and Nazi designs.

Until the Allies could be certain that Iran was no longer a centre of intense German activity, there remained a dangerous gap in the defensive arc which runs in a broad sweep from Russia to Egypt. As both Russia and Britain made plain when they crossed into Iran on August 25th, neither desired to interfere with Iranian independence nor to acquire a scrap of territory. It was a purely protective operation, not directed against the Iranians, but against obvious German manoeuvres—which were to exploit this one remaining breach in the Allied defences.

Two days after the Allies crossed into Iran, the Government whose attitude was responsible for resistance being offered resigned, and the new Government issued orders on August 28th that all Iranian Forces should refrain from further resistance to the British and Russian Forces. Simultaneously, the new Government emphasised its desire to avoid giving causes for bloodshed and its peaceful intentions towards neighbouring Powers.

A feature of the Allied advance was its speed in extremely difficult country. In less than three days the British had covered 100 miles across mountainous terrain: an almost equal rate was maintained by the Russians. Indicating the frame of mind of the Allies, the language used in the communiqué issued from British G.H.Q., Simla, on August 28th was interesting:

"On all fronts, both British and Russian, the advance is continuing with speed and determination."

An explanation of the great speed with which the British passed through Iran is largely found in the ability of those in command and in their thorough knowledge of a country not dissimilar to that in which they were obliged to operate. The British G.O.C. in Iran was General E. P. Quinan, for instance, who had been in command of the Waziristan District since 1938, and for the previous four years commanded the 9th (Jhansi) Brigade. Since he entered the Indian Army in 1905, he has spent most of his life in the East.

A cessation of resistance to the British and Russians did not, of course, mean a standstill on their part. They proceeded

Syria: How Nazi Coup was Forestalled 227

to control the vital objectives to reach which they had entered the country—particularly the Trans-Iranian railway, through which supplies can be sent to Russia from the Persian Gulf, the Teheran-Tabriz road, and the oil installations on which guards had to be placed against Nazi attempts at their destruction.

Controlling Iran, the Allies, actually, were at the very hub of the Eastern Hemisphere : around them Europe, Asia and Africa circled. They were astride the roads going south and east. Iran is more than Russia's " Burma road", although that is important enough. It is an all-important piece in the defensive frontier sprawling from West Africa to Singapore and including the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, India, China, the Middle East and the Near East, besides stretching to Equatorial Africa. In driving towards the Caucasus at the end of 1941, the German High Command was aware that control of this eastern hub had to be wrested from the British if the Empire was to be gripped by the throat.

Knowing this, General Wavell, Commander-in-Chief, India, and General Auchinleck, Commander-in-Chief, Middle East, were then holding conferences in the Middle East in an endeavour (in the words of the official announcement) " to work out full details of co-operation between India and the Middle East regarding the anti-Axis front now established from Syria through Iraq and Iran to the left flank of the Russian Armies "—a discussion on the Empire's battles during 1942.

Indeed, while it is difficult to predict whether any particular phase of the war will become decisive, all the portents in December, 1941, suggested that the Caucasus, Iran, Iraq and Syria might well prove to be the great battlefield of 1942. Against this possibility, extensive preparations were being made from the hour of the occupation of Iran.

To help Russia secure the war supplies she so urgently needed, and which were being shipped to the Middle East by Britain and America, the Australian Government in October, 1941, decided to send railway stock worth £1,000,000 to Iran, to enable the supplies to be speeded more quickly via the Iranian railway. It was one of the most important contributions to the war effort in materials which the Commonwealth Government made in the first two years of the war.

Chapter VI

Warships from Under the Southern Cross

" With a gentleman I am always a gentleman and a half, and when I have to do with a pirate, I try to be a pirate and a half."

—Bismarck, 1877.

" My object—destruction."

—Commodore Harwood, signalling his captains,
Graf Spee Battle, 1939.

BISMARCK'S was a good enough piece of advice, but the Navies of the British Empire had no need of it—least of all the Royal Navy. Dealing with pirates had been, centuries ago, the stuff on which it was nurtured. And one of the initial tasks it took up in the First Total War was the guarding in convoys of any neutral merchantman that sought the protection of its guns.

Hitler had ordered his Admiralty to sink on sight ships belonging to the Northern neutrals trading with Britain, thereby attempting to intimidate them into becoming the spearhead of a neutral group calling for cessation of hostilities, leaving Germany in possession of the swag she then held until she was later prepared to strike with even greater effect. So the Royal Navy offered its shield to neutrals.

Australian and New Zealand naval units were in the war from the hour of its declaration. Within the first two years they had helped to sweep Nazi pirates, masquerading as Japanese or South American merchantmen, from the Pacific and Indian Oceans, and had taken part in operations in the Atlantic wastes.

Chase

Just as the most-remembered feat of the Australian Navy in the last war was the destruction by H.M.A.S. *Sydney* of the German cruiser *Emden* off the Cocos Islands on November 9th, 1914, the most spectacular in the First Total War in which an Australian cruiser took part is likely to prove the hard-fought action by the new H.M.A.S. *Sydney* with the Italian cruiser *Bartolomeo Colleoni* off Crete on July 19th, 1940.

A midsummer Mediterranean morning: the sky clear, the air crystal, the sea cobalt-blue, sailors in their white dress.

Light units of the British Navy—four destroyers—were carrying out a daring sweep through the Antikithera Channel, off the north-western point of Crete. About fifty miles away to the north-east a cruiser, accompanied by a destroyer, acted as a covering force for the destroyer sweep. This covering force, itself almost ridiculously light, was between the destroyers making the sweep and the Italian bases in the Dodecanese Islands from which opposition might be expected.

It was 7.15. The destroyers were H.M.S. *Hyperion* (Commander H. St. L. Nicholson, D.S.O., R.N.), H.M.S. *Ilex* (Lieut.-Commander P. L. Saumarez, D.S.C., R.N.), H.M.S. *Hero* (Commander H. W. Biggs, D.S.O., R.N.) and H.M.S. *Hasty* (Lieut.-Commander L. R. K. Tyrwhitt, R.N.), operating under the command of Commander Nicholson in H.M.S. *Hyperion*, in the vicinity of the Antikithera Channel.

To the north-eastward, the six-inch-gun cruiser H.M.A.S. *Sydney* (Captain J. A. Collins, R.A.N.) and the destroyer H.M.S. *Havock* (Commander R. E. Courage, D.S.O., D.S.C., R.N.) were steaming on a* westerly course north of Crete.

Five minutes later Commander Nicholson's destroyers sighted two ships to the south-westward. Within a minute they were identified as two Italian cruisers, steering south-south-east, at a range of about ten miles from our destroyers. Commander Nicholson at once reported the presence of the enemy to *Sydney*, and swung his vastly inferior force of four destroyers round to the north-eastward in order to draw the enemy towards his supports.

The disparity of force was very great. The Italian cruisers mounted sixteen six-inch guns, as against the sixteen 47-inch guns of the destroyer force. Nevertheless, the Italians did not immediately chase. They turned up to the northward and steered this diverging course for about half an hour before hauling round to the north-eastward to chase the British destroyers.

Salvo

At 7.26 a.m. the enemy opened fire on the British destroyers. They replied, but the range of their lighter guns was not sufficient to enable their fire to be effective. There was nothing else for it but to cease fire, although they continued to be under fire from the enemy until 7.45 a.m. The enemy's gunfire, however, proved inaccurate and ineffective.

Meantime, immediately they got wind of the enemy, *Sydney* and *Havock* altered course to the southward to support the destroyers and endeavour to bring the enemy to action.

By 8.0 a.m. *Sydney* and *Havock* had hauled round to a south-easterly course in order to gain contact with Commander Nicholson's destroyers at the earliest possible moment.

At this time the enemy, having been out of range of the British destroyers for a quarter of an hour, apparently decided to chase them, and altered course to east-north-east. The two British forces and the Italian force were therefore converging at high speed, and at 8.26 a.m. *Sydney* sighted the enemy and identified them as two cruisers of the *Colleoni* class that later were proved to be the *Bartolomeo Colleoni* and the *Giovanni delle Bande Nere*.

Exactly two minutes later *Sydney* opened fire at a range of ten miles, steering a converging course in order to close the range, despite the enemy's preponderating force.

In four minutes, however, the enemy began to turn away, and the Italian cruisers became very bad targets, almost obscured by their smoke. Eight minutes later the enemy cruisers turned away again. This time it was a turn of more than 90 degrees. It was clear that they were endeavouring to break off the action and withdraw to the southward. *Sydney* turned to follow. Thus, less than a quarter of an hour after opening fire, the action developed into a chase. These manoeuvres meant that only the four forward guns of *Sydney* could bear on the enemy.

Hits

Already the four destroyers under the command of Commander Nicholson in *Hyperion* had made contact with *Sydney* and had been ordered to attack with torpedoes. But this attack did not develop owing to the large turn away made by the enemy.

Gunnery conditions during the chase were extremely difficult for *Sydney*. The enemy ships were frequently obscured by smoke, and they made frequent alterations of course to throw out the accuracy of the British gunfire. Nevertheless, it became clear within fifteen minutes that the gunfire of H.M.A.S. *Sydney* had taken effect. The left-hand enemy cruiser was seen to sheer off from her consort, badly hit, and to lose speed. The other Italian cruiser continued to steam away to the southward at high speed.

Sydney kept up her fire at the damaged enemy cruiser until the range had closed to four and a half miles. It was then seen that the enemy, which had been repeatedly hit by *Sydney's* salvoes, was badly down by the bow and listing heavily. *Sydney* then ordered her destroyers to finish off the crippled ship while she herself, with other destroyers, went in pursuit of the remaining Italian cruiser. The chase was continued and *Sydney* continued in action until 10.20 a.m., when it was obvious that the enemy was making good his escape by virtue of his superior speed.

While *Sydney* was chasing the runaway Italian cruiser, *Hyperion* and *Ilex* torpedoed her crippled companion, which had been abandoned by her crew. She turned over and sank, bottom upwards, at 9.59 a.m. *Hyperion* and *Ilex* then began picking up survivors from the sunken enemy cruiser, which was found to have been the *Bartolomeo Colleoni*.

Havock, which had been detached from *Sydney*, soon arrived on the scene, and the work of picking up survivors was left to this ship, while *Hyperion* and *Ilex* followed *Sydney* southward.

By 12.37 P.m. *Havock* had picked up 218 officers and men of the *Bartolomeo Colleoni*. Six Italian Savoia bombers then appeared and carried out bombing attacks on *Havock* while she was trying to pick up more survivors. None of the Italian bombs hit the British destroyer, but the attacks forced *Havock* to abandon her task of rescue.

"You return to your homeland full of honour and with the gratitude of the Australian people," said the Governor-General, Lord Gowrie, when *Sydney* steamed into Sydney Harbour eight months later to receive the gratitude of the nation expressed in warm homecomings, marches through the streets, a school holiday and a shower of congratulatory telegrams.

Destruction—And Mystery

Such are the fortunes of war that in the same year (on December 3rd, 1941) the same city was in mourning, the same streets flying flags at half-mast in commemoration of the glorious end of *Sydney*. In the gathering dusk, 300 miles west of Carnarvon, Western Australia, while engaged on patrol duty, *Sydney*, coming upon the German merchant raider then sailing under the name *Kormoran* but known to the Admiralty as raider "No. 41", fought her last fight.

When *Sydney* encountered *Kormoran*, the initial advantage lay with the raider, because she was disguised as a merchantman, and because presumably something prevented *Sydney* from using air reconnaissance from a distance. What actually happened aboard *Sydney* was not known when the Australian Government announced her loss in December. No survivors were found, although she had a full complement of 42 officers and 603 men. According to German survivors, the engagement took place at the end of November. For strategic reasons, the announcement of the disaster was delayed. Between the time *Sydney* was last heard of and December 2nd, when the news was given the world, a long search over 300,000 square miles had produced no evidence of *Sydney* except two empty lifeboats and one Carley float, badly damaged by gunfire.

German sailors, now prisoners in Australia, say that *Sydney*

closed in on the raider, which was armed with 5*9-in. guns and torpedoes, and both ships opened fire simultaneously. The raider's first salvo struck *Sydney's* bridge, apparently damaging the central control tower, certainly starting a fire which lasted throughout the action. Closing the range as she fought, *Sydney* was, however, soon ablaze amidships. At the same time, the raider was burning as a result of a direct hit in the engine-room. As darkness fell, the enemy ceased fire and abandoned ship. Afterwards it blew up. Bobbing away in lifeboats in the gathering gloom from their doomed ship, more than 300 German survivors watched *Sydney* disappear over the horizon, flames still rising from her. It was the last glimpse ever caught of one of the bravest ships in the British Imperial Navy.

The marauding career of the raider was known in outline to the Admiralty. Out from Germany a year, it had only captured nine merchant ships—an ineffectual career. She was the *Steiertnark*, of 9,400 tons, but used *aliases*, including *Kormoran*, and, it was said, on her prowls in the Indian and Pacific Oceans she now and again masqueraded as a Japanese ship.

It was a grievous coincidence that made it necessary to announce on the same day the loss of the Australian-built sloop, *Parramatta*, torpedoed and sunk while on escort duties in the Mediterranean. Out of her complement of 161 officers and men, 141 were missing, believed killed. The convoy which *Parramatta* was escorting when she was attacked arrived safely at its destination.

Battle of Matapan

Australia will also proudly remember that she had a cruiser in the memorable action off Cape Matapan. Its story will always be recounted.

About midday on March 27th, 1941, air reconnaissance reported that enemy cruisers were at sea to the south-eastward of Sicily. The Commander-in-Chief Mediterranean, Sir Andrew Cunningham, was then at Alexandria with the main body of his fleet. It was immediately clear to him that these enemy cruisers probably intended to attack British convoys between Egypt and Greece.

Acting on this supposition, he made the following dispositions of the forces at his disposal: the Vice-Admiral Commanding Light Forces, Vice-Admiral H. D. Pridham-Wippell, C.B., C.V.O., R.N., with his flag flying in H.M.S. *Orion* (Flag Captain G. R. B. Back, R.N.), had with him the cruisers *Ajax* (Captain E. D. B. McCarthy, R.N.), *Perth* of the Royal Australian Navy (Captain Sir P. W. Bowyer-Smith, Bt.) and

Gloucester (Flag Captain H. A. Rowley, R.N.) and some destroyers. This force the Commander-in-Chief ordered to proceed to a position south of Crete in which it would be strongly placed to intercept any enemy forces attempting to interfere with our traffic with Greece.

The Commander-in-Chief, whose flag was flying in H.M.S. *Warspite* (Flag Captain D. B. Fisher, C.B.E., R.N.), had with him the battleships *Valiant* (Captain C. E. Morgan, D.S.O., R.N.) and *Barham* (Flag Captain G. C. Cooke, R.N.), the aircraft carrier *Formidable* (Flag Captain A. W. La T. Bissett, R.N.) and some destroyers. This force was ordered to raise steam with all despatch.

Early in the afternoon of March 27th, the Commander-in-Chief took his main fleet to sea from Alexandria and steamed to the north-westward in the hope of intercepting enemy forces and bringing them to action.

Next day at 7.49 a.m. air reconnaissance reported an enemy force consisting of one *Littorio* class battleship, six cruisers **and** seven destroyers about 35 miles south of Gavdo Island, steering to the south-eastwards. Soon after being sighted it was seen to be joined by two more cruisers and at least two more destroyers.

At the time of this sighting Vice-Admiral Pridham-Wippell, with the cruiser force, was about 40 miles to the south-eastward of the enemy. The Commander-in-Chief with the main fleet was then about 95 miles to the south-eastward of the cruiser force and steaming to the north-westward.

Skilful Manoeuvre

Acting on the aircraft report of sighting the enemy, our cruiser force altered course to the northward and made contact with enemy cruisers at 8.2 a.m. Having made contact, Vice-Admiral Pridham-Wippell turned his cruisers to the south-eastward in order to draw the enemy on towards the battle fleet.

Within an hour the enemy cruisers turned 16 points and began to steer to the north-westward. The British cruiser force followed suit in order to keep in touch. This they did until 10.58 a.m., when Vice-Admiral Pridham-Wippell sighted the *Littorio* class battleship 16 miles to the northward. On sighting her, Vice-Admiral Pridham-Wippell turned his cruisers once again south-eastward to keep outside range of the heavy guns of the enemy battleship and to draw the enemy forces towards his Commander-in-Chief.

A torpedo bomber attack was launched from H.M.S. *Formidable*, and this developed on the *Littorio* class battleship at 11.30 a.m. One possible hit was claimed in this **attack**.

Anzacs into Battle

Either this attack or the knowledge of the presence of an aircraft carrier caused the *Littorio* class battleship and her accompanying cruisers to turn to the north-westward. The enemy was thus again heading for his bases.

This abrupt turn by the enemy caused Vice-Admiral Pridham-Wippell to lose touch, but our cruiser force almost immediately came in sight of our own battle fleet, and the whole of our forces pressed on after the enemy. At 11.35 a.m. our aircraft sighted and reported a second enemy force about 80 miles west of Gavdo Island. This force consisted of two *Cavour* class battleships, three cruisers and four destroyers.

At about this time another torpedo-bomber attack by naval aircraft was launched against the enemy force which included the *Littorio* class battleship. One hit was claimed in this attack.

During the first hours of the afternoon naval aircraft again carried out a search for the enemy, with whom touch had been temporarily lost. They were again located. A further torpedo-bombing attack was launched, and in this attack three torpedo hits on the *Littorio* class battleship were claimed.

Between 3 p.m. and 5 p.m. Blenheim bombers of the R.A.F. attacked the enemy with bombs. In these attacks it was claimed that two direct hits were scored on one cruiser, one direct hit on a destroyer and two probable hits on another cruiser.

At 4 p.m. the Commander-in-Chief received a report from aircraft that the speed of the *Littorio* class battleship had been drastically reduced. He at once ordered Vice-Admiral Pridham-Wippell to press on with his four cruisers to regain touch. Two further torpedo-bombing attacks were launched at dusk by naval aircraft. It is not thought that the *Littorio* class battleship was again hit during these attacks, but one enemy cruiser was definitely hit by a torpedo.

Vice-Admiral Pridham-Wippell regained touch with the enemy just after dusk, and some destroyers were ordered to attack, others being retained with the battle fleet for screening duties. Having led the destroyers to the position from which they were to commence their attack, he led his cruisers clear of his destroyers to the north-eastward.

Night Fight

At 10.10 p.m. it was reported to the Commander-in-Chief that an enemy vessel was lying damaged and stopped three miles to port of the battle fleet's course. The Commander-in-Chief at once turned the battle fleet to engage this unit, which was the Italian cruiser *Pola*. While approaching *Pola*, three

enemy cruisers were sighted on the starboard bow. This force consisted of two *Zara* class cruisers led by a smaller cruiser of the *Colleoni* class, and it was crossing the bows of our battle fleet from starboard to port.

As the enemy cruisers passed ahead of the screen, H.M.S. *Greyhound* (Commander W. R. Marshall A'Deane, D.S.C., R.N.) illuminated the leading heavy cruiser. Our battle fleet at once opened fire. The Italians must have been taken completely by surprise. The first salvos hit at a range of about 4,000 yards and practically wrecked both the heavy cruisers of the *Zara* class as far as fighting was concerned. Enemy destroyers which were astern of the cruisers were then seen to turn and fire torpedoes and our battle fleet turned away to avoid them.

Exactly what followed is still obscure, but H.M.A.S. *Stuart* (Captain H. M. L. Waller, D.S.O., R.A.N.) and H.M.S. *Havock* (Lieutenant G. R. G. Watkins, R.N.) certainly did considerable execution. The destroyer attacking force which was searching for the damaged *Littorio* class battleship failed to locate her, and it seems probable that she moved off during the action between our battle fleet and the enemy cruisers.

Some of the destroyers from this attacking force subsequently made touch with the destroyers sent in by the Commander-in-Chief to mop up, and they assisted in sinking *Zara* and *Pola*. It appears probable that during the night, and as a result of excitement and confusion among the Italians, the *Littorio* class battleship became heavily engaged with her own forces. Heavy gunfire was heard at a time and from a direction which made it impossible for any of our forces to be engaged.

As soon as it became possible for a fleet action to take place, a force of Greek destroyers steamed out to the westward in the hope of intercepting enemy forces endeavouring to escape into the Adriatic. Unfortunately, the line of the enemy retreat did not give them an opportunity to attack.

Historic Engagement

Extensive air search next morning failed to disclose any of the remaining Italian ships, which must have made their escape under cover of darkness. The known results of this action were that the heavy cruisers *Zara*, *Pola* and *Fiume* were sunk, one six-inch-gun cruiser of the *Colleoni* class was probably sunk; the large Italian destroyer *Vincenzo Gioberti* and the destroyer *Maestrale* were sunk, and the large destroyer *Alfieri* probably sunk. The new battleship of the *Littorio* class sustained serious under-water damage and other enemy units were also certainly damaged.

None of our ships sustained either damage or casualties. The total British losses during these operations were two naval aircraft.

These highly successful engagements in the Mediterranean can be accounted historic for two reasons. It is the first occasion in history in which skilful co-ordination of naval operations with attacks launched by aircraft have resulted in the enemy's speed being reduced and our main units being able to force action upon a reluctant enemy. It is also the first occasion in naval history in which such severe losses have been imposed upon the enemy, while our own forces went completely unscathed.

On the following day some 55 officers and 850 men from the Italian vessels which had been sunk were picked up by our forces and by Greek destroyers which were actively co-operating. Survivors included Captain Despini of the *Pola*; Admiral Cantoni, commanding the Italian heavy cruiser squadron, is thought to have been lost in the *Zara*. Some hundreds more Italian survivors would have been picked up by the Allied forces had not the life-saving operations of our ships been interrupted by dive-bombing attacks delivered by the German Air Force. These dive-bombing attacks, although ineffective, caused the abandonment of rescue operations.

One Ju 88 was shot down during these attacks. Another which had attempted to interfere with our operations on the previous day, had also been shot down. When the Commander-in-Chief reluctantly decided to abandon the rescue of ItaUan seamen in order to avoid exposing his ships—and incidentally the Italian survivors—to danger from the German aircraft, he made a signal *en clair* to the Chief of the Italian Naval Staff, stating that over 350 Italian survivors were believed to be on rafts, giving their positions and stating that a fast hospital ship would be needed to pick up such survivors as he had been unable to rescue.

The Commander-in-Chief received the following reply from the Commander-in-Chief of the Italian Navy :

" Thank you for your communication. Hospital ship *Gradisca* already left Taranto yesterday evening at 5 p.m."

The British Commander-in-Chief made a signal thanking the Greek Navy for its very prompt and valuable co-operation.

The total forces operating were: British—three battleships, one aircraft-carrier, four cruisers and destroyers; Greek—some destroyers; Italian—three battleships, eleven cruisers, fourteen destroyers.

Catching Pacific Raiders

Minefields were laid off the New Zealand coast, and off Australia and South Africa by German raiders, as they were in the Great War. Pacific raiders, as survivors from some of them sunk by units of the British fleet testify, disguised themselves sometimes as Japanese merchantmen. Before one raider, masking her true identity with Japanese markings, went into action she would merely hang Nazi flags over the Japanese flags painted on the side of her hull amidships. A couple of other Japanese flags painted farther forward were hidden when the main gun-ports were opened by the covers swinging upwards and stowing close to the ship's side.

The New Zealand Division of the Royal Navy and the Royal Australian Navy are always seeking these raiders. Some of them are large. A German armed merchant cruiser, acting as a commerce raider in the Indian Ocean, which was sunk in May, 1941, by H.M.S. *Cornwall* (Captain P. C. W. Manwaring, R.N.), was an ex-Hansa liner of some 10,000 tons and a speed of nineteen knots, armed with six concealed 5.9-inch guns, torpedo tubes and mines. As a big ship she would have accommodation both for a company large enough to provide prize crews for her captures (if she wanted to use them) and for prisoners. It was just such ships that laid the minefields in the Pacific and, by changing their markings, tried consistently to evade capture. Supply ships for these commerce raiders were also numerous earlier in the war: many of them used to put out from South American ports: some were suspected of coming from Japanese harbours. One, acting as a supply ship for a raider, and a Norwegian tanker which had been captured by the raider and was being used by her, were intercepted in May, 1941, in the Indian Ocean by H.M.A.S. *Canberra* (Captain H. B. Farncomb, M.V.O., R.A.N.) and the New Zealand cruiser H.M.S. *Leander* (Captain R. H. Bevan, R.N.). The supply ship was the 7,400-ton *Coburg*, and the captured tanker the 7,031-ton *Ketty Brovig*.

Admiral Graf Spee

Possibly history will show that the two most thrilling battles fought out with strong German warships in the First Total War, were those which resulted in the cornering and destruction of the German pocket battleship *Admiral Graf Spee* (December 3rd, 1939) and the *Bismarck* (May 27th, 1941). While no Dominion warship had the opportunity of taking part in the destruction of the *Bismarck*, a cruiser of the New Zealand Division of the Royal Navy played a conspicuous part in the elimination of the *Admiral Graf Spee*. **This crack Nazi pocket**

battleship had its doom sealed when remarkable tactics were used successfully by the British sailor in command of three British cruisers, *Ajax* (Captain C. H. L. Woodhouse), a modern 7,000-ton cruiser of 32½ knots, armed with eight six-inch guns; *Achilles* (Captain W. E. Parry)—a sister ship of *Ajax*—belonging to the New Zealand Division and manned largely by New Zealanders; and *Exeter* (Captain F. S. Bell), a re-conditioned cruiser of 8,400 tons and 32 knots armed with six eight-inch guns.

Admiral Graf Spee, a model warship, was of 10,000 tons and 26 knots with six eleven-inch guns and eight 5.9-inch guns. Well protected against six-inch gunfire and better armed than any cruiser, the *Admiral Graf Spee* was superior to anything then in the Royal Navy with the exception of the battle-cruisers *Hood*, *Renown* and *Repulse*. The notorious *Altmark* was her tender. To illustrate the odds against the three British cruisers in weight of shell fired at one broadside, apart altogether from range of fire : the *Graf Spee's* broadside was 4,700 lbs., compared with 3,136 lbs. of the *Ajax*, *Achilles* and *Exeter* combined!

The only way in which the British could hope to win was by superior tactics. Superb manoeuvres alone might defeat the vastly superior fire-power of the enemy. Commodore (now Rear-Admiral) Henry Harwood believed it could succeed. He was in command of the three British cruisers which formed the South American Division. His broad pennant flew in the *Ajax*. The essence of his grand plan was to split the fire of the *Admiral Graf Spee*. How he did this amazed the Germans : Captain Langsdorff said afterwards that it was the "inconceivable audacity", the "incredible manoeuvres" and the "heroic tactics" of the British Commodore which upset his plans. "The *Graf Spee's* advantage in gun-range was thus neutralised. . . . I realised how dangerous the position was and resolved at all cost to break off the action."

Tactic Practised

This historic battle had four distinct phases—first, the preliminary movements which made victory possible; second, the main battle; third, the long shadowing engagement while the *Graf Spee* was flying before the British for the safety of neutral territorial waters—the River Plate; fourth, the long watch by the British off the estuary of the river, waiting for the German battleship to make a dash for the open sea.

Actually, it was the bravery of the wireless operator of the British S.S. *Doric Star* which probably brought about the action. When, on the afternoon of December 3rd, 1939, the *Doric Star* was being shelled by the *Admiral Graf Spee* on

the eastern side of the South Atlantic about midway between Sierra Leone and the Cape of Good Hope, he continued sending out messages giving his ship's position.

At that moment Commodore Harwood's cruisers were on the opposite side of the Atlantic, the three being scattered over an area of 2,000 miles. But the *Doric Star's* signal was picked up. The British correctly anticipated that the captain of the *Admiral Graf Spee*, well aware that his attack had been reported before his shells blasted the wireless operator's room, would probably run from that area and, most likely, cross the South Atlantic.

Commodore Harwood, charting the position, concluded that the *Admiral Graf Spee* could reach at about the same time the Rio de Janeiro area by dawn on December 12th; the River Plate area by that evening; or the Falkland Islands by December 14th. These three points, however, were separated by about 1,500 miles : the vital question was, for which would the raider make ? What finally decided Commodore Harwood to concentrate his force in the River Plate area was his belief that since it was the focal area of trading ships, the *Admiral Graf Spee* would probably select it in which to prey before moving off to another route. Once his mind was made up about it, he flashed a short message to his captains, instructing them where they were to meet. Not another wireless message was exchanged : no risks were to be run of letting the enemy know British forces were on the move.

All three cruisers arrived at their secret rendezvous, 150 miles off the River Plate, at 7 a.m. of December 12th. During the whole of that day Commodore Harwood and his three captains practised the tactics he intended to employ to beat the battleship.

Battle

As dawn broke next morning the three cruisers were steaming east north-east at fourteen knots under a clear sky, which promised a brilliant day, with visibility at its best. They were ploughing along in single line ahead in the order *Ajax*, *Achilles* and *Exeter*, when at 6.14 a.m. a smudge of smoke on the horizon just abaft the port beam caught the captains' eyes. Two minutes after *Exeter* investigated it, she reported : "I think it is a pocket battleship." So this was the quarry these gallant British cruisers had been seeking for two months. A thrilling moment: a dangerous moment, too, because they knew, and the *Admiral Graf Spee's* crew knew, as soon as they spotted them, that with their guns they could blow the three cruisers out of the sea without letting them drop a shell within splashing distance of the raider.

Immediately, Commodore Harwood's tactics began to be employed: apart from the first essential, the concentration of the cruisers before action was joined, the second essential was to exploit the advantage in speed and handiness of the British forces.

Speed in all the cruisers was worked up to the full. Ordinarily this takes about two hours, but with such tremendous energy did the stokerroom crews work that full speed was attained within half an hour. One of the *Ajax's* engine-room artificers said: "We knew we were in action, and we worked like devils to get the engines round."

A converging course was being steered by the cruisers at the time the smoke was seen on the horizon. Once *Admiral Graf Spee* was identified, the cruisers separated: *Exeter*, being the most powerful, made a big alteration in course to the westward, while *Ajax* and *Achilles* raced north-eastward, altering course a trifle to close the range rapidly. By this manoeuvre *Admiral Graf Spee* was to be engaged at once from widely different angles so that the raider would have to split the fire of her main armament if she were to engage both units or, leaving *Exeter*, concentrate fire on *Ajax* and *Achilles*, or vice versa.

Within four minutes of sighting the British, Captain Langsdorff decided to split his main fire. His eleven-inch guns roared at all three cruisers. The range was long, but the British cruisers were shortening it alarmingly by their quicker speed. Two minutes later, at 6.20 a.m., *Exeter* opened fire with her two forward turrets—four eight-inch guns—at a range of nine and a half sea miles. Worried by the eight-inch fire, *Admiral Graf Spee* suddenly swung all her big guns on *Exeter*. Shells were falling all around, splinters of one killing some of the crew. At 6.24 a.m. an eleven-inch shell hit *Exeter*, putting a turret of two eight-inch guns out of action, killing all the bridge personnel except the captain and two others, smashing the wheel-house communications, momentarily putting the ship out of control.

Brilliant British Seamanship

Meantime, *Ajax* and *Achilles* opened fire with their six-inch guns, developing amazing accuracy with a rapid rate of fire. So worried by this fire did *Admiral Graf Spee* become that at 6.30 a.m. Captain Langsdorff again split his fire, switching an eleven-inch turret to engage the six-inch cruisers, a movement temporarily relieving *Exeter*, which meanwhile had suffered two more direct hits, and had to be fought by orders being shouted from man to man, and steered from the after-steering

"STRIKE A
LIGHT, PAL!"

The first casualty
among the Allied
troops in Syria, an
Australian, wounded
in the hand, has his
cigarette lit by a
comrade.



PSKIS

" DEMOLITIONS
ARE DELAYING
OUR ADVANCE "

A vivid illustration
of a familiar phrase :
an Anzac looking
down on a broken
bridge over the Litani
river, scene of stiff
fighting, where sap-
pers are building a
temporary one.



position. Fires were burning in her. A scene of carnage was everywhere, yet no man thought of himself. A sailor with his forearm blown away went on fighting, encouraging his companions by his fortitude.

The secondary armament of *Admiral Graf Spee*—her 5.9-inch guns—did not hold off *Ajax* and *Achilles*, although all of it was concentrated on them, several salvos falling very close. *Exeter* fired her starboard torpedoes at 6.32 a.m. They went wide because the enemy, finding the British manoeuvre too bewildering, the gun-fire too hot, the audacity and courage of the men too great, at that moment put up her first smoke-screen and, by making a sudden big alteration in her course, turned 150 degrees away under cover of smoke before they could reach her.

Speed was the astonishing feature of the battle. Clearly, it was a thunderbolt to the Germans. By 6.36 a.m. *Ajax* and *Achilles* were doing twenty-eight knots—double the speed they were doing when action began twenty minutes earlier! Travelling at this rate, reeling from gunfire, *Ajax* catapulted her aeroplane, with a pilot and observer aboard, to spot the fall of the six-inch shells and to watch for enemy torpedoes. Despite the fact that the aeroplane flipped about like paper in the gun-blast, it got into the air and coolly took up a position above the cruisers.

A minute after it was up, it saw *Exeter* (at 6.38 a.m.) receive two more direct hits from eleven-inch shells, one putting the foremost turret out of action, the other entering the hull, starting a fierce fire between decks. "She's completely disappeared in smoke and flame," the observer reported, and it was feared she had gone: but, in the true Nelson spirit, she emerged from the smoke with the few guns she had left still blazing, and re-entered the action. All her compass repeaters had been smashed, only two guns were working, what little internal communication was possible was being done heroically by a chain of messengers, the captain was conning the ship with the help of a small boat's compass, she was developing a seven-degree list and was down by the bow, but still steaming at full power.

Tenacity

Like terriers, *Ajax* and *Achilles* hung on the *Admiral Graf Spee*. They never let go their grip, though they knew they were doing what naval theorists all over the world had said was impossible. At 6.40 a.m. an eleven-inch shell burst just short of *Achilles*, in line with the bridge, splinters killing four ratings in the main gunnery control position and stunning the gunnery officer and slightly wounding the captain on the

bridge. No serious damage was done to instruments, however, and while the main gunnery-control position was momentarily out of action, the secondary control position took over, so that gunnery efficiency was unimpaired.

But by now the action had virtually become a chase. Obviously afraid of destruction, *Admiral Graf Spee* turned away westward under cover of smoke screens, with *Ajax* and *Achilles* now racing at thirty-one knots, and still increasing speed. At this moment *Ajax* and *Achilles* were on the starboard quarter of the enemy, *Exeter* rather before the enemy's port beam, still firing her last guns.

About 7.16 a.m. *Admiral Graf Spee* hauled round until her eleven-inch guns would bear on *Ajax* and *Achilles*) at a range of only five and a half miles she tried desperately to blow them out of the water. Both were straddled, but not hit. Neither were they struck by the enemy's smaller guns, which now had effective range, but whose shooting was ragged. Four minutes later *Ajax* and *Achilles* brought all their guns to bear on the raider: it was rapid, accurate shooting that started a fire amidships in *Admiral Graf Spee*. *Ajax* fired her port torpedoes at a range of four and a half miles, but the raider dodged them under a smoke-screen by another violent alteration in course.

Ten minutes later *Exeter's* last turret ceased to operate because of flooding. Reluctantly, she turned away from the battle, steaming slowly, and starting to repair damage and make herself seaworthy. At 7.40 a.m. Commodore Harwood was told that so many rounds of ammunition had been fired there was some danger of a shortage if the action proceeded without a final decision. This prompted him to break off the day action and to decide to shadow the enemy until nightfall, when he thought he would have a better chance of shortening the range to a point where his lighter armament and torpedoes would have a decisive effect.

A Wreck in Flames

The German battleship made not the slightest attempt to turn to follow the little British cruisers, but sped for the safety of neutral waters at twenty-two knots. All day the pursuit was maintained tenaciously. Nothing the *Admiral Graf Spee* could do could shake off the British.

"We knew our commodore would die rather than let the raider go," the New Zealanders in *Achilles* said afterwards. "His intention was to destroy—and we knew he meant it."

At ten minutes past midnight *Admiral Graf Spee* dropped anchor in Montevideo roads. Outside the territorial waters the British cruisers watched, their crews tired but exhilarated

by the defeat of a battleship which, according to all the accepted rules of naval warfare, should have sunk them hours ago.

Rushing through the night at full speed, H.M.S. *Cumberland*, from the Falkland Islands, and the aircraft-carrier H.M.S. *Ark Royal* and the battle-cruiser H.M.S. *Renown*, and other ships, all of which had been operating some 3,000 miles away, were coming, acting on signalled instructions. But the responsibility for seeing that the battleship did not break out into the open sea still devolved upon the two cruisers. Help could not arrive for some time. But Commodore Harwood had one great advantage—the spirit of his crews. It matched his own, which was indomitable. The intention was destruction : the end would be destruction.

For five nights they watched and waited. Reinforcements arrived, but still *Ajax* and *Achilles* stood there. At 5.30 p.m. on the afternoon of Sunday, December 17th, *Admiral Graf Spee*, after having undergone repairs (with assistance from the shore) and refuelled, weighed anchor. A thrill ran through the British crews; the expectations of action were, apparently, about to be fulfilled.

Suddenly the aeroplane from *Ajax*, watching the raider in a position in shallow water about six miles south-west of Montevideo, signalled at 8.54 p.m.: "*Admiral Graf Spee* has blown herself up."

Lights were switched on by the British as the squadron steamed to a point within about four miles of the wreck. Commodore Harwood said : " It was now dark, and she was ablaze from end to end, flames reaching almost as high as the top of the control tower, a magnificent sight and most cheering sight."

In his despatch he said :—

" I would like also to place on record the honour and pleasure I had in taking one of H.M. ships of the New Zealand Division into action, and fully concur with the Commanding Officer of H.M.S. *Achilles*' remark that ' New Zealand has every reason to be proud of her seamen during their baptism of fire.' "

Chapter VII

Red Sun in the Far East

" Indo-China, Malaya, Thailand are close neighbours of Australia—as close, indeed, as they are of Japan. We look with misgivings at Japan's entry into Indo-China. We look ahead and naturally ask ourselves what is Japan's next move, the next and the next."

—Australia's Army Minister, August, 1941.

JAPAN had been a cloud of variable size on the horizon of Britain, America, Australia, New Zealand and the Dutch East Indies since 1930. The cloud became more menacingly dark from 1937. War against China was properly launched in that year. Each step that Japan took from early in 1931, when she struck at Manchuria, must be examined in the light of her manoeuvres for power, which culminated in her treacherous, unprovoked attacks on Britain and America on December 7th, 1941.

In 1914-18 Japan was as a beneficent sun. Australia has not forgotten that two Japanese cruisers helped to escort her first big convoy of troops to Britain in the Great War. Friendship was at its warmest and firmest then.

At the end of the second year of the First Total War, following Japan's occupation of Indo-China, the position was that whether there was to be peace or war in the Pacific depended on Japan. Indo-China has a common frontier with Thailand; Thailand, which had declared it did not want the protection of any Great Power—Britain, America or Japan—provides the only frontier with British Malaya.

Danger

British, American, Chinese, Australian and New Zealand authorities agreed that an aggressive move by Japan against Thailand would be the spark that would most likely ignite the powder magazine in the Far East, enveloping the Pacific region in flames as fierce as those crackling in Europe and the Middle East.

Mr. Eden, the British Foreign Minister, put it mildly when he said in the House of Commons (August 7th, 1941) that

" any action which would threaten the independence of Thailand would be a matter of concern to this country, more particularly as a threat to the security of Singapore."

Mildly, for already Japanese naval bases at Saigon and Camranh Bay, and air bases in the south and west of Indo-China, were serious menaces to the Philippines, the Netherlands East Indies, Burma and British Malaya—indeed, to the whole British Imperial and American position in the Southern Pacific. As *The Times* declared: "This menace would become intolerable if Japan were permitted to establish herself in Thailand."

But mild though Mr. Eden's language appeared, public opinion interpreted it to mean that any further move by Japan would mean war in the Pacific. Nobody in Britain or America had any doubts about the difficulty of ejecting the Japanese from areas in which they have been permitted to secure a firm hold. Neither Britain nor America could afford to let Japan get a grip on Thailand.

Going much further, Mr. Churchill, on August 24th, in a broadcast speech on his meeting with President Roosevelt when they drew up what has been aptly described as the Atlantic Charter—the historical eight-point world peace plan—told Japan bluntly that the policy of appeasement in the Far East had ended for Great Britain—and for the Empire. In a remarkable statement on the unanimity of British and American policy in the Pacific, a statement that is probably unmatched, Mr. Churchill declared :

" Since the Mongol invasion of Europe in the sixteenth century there has never been methodical, merciless butchery on such a scale, or approaching such a scale. And this is but the beginning. Famine and pestilence have yet to follow in the bloody ruts of Hitler's tanks. We are in the presence of a crime without a name.

" But Europe is not the only continent to be tormented and devastated by aggressions. For five long years the Japanese military factions, seeking to emulate the style of Hitler and Mussolini, taking all their posturing as if it were a new European revelation, have been invading and harrying the 500,000,000 inhabitants of China. Japanese armies have been wandering about that vast land in futile excursions, carrying with them carnage, ruin, and corruption, and calling it 'the Chinese incident.'

" Now they stretch a grasping hand into the southern seas of China; they snatch Indo-China from the wretched Vichy French; they menace by their movements Siam; menace Singapore, the British link with Australasia, and menace the Philippine Islands under the protection of the United States. It is certain that this has got to

stop. Every effort will be made to secure a peaceful settlement.

"The United States are labouring with infinite patience to arrive at a fair and amicable settlement which will give Japan the utmost reassurance for her legitimate interests. We earnestly hope these negotiations will succeed. But this I must say: that if these hopes should fail we shall of course range ourselves unhesitatingly at the side of the United States."

The emphasis on Britain's willingness to "of course, range ourselves unhesitatingly on the side of the United States" irritated a considerable number of American critics. Even such friendly, responsible journals as the *New York Times* felt bound to observe that "to some Mr. Churchill's commitment may seem like a misapplication of emphasis. Certainly it cannot be denied that the British Empire's stake in the Far East is at least equal to our own, and that its vital interests are more likely to be challenged by Japanese aggression southward"—an interesting comment in the light of what actually happened.

Alert

Elaborate precautions against possible attack on British possessions in the Far East were taken early in the war. In September, 1941, the only difference between the beach along the front of hotels in Britain's Brighton and that in front of the celebrated Sea View Hotel, Singapore, was that there were no bomb-wrecked buildings to be seen on the Singapore sea-front.

Barbed wire was rusting there as it was at Brighton. Machine-gun pill-boxes were being dashed by spray in both places. In Raffles Square—the Trafalgar Square of Singapore—concrete machine-gun posts decorated incongruously the street intersections: and there were strong points on municipal aerodromes.

All the sea approaches to Singapore had been strengthened, particularly since the end of 1940. Besides the barbed-wire entanglements on the beaches and foreshores, the innumerable tank-traps and machine-gun strong posts, there were a number of heavy shore batteries, anti-aircraft batteries, including batteries of searchlights, and several squadrons of the Royal Air Force and the Royal Australian and Royal New Zealand Air Forces. All numbers were, and are, secret.

Picked British Imperial troops were stationed on the Malayan frontier: to the north, too, formations of the latest bombers were sent early in 1941 and strengthened steadily. Simultaneously, Japan was reinforcing all her newly-acquired positions,

including Indo-China and Hainan Island. An arresting point was that great developments had been made in the torpedo section of the R.A.F. throughout Malaya. Squadrons of torpedo bombers were stationed at strategic points, and sections of the R.A.F. stations responsible for the maintenance, repair and storing of torpedoes had grown enormously. Hundreds of torpedoes are required by the squadrons operating from the Malayan bases.

Air Force stations, like the naval buildings, are constructed to give the maximum security against air-raid attacks. Vital points are proof against direct hits. Wireless stations, high-powered and among the most modern in the world, are heavily protected. Workshops are models of efficiency. Thousands of skilled men, white and coloured, work round the clock. The technical work of some members of the Asiatic Technical Corps is highly praised by British army, navy and air experts, who rate them high as mechanics. No aeroplane is too big for repair; large, up-to-date types are maintained.

Similarly, equipment for the handling of the units of the Royal Navy is admirable: the largest ship afloat can be handled with ease. Any naval repair can be made. There are cranes to lift the heaviest gun, the largest boiler. All the magazines, holding mines, bombs, shells, bullets, concealed at various points in Malaya, are safe against salvos of direct hits, as are the subterranean fuel reservoirs, which hold hundreds of thousands of gallons of oil and petrol.

High Stakes

But Singapore is more than just Britain's most powerful fortress. It is the keystone in the great arch of Anglo-American defensive positions in the Pacific. If Japan controls Singapore, she controls half the world.

Once she was in undisputed possession of the Base, Japan would control the Straits of Malacca, which separate Malaya from Sumatra. These Straits lead into the Indian Ocean. By steaming up the coast of Malaya she could reach Burma; by steaming west from the Straits she would aim at cutting the British trade routes by rounding Ceylon, and setting a course north-west for the Arabian coast. In this one movement, if successful, she would sever the shipping lines between Colombo and Cape Town and between Burma and India and the Red Sea, and isolate the Arabian Sea and the Persian Gulf.

Thrusting south from Singapore, Japan, it was thought, would have as her preliminary plan for the subjugation of Australia and New Zealand the isolation of both countries by cutting their lines of communication with the world. Very likely she would seek to possess Thursday Island, between

Australia and New Guinea, and seize Darwin. At the same time she would most likely drive south, along the West Australian coast, to hack Australia's shipping route to the Cape, critics thought.

Tremendous encouragement to try to bring off earlier such an attack as she suddenly made on December 7th would have been given Japan if Germany and Italy had succeeded in crippling British power in the Middle East and had gained control of territory either side of the Red Sea, as they had hoped before the Allies dealt their successful blows in Italian East Africa, Egypt and Libya and before German influence was eliminated from Syria, Iraq and Iran.

The British, however, have no intention of letting the Japanese get Singapore. Wisely, they had their plans for counter-attack. Not knowing where, among several possible spots where feint attacks might be made by the Japanese, the real attacks would fall, the British were prepared at all points. Singapore is the centre of a wide web of fortifications. Troops and aerodromes were miles north in the vicinity of the Malayan-Thailand border; scouting aeroplanes patrolled ceaselessly the surrounding waters, on the watch; minefields on land and sea were, in some areas, already laid.

As soon as Japan controlled French Indo-China, the menace she representee! increased. This control greatly helped her in her initial attack. Thrusts could be made simultaneously from Formosa and from Saigon and Camranh Bay at the Dutch East Indies, Singapore and Borneo and Sarawak.

Countering these ocean and air attacks, the British, assisted by the Dutch, were soon delivering blows from Singapore, Java and Australia. The Japanese were being met by British, American and Dutch surface warships, submarines and aeroplanes of several types.

Stars and Stripes

No less than to the British, the security of Singapore is imperative to the United States. Shaven-headed Japanese generals, admirals and air chiefs, in discussing plans of attack on Singapore and the chances of further expansion southward, were always brought face to face with the necessity of considering how such an attempt would be interpreted in America. Their horror was the thought of American intervention, of giant bombing raids from aerodromes in Guam, just east of the Philippines and only 1,350 miles from Tokyo. Incendiaries, they knew, could turn great Japanese cities into huge bonfires. The flimsy homes would flare like dry torches.

Malaya produces almost a third of the world's tin, a little more than a third of the world's rubber. America depends

on Malaya and the Dutch East Indies to supply her with most of her requirements.

I was sitting one evening on the wide verandah of the bungalow of an American journalist friend in Honolulu. He was the Central Pacific correspondent for a group of American morning newspapers. He had been there for three years, flying to New York or to Singapore at least once a month, sometimes twice, to keep in touch with friends and acquaintances either side of him. (As a result of his frequent visits to China and Japan he had more silk shirts and pyjamas, all presents from Chinese and Japanese, than he could wear : his wife more silk kimonos, silk frocks, silk stockings, silk scarves than I have ever seen in the possession of any one woman.)

Ships' lights were twinkling below. I asked him what was the most impressive scene he had witnessed since he had been living there.

" More than a hundred American warships after manoeuvres between here and the Philippines," he said. " I flew out to look at them when it was over and we knew they were on their way to Pearl Harbour. You felt you'd pity the Japs if they tried taking the bone from the teeth of those gobs."

The Philippines is America's most advanced base in the Pacific. It thrusts right up under Japan's ribs. Independence may or may not come to the Philippines in 1946. Until then America holds certain rights on the islands, is responsible for their defence, maintaining naval and military bases there, controls all things relating to immigration, currency, foreign trade, debt, tariff.

The Act creating this position, passed in 1936, was designed by America to give the Filipinos a chance to make up their minds whether they wanted to stay under the Stars and Stripes or become the Philippine Republic. The Filipinos have not yet made up their minds. There are various opinions, ranging from a wish that the Philippines could have something like Dominion status with America, to a downright call for immediate independence.

What was accepted as a certainty was that America could not afford to let Japan control Malaya, principal source of her rubber supplies and a considerable quantity of her tin. As William Dwight Whitney puts it in *Who Are the Americans ?* (1941) :

" The industrial effects of the enormous size of the American motor-car industry are manifold, of which not the least is the complete dependence of the American economy upon rubber, none of which can possibly grow

in the United States, and substantially all the world's export supply of which is produced in the British and Dutch East Indies. American life would be revolutionised if Japan were to cut off the access to Malayan rubber, and no American Government could permit this."

Indirectly the American importer of rubber and tin pays a considerable proportion towards the upkeep of Singapore, which is estimated in peace-time to be about £500,000.

Naval Power

Oddest feature about Singapore as a naval base is that in the months before Japan attacked there was very little of the Royal Navy there. Yet Britain's chief offensive force in the Far East, essentially, is the Fleet. The first line of defence is the Air Force, although this can be used in co-operation with the Navy and to a certain extent independently as an advance striking force. The second line of defence is the military force.

Britain is building great numbers of fast motor-torpedo boats to be based at Singapore. Before the war in the Pacific, cruisers and destroyers composed the Royal Navy's China Squadron, based at Hong Kong. Yet Singapore could hold more than the whole of the British and American Fleets.

An area of twenty-one miles is covered by the naval base alone. Naval yards spread around it. Railway lines, for the special use only of the Admiralty, criss-cross the yards, linking a great industrial unit, threading among factories, power-houses, huge cranes, piles of iron and armour plate.

Singapore is nearly 3,000 miles from Yokohama. It is better than Gibraltar, because it has excellent provision for aircraft. Australian-made Wirraway trainers and American fighters, such as the Brewster, and American bombers, such as the Lockheed Hudson, are there, apart from certain types of fighters and bombers made in the United Kingdom. Australian-made Bristol Beaufort bombers are also being added.

Singapore represents the greatest concentration of military, naval and aerial power at the cross-roads of the Far East, the junction of trade routes from India and the west to China. It is only twenty-seven miles long, fourteen wide. A cause-way over the dazzling blue Strait of Johore connects it with the mainland.

A gigantic engineering feat turned a mangrove swamp into a mighty defensive base. Until the one floating and one graving dock were installed at Singapore, Malta, 8,000 miles

away, was the only naval base big enough to take British warships if they needed repairs away from bases round the British Isles. The docks were towed, in sections, from Britain : another feat.

Apart from perfect flying-boat bases, there are ideal military airfields on the island. In manoeuvres, flying-boat squadrons fly from India, just to show how quickly reinforcements could arrive. Manoeuvres are held every year. Other bases are in North Borneo and Sarawak.

Once there were two schools of thought on the question of the impregnability of Singapore Base. Service experts on the spot said it could never be taken by any enemy : Service experts in Britain believed the defences were good even five years ago, but thought a chink in the armour was provided by a relatively weak air arm—a defect, if it was one, which has been rectified. Now it is a common belief that Singapore is invulnerable to any sort of attack.

A great many of its defences are closely guarded secrets. None is more closely screened than the nature and number of the great land batteries. These dominate the coast. They bristle on many a small island in the Straits. Permanent garrisons of artillery and engineers live there. Japanese spies, like German agents, have been trying for years to discover their exact whereabouts. Not the greatest battleship in the world could stand up against some of them. This much is known, at least. For some of the batteries contain eighteen-inch guns, the heaviest in the world. Maximum armament of the most powerful warships is fifteen- or sixteen-inch guns.

Costly Delay

Jellicoe was one of the British admirals who advocated the creation of the Base. That was in 1919-20. He wanted to see a British Fleet in the Far East; battleships, not just cruisers; a two-hemisphere naval policy. After the Imperial Conference, held in London in 1921, it was decided to build it. Arguments against the Base included its great cost and the contention that it would irritate Japan and start a ship building race. The Washington Naval Limitation Treaty, signed in 1922, established naval relations between Great Powers and terminated the Anglo-Japanese alliance.

Labour, in office in Britain, having second thoughts about the Base, decided in 1924 to suspend construction. Explaining how this caused delay, Lord Stanhope, who from November 1924 to June 1929, was Civil Lord of the Admiralty, and therefore the member of the Board responsible for the construction of the Base, writing to *The Times* (August 26th, 1941), revealed that:—

" When construction was again decided on in 1925 the personnel which had been brought home had to be sent but again. It was then found that many of the ditches dug to drain the area to free it from malarial mosquitos had fallen in, and it proved a more difficult task to complete this work than if it had never been started. It was thanks to the energy, knowledge, and skill of the Naval Surgeon-Commander in charge that the work was completed so rapidly and so effectively. Of course, that was not the only work which had to be restarted, but, whatever may have been done outside the base, all work within its boundaries fell on naval Votes.

" Speaking in reply to a question in the House of Commons on February 11th, 1925, the First Lord of the Admiralty, Mr. Bridgeman (as he then was), said that although little direct monetary loss had resulted from the suspension of 1924 there had been considerable indirect loss, and that the loss of time would be at least 1½ years.

" Actually I and another Commissioner of Admiralty signed the main contract on behalf of the Board on October 8th, 1928. That was only just soon enough to get the work so far advanced that the Labour Party, on coming back into office in 1929, were unable again to stop the main contract. To have done so would have involved the payment of heavy compensation. They did, however, stop all other work. As it was, the Naval Base was only officially opened for use early in 1938, though at that time far from completed."

R6le of Torpedo Bombers

The lessons of the German aerial assault on Crete were closely studied by the British naval, aerial and military experts in the Far East and applied during manoeuvres in the Malayan setting. Experts, in discussing the Japanese Air Force before the Pacific war, invariably recognised the fanatical bravery of Japanese pilots, but believed that at best the Japanese were not as good aviators as the Italians, and that the speed with which the tiny section of the R.A.F. operating against the Italians late in 1940 and early in 1941 soon gained complete mastery over the *Regia Aeronautica* was a clear indication that the much stronger section of the combined Royal Air Force, the Royal Australian Air Force, and the Royal New Zealand Air Force would be able to beat down to the dust the Japanese Air Force. Indeed, it was officially stated on October 19th, 1941, by Air Vice-Marshal C. W. H. Pulford, Air Officer Commanding the Far East,

that while one of the best Japanese fighters is the *O* naval fighter, the Brewster Buffaloes, possessed in substantial numbers by the Empire air force in Malaya and Burma, would not expect to experience any real difficulty in dealing with it. The Japanese were known to have two fairly good bombers of the Mitsubishi type. One of them is used by the Japanese Army, the other by the Navy. In performance, these bombers are almost comparable with the Whitley bomber in the R.A.F. Japanese factories, it is believed, are turning out only limited numbers of the German Messerschmitt 109.

Because Japan is 3,000 miles from Singapore, a full-scale Japanese Fleet attack on the island was considered to be as difficult as a British Imperial Fleet attack on Japan. To steam to a point 3,000 miles away for a fight, especially in such dangerous, narrow and difficult waters, and to return from it, is a pretty formidable task.

Japanese are bad aviators, generally speaking, compared with British, American or Russian flyers. They are hot-headedly daring, but not precise. Precision bombing is always desirable; it will never be more desirable than in the war in the Far East. It was suggested before Japan's declaration that in the event of war the way in which the Japanese Fleet would be most likely to be attacked, in part, and perhaps a considerable section of it crippled, if not destroyed, would be by long-range torpedo bombers. It is hardly too much to say that a single major naval engagement, in which the Anglo-American navies were victorious, could completely settle the outcome of the conflict, even if it did not end it immediately. No doubt, the Japanese Admiralty gained a number of sound lessons by watching the Royal Navy deliver a crippling blow with torpedo bombers to a valuable portion of the Italian Fleet apparently so safely moored in Taranto. (It is noteworthy, in discussing this point, that Air Chief Marshal Sir Robert Brooke-Popham, then British Commander-in-Chief in the Far East, concluding a visit to Australia, said publicly in October, 1941, that he had been greatly interested to see the extent of progress made in the manufacture of torpedo-carrying bombers in Australia.)

When finally the units of the British Imperial Fleets and the United States Navy, with air support, have dealt major blows at the Japanese Navy, they will seek to close all routes to Japan. Their object will be to bottle up the Japanese Fleet and sink all merchant shipping. They will be the screw in the vice. They will shut off Japan by a blockade as effectively as Germany was shut off in the Great War.

Fighting in China has, nevertheless, shown that Japanese pilots have improved their technique each year. But they

are not individualists; rather are they regimented, a fact which is revealed when a squadron is caught in a difficult position. They appear, in such an emergency, "to act according to rules", and do not instinctively react and improvise a defence as white pilots do. British, American and Russian pilots have repeatedly proved this in skirmishes over China. The Japanese have good machines; on passenger air lines they have flown hundreds of thousands of miles. Most of the machines turned out of Japanese factories are copies of American fighters and bombers. Perhaps the Japanese Air Force acquires most as a result of the occupation of Indo-China, for at the outbreak of war it had the use of some good air bases there.

Vast quantities of Japan's best material for her land forces are in China. The margin of reserves for her land forces is not considerable. She is weak in tanks, for example. Her industry's capacity for quick and adequate replacements on the scale demanded by *blitzkrieg* battles is practically non-existent. Indeed, the cardinal weakness of Japan in her striving to be a first-class military power is lack of strength in the basis of her heavy industries. It is too weak to allow the full development of war industries.

Until December 7th, 1941, Japan had had little practice in first-class methods. When she challenged Russia on the Mongolian-Manchurian border in 1939, she was so badly mauled in the few days' fighting that she has not yet chosen to seek a second test. Even against inadequately armed China she did not make any solid progress in 1940-41: she was, in fact, slowed down if not halted in China.

Chinese make good pilots. Even before September 3rd, 1939, British, American, Russian, Australian and New Zealand airmen had taught scores of them. Some of these Australian and New Zealand pilots, at the outbreak of war, came to Britain to enlist with the R.A.F. For instance, among the pilot-officers under training at a Royal Air Force Flying School in 1941 were two young Australians who had seen service as pilots in the war between China and Japan and also in the Spanish Civil War. Both had had extraordinary experiences. One, who in peace-time was a school-master in Sydney, commenting on the hostilities in China, said:

" Our squadron was composed half of Russian, a third of American, and the remainder of Australian pilots, with four Chinese. I had the incredible good luck to bag an enemy bomber the second day I flew, and was so cocky about it that I was shot down myself—incendiary bullets

—the day after that. I narrowly escaped drowning when I landed in a river and my 'chute would not unbuckle."

Later, the two Australians were posted to a Chinese flying school, where they were instructing young Chinese to fly on a varied assortment of aircraft—British, American, Russian and French, bombers and fighters mixed. In the autumn of 1939 they worked their passage to England, signing on as "cabin boys". The voyage took three months.

Eventually they found themselves in England, and were accepted for service in the Royal Air Force. One of them said: "I thought I could fly when I came here, but I find I was quite wrong by R.A.F. standards. The thoroughness of the drill and lecture courses I have done are the best training possible." (These two Australians were actually in a section for training which included men from Canada, United States, South Africa, Malaya, New Zealand and even Patagonia.)

Jungle—and City Lights

Reinforcements from the British and Indian Armies, and from Australia and New Zealand had, for months before hostilities began, increased the international flavour of life in Singapore and Malaya: here were soldiers from all quarters of the Empire—English, Scotch, Welsh, Irish, Anzacs, Sepoys, Punjabis, Sikhs, Malays.

They are scattered throughout the Malayan peninsula, of which Singapore is a tiny dot of an island at the extreme tail-end. For what is called British Malaya comprises three distinct types of territory—the Straits Settlements, including Penang and Singapore, which are a Crown Colony; the Federated Malay States, which are native principalities ruled by Britain; and the Unfederated Malay States, whose sultans have autonomy (the most important of them is the Sultan of Johore), which are as dependent on Britain for safety as are the Federated Malay States. Nearby are the British portions of the huge island of Borneo—Sarawak, North Borneo and Brunei.

Like a scimitar, a string of islands from Malaya curves in a sweep above Australia, the point, thrust past the Dutch East Indies—rich in colour, vastly wealthy, populated by some 65,000,000 natives happily governed by a handful of Hollanders—resting in New Guinea, Australia's mandated territory.

Heat in Malay is as different from the dry heat in Libya as the jungle and cities are different from the sands and bazaars of Cairo. It is steamy, but neither unhealthy nor too un-

pleasant. Most of the cities are rich, but the richest is Singapore. Raffles Square, Raffles Statue and Raffles Hotel are only three reminders of the self-made millionaire, Sir Stamford Raffles, who created Singapore. Back in 1818 the British started fashioning it on a malarial swamp. To-day its great stone skyline is unforgettable. It is a modern city, graced by some of the finest private residences in the world. Tin and rubber kings have let money flow like water.

Of the coloured population, the majority are Chinese (75 per cent.), but it includes, besides Malays, Indians and a minute sprinkling of Japanese. Whites number approximately 15,000. The inhabitants are used to the presence of British garrisons; but perhaps the greatest surprise they have ever had from soldiers was given them by the easy-going, carefree manner of the Anzacs. Not knowing or caring about local caste prejudices, local taboos, ready to talk with anyone, offer a hand to the world, the Anzacs go where they like when on leave, speak to whom they like, drink beer with them, dance with the girls who take their fancy in the taxi-dance halls.

Fantastic Battleground

A more fantastic battleground than Malaya offers could not be found, except in the forests of Brazil or in other parts of Latin America. It is the incredible tropics of incredible Hollywood movies: a lush, unbelievable, jungle-matted green, some of it inaccessible, its rocky coasts storm-beaten by the eastern monsoons. The Malay Peninsula, south of the Thailand border, is approximately 500 miles long, about 200 miles wide, and runs from north-west to south-east.

A high ridge of mountains, the end of the formidable rugged chain stretching down from the Himalayas, is its backbone. They are wild mountains, amazingly steep, jagged, slashed by ravines and fast rivers, with thick forests striding up from the base to the summit, 6,000 or 7,000 feet up. Tigers and elephants roam in the craggy valleys, the tangled, steaming glens; pythons hang from giant tree limbs, glide over rocks, their unblinking eyes as cold as shoe-buttons.

On the western side of the range, the narrower side, there are several good roads; on the eastern side there are practically none at all. No military road runs—as one does in Java—through the country: most roads run from the coast inland, finishing in the hills. From the Thai frontier to Penang, thence to Singapore, there is only one road—and under a weight of military traffic it would not last long.

Chopping up the whole peninsula are rubber and pineapple

plantations, clearings round tin dredges, and native rice-fields; and three big cities—Singapore, Penang and Kuala Lumpur. Next to Shanghai, Singapore is the liveliest cosmopolis in the Far East. Penang is a smaller edition, less hybrid, more prim. Kuala Lumpur is the Washington of Malaya, home of national and cultural aspirations, dignified by beautiful Government offices of neo-Moorish design, set in broad avenues against a background of wide, smooth lawns. Go into the famous cocktail bars any night and you are in the centre of European high life, rubbing shoulders with rubber and tin magnates. There are surprisingly few flies; mosquitoes, eliminated in Singapore, for instance, are found mostly only in a few places up-country.

The simple explanation of the lack of great arterial highways is that, on the one hand, the roads are designed for the use of the cultivated regions, rubber estates principally, while on the other the small separate States have no need for main thoroughfares to connect them. If it were desired to move troops through the territory, the military obstacle presented by this road pattern and by the wild nature of the country is obvious.

Only on the coastal fringe either side of the central range of mountains is there any level ground. Even there it is mostly mangrove swamp. Broken hills and dark jungle form most of the eastern side: paths have to be forced, except for the narrow tracks between native villages.

To cope with the fighting in the hills and in the jungle are men of marked adaptability for this highly specialised phase of the military art, the Anzacs, the Indians—especially the Gurkhas from the hills of Nepal—and the Kachins, who dwell in the dark teak forests of the Kachin Hills, in Burma, masters of fighting in bamboo jungles.

Australia and New Zealand Participate

New Zealand gave £1,000,000 towards the construction of Singapore Base: chiefly the Base is maintained by contributions and revenue from the Straits Settlements and the Federated Malay States and by contributions from the potentates of the Unfederated States.

Australia contributed in another way. Consideration of Australia's defence policy, in the light of Australia's contribution to the Empire's war effort, takes us back to the years shortly after the Great War. The Washington Treaty had just been signed, and a Treaty of Mutual Guarantee was under consideration by the League of Nations. At the same time—1923—an Imperial Conference was held in London at which Australia was represented by the Rt. Hon. S. M. Bruce, then Prime Minister, now High Commissioner in London.

At that conference Empire defence was a main consideration and certain decisions were arrived at. One was that the conference affirmed that it was necessary to provide for the adequate defence of the territories and trade of the several countries comprising the British Empire. Certain principles were affirmed by the conference in support of that resolution. One was that local defence was a primary responsibility of each portion of the Empire represented at the conference, in regard to which the conference noted :—

" The deep interest of the Commonwealth of Australia, the Dominion of New Zealand, and India, in the provision of a Naval Base at Singapore, as essential for ensuring the mobility necessary to provide for the security of the territories and trade of the Empire in Eastern Waters."

On his return to Australia, Mr. Bruce laid down a five-year programme to strengthen the defences in the Commonwealth. Introducing the enabling measure to Parliament, he made some comments which, in view of what has since happened, are worth noting.

Referring to the Treaty of Mutual Guarantee, Mr. Bruce said that it had in it an inherent defect, for the one thing that had really menaced the League had been the objection of many nations to Article X of the Covenant. This provided that all nations in the League should take action to ensure each other's territorial integrity.

The Treaty of Mutual Guarantee ran very much on the same lines as Article X and, said Mr. Bruce, the view of the Commonwealth Government was that the Treaty was not likely to be so generally accepted that they could place any reliance upon it for ensuring the world's peace.

So far as the Washington Treaty was concerned, while acknowledging that *it* had achieved much, in that it stopped the competition in naval armaments between Japan, America and Great Britain, Mr. Bruce did not think, taking all the factors into consideration and visualising the complicated and difficult questions involved in China and the East, that anyone would be prepared to say for certainty that the nations which were then working in absolute accord might not find themselves opposed to one another on questions about which there might be the greatest difficulty in reaching a settlement.

And Mr. Bruce had something to say about the Singapore Base. Immediately following the 1923 Imperial Conference, there was a change in the British Government, and one of the first decisions of the new Government was that the Singapore Base should not be proceeded with. Australia,

however, was still convinced of the vital importance of the Base in the interests of the Empire as a whole, and prophetically Mr. Bruce said he believed it was only a matter of time for that decision to be reversed. That was in 1924.

At the Imperial Conference of 1926 Mr. Bruce returned to the question of the Singapore Base. This is what he said:—

¹¹ We in Australia have not in any way altered the views I expressed three years ago. At that conference we went exhaustively into the question whether Singapore was the right spot for a naval base for the Far East.

"We in Australia were quite satisfied that it was essential that there should be in the East a base where the British Navy could be quartered in the event of any trouble arising in the Pacific, for the purpose both of protecting the territories of the Empire and also of ensuring the keeping open of the trade routes, and our final decision was that Singapore was the place.

"At the 1923 conference I pointed out that we had not then determined upon our defence policy, but that it was essential that we should do so, and I made it quite clear that we would be quite prepared sympathetically to consider the question of contributing towards the establishment of the Singapore Base.

"After the conference had been held, and after the principle of the establishment of the Base at Singapore had been subscribed to, the British Government changed and a different policy was adopted, and it was announced quite definitely that Britain did not propose to proceed with the building of the Base at Singapore.

"We could delay no longer; we had to go forward in the altered circumstances and determine what our defence programme should be for the next few years. We laid down that five years' programme to which I have referred, possibly at some considerable length. I want to make quite clear the position we now find ourselves in in relation to Singapore.

"Under that programme of 1924, based upon the circumstances as they then were when Singapore was dropped, we went to the furthest limit that financially we could with regard to ensuring our own defence and our contribution towards the general defence of the Empire. As that programme involved the figures which I have given—a figure actually of £36,250,000 over a period of five years—it is very gravely doubtful whether we can now do anything further.

" I can only say, therefore, that Australia believes that the Singapore Base is absolutely essential, and, while I could not for one second suggest that Australia make any contribution towards its construction in view of the commitments remaining under this five years' programme, I can promise that our position with regard to Singapore will be discussed in the Commonwealth Parliament after my return, and it will be for Parliament to come to any decision it may think fit."

Time proved his prescience. The Treaty of Mutual Guarantee and the Washington Treaty have suffered the fate of many similar guarantees and treaties in the last decade. Ultimately, the British Government decided to proceed with the construction of the Singapore Base, and " its paramount importance in the interests of the Empire "—as Mr. Bruce put it—was never more apparent than it is now.

As Mr. Bruce indicated, Australia carried on with the £36,250,000 defence developmental programme in 1924 on the assumption that the Singapore Base would not be proceeded with.

In planning this programme the Australian Government had in mind that a policy could not properly be framed if its basis was merely the amount of money annually available. Some fixed plan, capable of acceleration or reduction as the international situation changed, was essential. The programme was therefore marked out in stages, the first being for five years. At the end of that period the Government expected the defences of the country would have advanced to a definite point.

Two Trust Funds were created, one for naval construction and one for an ordinary defence reserve. The naval programme included the building of two 10,000-ton cruisers (to replace two due for replacement), two sea-going submarines and a seaplane-carrier. Provision was also made for the training of the necessary additional naval personnel, for additional military training, the purchase of stocks of munitions and the raising of new units of the Air Force.

The five-years programme was completed just as the world economic depression began to make itself felt; development was suspended. With the revival of the country's finances, a three-years' programme was launched in 1934. This was on the lines of the previous programme, and included the building of the cruiser *Sydney* and mine-sweepers. Arrangements were also made with the British Government for the transfer from the Royal Navy to the Royal Australian Navy of a flotilla leader and four destroyers;

and five " S " class destroyers, which were over-age, were disposed of.

When this programme was completed, another three-years* plan was adopted, on which the Imperial Conference of 1937 had an important bearing. This conference affirmed that there should be a reduction in the existing dependence of all parts of the Empire on the munitions produced in the United Kingdom. Accordingly the new programme provided for new Government Munition Factories.

Vision

At this conference, too, the Australian delegation presented a scheme for the development of aircraft manufacture in Australia, which met with the endorsement of the United Kingdom authorities. The danger of depending solely on oversea countries for the supply of aircraft for the R.A.A.F. had been brought home forcibly during the period of abnormal expansion of the R.A.F. Fulfilment of orders of aircraft from England had been obtained only with the greatest difficulty and after delays extending to two years. Some orders could not be fulfilled. The Commonwealth Government realised that, in time of war, when still greater demands would be made upon the resources of British manufacturers, the position would be immeasurably worse.

With a view to remedying this state of affairs, the Government discussed the position with certain commercial interests. As a result a proposal was submitted by them for the establishment of factories for the local manufacture of air-frames and aero-engines, of types to be selected by the Defence Department. No subsidy, guarantee or orders were asked for from the Government. A company known as the Commonwealth Aircraft Corporation was formed, and the construction of a factory near Melbourne was immediately proceeded with, and by the time war broke out production had commenced.

Developments in Europe, culminating in the Munich crisis, September, 1938, revealed that the time factor on which the Government was working must be reduced by speeding up defence preparations. So in December, 1938, a revised programme was brought forward involving an increase in the expenditure proposed for the three financial years commencing on July 1st, 1938, from £44,500,000 to £63,000,000. Two new cruisers were purchased from Great Britain; other naval provisions included the replacement of over-age destroyers, the construction of motor-torpedo boats, works at naval shore establishments and the building up of reserves of stores and fuel oil.

On the army side the main items were the acceleration of

enlistment of permanent personnel, the increase of the militia forces from 35,000 to 70,000, ammunition and war equipment and increased anti-aircraft defences.

In the air-force programme, main items were increased reserves of raw materials for local manufacture of aircraft, reserves of equipment, tools and fuel, the training of personnel on the reserve and the establishment at Port Moresby of a base for mobile naval and air forces.

The munitions programme provided for extensions of Government ammunition, explosives and ordnance factories and the provision of annexes at State railway establishments and at the works of selected private firms to provide for the production of all types of munitions, armoured vehicles, depth-charges, etc. Provision was also made for reserves of raw materials for the operation of factories on war capacity; and the organisation of man-power was not overlooked.

A year before war broke out, the late Mr. Joseph Lyons, then Prime Minister, stated that:—

"it is the intention to press on with the completion of plans for all phases of national activity in an emergency. The aim of these is to provide for the parts that could be played by every organisation, industry and citizen, either in respect of their normal work in the life of the community or by special voluntary effort."

Steps were immediately taken to implement this declaration. A Man-power Committee was appointed to report on the measures necessary for a national register. As a result, the National Registration Act was passed in June, 1939, under which a census was taken and a register of the wealth and of all skilled labour and man-power throughout the Commonwealth was made, in order to record the extent of the resources of the country and to enable the most effective allocation of man-power to be made in accordance with qualifications, training and skill.

The Man-power Committee was authorised to carry out a survey of these resources, as revealed by the statistics in the National Register, and to prepare allocations of personnel in an emergency to the Armed Forces, munitions factories, key industries and essential services. A provisional schedule of reserved occupations was issued, which was available as a guide to control enlistment and the recruiting of persons who were engaged for the manufacture of essential industries and services.

Threat from Japan

Since 1930 five factors had combined to cool relations between Japan and other countries in the Pacific region, but

not to snap them. The first was the Mukden "incident", 1931; second, Japan's walk-out from Geneva, 1934; third, launching of a full-scale war against China, 1937; fourth, Japan's joining of the German-Italian Axis, 1940; and fifth, the dangerous ambiguity of the language used in her current descriptions of what she means by her doctrine, the "New Order in Greater East Asia", and her slow, crab-like but methodical southward drive, with a grip now on Indo-China.

Take the first of these factors, the so-called Mukden "incident". Between 10 p.m. and 10.30 p.m. on September 18th, 1931, according to Japanese accounts, some Chinese blew up a section of the South Manchuria railway line a little north of Mukden at a point not far from the Peitaying (Chinese) barracks. The South Manchuria Railway is of vital importance to Japan. Along that steel track she sends practically everything with which she develops Manchuria. Japan has the right to station troops in the railway zone, which meant, legitimately, that Southern Manchuria was a Japanese sphere of influence. The section of the track which was blown up was well within the Japanese zone. The question was: Who blew it up, if, in fact, it was blown up? The Chinese denied they did it; the Japanese said the Chinese were liars. There was no independent witness.

Certainly, the Japanese acted quickly enough. Some thought *too* precipitately. If they had *known* the incident was going to happen they could not have put their military machine into smooth motion more swiftly. For the purposes of this brief reference to "the mother of incidents" it is not necessary to describe the comparatively ramshackle state of China at that period, the attempts of various rival leaders to better her position—certainly, in nearly every case, their own position—the internecine strife, the scandalous rackets, such as the opium racket, the marauding armies of bandits commanded by "generals". Similarly it is not necessary to dwell upon the advantage to Japan of grabbing Manchuria while there was an opportunity. The bibliography on all angles of the subject is too lengthy even to list conveniently. Taking the night of September 18th, 1931—as good a time as any as a point from which Australia's general attitude towards the Far East might be surveyed—the incident itself and the repercussions it had in Australia are alone relevant.

A severely condensed version of this attitude is that Australia was guided by the attitude of Britain. Judged by its actions, and by a good deal of what it said, the British Government was disinclined to treat the incident seriously. America, on the other hand, viewed it seriously almost from the outset. America has been consistent about it, at least. For years

the British Government, notoriously, blew hot and cold. Most criticisms of Britain's foreign policy make this point.

Broadly speaking, Australian foreign policy was then following the lines of Britain's foreign policy, although as a free, independent nation and a member of the League of Nations she had a voice in deciding the League's attitude towards the "incident". The League found Japan guilty. It acted upon the report of the Lytton Commission, which was sent to the Far East to investigate the matter on the spot. Lord Lytton in his report never referred to the actual explosion as a fact. He referred only to the incident as a whole and to subsequent events.

Chinese Preferred

The natural feeling of the Australian and New Zealand people has always been warmer towards the Chinese than towards the Japanese. They admire the rationality of the Chinese, their endurance, their culture and civilisation, their general honesty and their love of the good things of life. Japanese are frequently suspected as opportunists and generally considered a prickly, ambitious, cocksure, difficult people, fanatically patriotic, dangerously Westernised, not wholly trustworthy, except when it paid them to be. Consequently, when the Mukden incident developed into a war as a result of the Chinese resisting in Northern Manchuria the drive of the Japanese from the south, where there was no Chinese resistance, the broader flow of sympathy was towards the Chinese, rather than the Japanese, as was the case in Britain and America.

Nevertheless, some influential persons believed that the acceptance by the League of Nations of the Lytton Commission's report was a grave injustice to Japan. Others equally influential—and these were the majority—believed Japan had been condemned rightly, hoped the Chinese would beat them up in quick time and hurl them back. Few people saw in it Japan's first step towards the fulfilment of her dreams of domination of Greater East Asia, of the whole vast Pacific area.

This was surprising because of the fact that there 'was the old, old belief of the Japanese leaders that they were destined to rule ever vaster domains. As far back as December 1920—long before Germany's New Order for Europe was heard of—the doctrine of *Kodo* (the Imperial Way) was openly lauded in Japan. That doctrine is *centuries* old. It had not then been given the fashionable style of "New Order", but it meant the same thing. A fundamental part of what is known as *Dai*

Nippon Sekai Kyo (Great Japan World Teaching), was explained in an article appearing in the *Nichi-Nichi Shimbun* :—

" The people and gods who are centralised in the doctrine of Kodo-Omoto are only working to accomplish this greatest and loftiest task of unifying the world under the sway of the Emperor of Japan. . . . We are only aiming at making the Emperor of Japan rule and govern the whole world, as he is the only ruler in the world who retains the spiritual mission inherited in the Divine world."

Early in 1940 Japan's Foreign Minister, Mr. Matsuoka, expounding the " New Order in Greater East Asia ", declared that Japan's mission was " to proclaim and demonstrate *Kodo* throughout the world ". Incidentally, one of the things Mr. Matsuoka is noted for is that he walked out of the League Assembly at Geneva in 1933 over the Lytton Report on the Mukden incident. Again on May 28th, 1941, Mr. Matsuoka was reported in *The Times* as having said ". . . the materialistic civilisation of the West was doomed. The only people able to save mankind, in his opinion, was the Yamato race."

Japan's Dream of New Order

A long tradition stretches behind Japan's " New Order in Greater East Asia ". Its antiquity may be gauged from the fact that it enshrines the political aspirations of the Shinto faith. There is no doubt that the reasons for these aspirations being publicly paraded in their present guise is that Japan's Axis partners made it smart to talk of a " New Order ", and that Japan expected easy pickings from the colonial domains of the Western nations, since she believed the British Empire would topple soon after the fall of France and the rest of the European countries ravaged by Germany. Between 1935 and 1941 Japan brought a great deal of ingenuity to bear on the composition of the semi-official descriptions of the New Order in East Asia.

Chiefly there are two versions of what is meant by Greater East Asia. Mr. Matsuoka, when Foreign Minister, said it was " the regions beyond Japan, China and Manchukuo. It includes Thailand and Burma and goes as far as New Caledonia, but excludes Australia and New Zealand." Other spokesmen have defined it more closely as beginning with Manchukuo in the north and extending to Australia in the south; in the east it begins at the 180th parallel and extends west to the Bay of Bengal and Burma. More : they say it will be constructed in several stages, the first of which includes Manchukuo, China, Indo-China, Burma, Malay, the Netherland Indies, New Guinea, New Caledonia, many islands in the Western Pacific

and the Japanese mandated islands, and the Philippines. Australia belongs to the second stage. " Greater East Asia will be built up in proportion to our national strength. The greater our strength the larger will be our sphere," they prophesy.

Economic advantages which would accrue " to the whole of East Asia" as a result of such a New Order were, of course, persistently dwelt upon by Japanese spokesmen. They argued that the abandonment of free trade by the Great Powers compelled others, like Japan, to organise their own self-contained regional spheres in which they have all they need—raw materials and markets. A re-division of the world into huge regional systems was envisaged and urged, *with military might matching economic power*. It is now being fought for by Japan.

Plausibility was always one of the principal keynotes of Japanese advocates of this regional organisation. Listen to Mr. Hachiro Arita, ex-Foreign Minister, in a broadcast speech on June 29th, 1940 :—

"Japan's ideal since the foundation of the Empire has been that all nations should be enabled to find their proper place in the world. . . . In order to realise such an ideal therefore it seems to be most natural that peoples who are closely related with each other geographically, racially, culturally and economically should first form a sphere of their own for co-existence and co-prosperity, and establish peace and order within that sphere and at the same time secure relationship of common existence and prosperity with other spheres. . . . The countries of East Asia and the regions of the South Seas are geographically, historically, racially and economically very closely related to each other. . . . The uniting of all these regions in a single sphere on the basis of their common existence thereby insuring the stability of that sphere is, I think, a natural conclusion. . . . Quite naturally Japan expects that Western Powers will do nothing that will exert any undue influence upon the stability of East Asia. Japan, while she is carrying on vigorously her task of reconstructing the New Order in East Asia, is paying serious attention to developments in the European war and to its repercussions in various quarters of East Asia, including the South Sea region. I desire to declare that the destiny of these regions—any developments therein and any disposal thereof—is a matter of grave concern to Japan in view of her mission and responsibility as the stabilising force in East Asia."

A more all-embracing programme than this it would be hard

to produce. If anything suggests that attempts at appeasement would be futile with a power with these ambitions it is precisely this outline of Japan's wishes. Suspecting a sinister significance in the speech, *The Times* (July 1, 1940) commented :—

" If it means the wide regions in the Pacific as well as in the Far East are to be regarded as a Japanese sphere of influence where other powers, if tolerated at all, are to ' keep their proper stations ', then the claim will not easily be accepted by nations which have definite rights and obligations in these parts of the world. If, on the other hand, it means that Japan expects to be consulted in any ultimate territorial or political changes in the Pacific, the demand would be natural enough at a time when the foundations and frontiers of a great part of the civilised world have been shaken or swept away by lawless violence."

No newspaper, of course, appreciates more than *The Times* that what Germany calls *Lebensraum*, Japan calls "a co-prosperity sphere". With a nice, though undoubtedly unconscious timing, it permitted a correspondent, lately in Japan, to say this of it on April Fool's Day, 1941:—

" Whoever invented the term discovered an attractive way of rationalising one of the widest and boldest expansionist programmes ever consciously planned. The Greater East Asia co-prosperity is to consist of an indissoluble central core comprising Japan, China, Manchukuo, surrounded by a kind of planetary system of satellite States and islands revolving round the parent sun in Tokyo. Despite much vaunting of its modernity, the system is essentially feudal. It postulates an overlord encircled by vassals who give goods or services in return for protection which is bestowed whether wanted or not."

Still, ten years earlier, when the Mukden incident occurred, the shape of Japan's intentions was not so clear to the Australian public, or to the British Foreign Office.

Conflict of Policies

Agreement in Japan about the necessity for an expansionist policy has been consistent. In recent years there has been a division only on the question of the direction the expansion should take. The Army group, supported by sections of the heavy industries, was thought to believe that the greater safety lay in expansion on the Asiatic mainland. The Navy group was thought to favour strokes, to the south. It was this group

which insisted that the chances of securing Indo-China from Vichy France in 1941 were perfect. It was proved correct and the fact strengthened its position, increased its prestige. The dream of this group is to control a seaboard from Vladivostock to Singapore and beyond. It can be accepted that it is also the Army group's dream, although the Army's methods of setting about securing it were thought to be different.

Involved in the threat of a southward drive, apart from French Indo-China (the prosperous colony of Cochin-China, which is united with the French Protectorates of Cambodia, Laos, Annam and Tonkin), are Britain's Malay possessions, Thailand (formerly Siam), and the Dutch East Indies. Enormous wealth lies in these lands. Their combined size is greater than the combined size of Great Britain, Germany, France, Sweden, Spain, Norway, Switzerland. Approximate populations are: Malaya and the Straits Settlements, 4,000,000; Dutch East Indies, 64,000,000; French Indo-China, 25,000,000; Thailand, 15,000,000. Essential war supplies exported from South and East Asia and from Oceania to Japan amount to between 50 and 60 per cent, of Japan's total imports in petroleum, tin, rubber, ores, lead, zinc, mica; it includes 100 per cent, of Japan's imports of tin and ores.

The ascendancy of the Navy group over the Army group in Japan was indicated in February, 1939, when Hainan Island was occupied. The island controls the entrance to the Gulf of Tonkin and was a springboard for the attack on Indo-China. Already in this war it has been used as one for an attack on Malaya. Consequently, the seizure two months later of the Spratley Islands, then of the Paracels, should not have surprised anyone. Their strategic importance to Japan was even more obvious than it was before the swoop on Hainan. The agreement with the Vichy Government for Japan's "peaceful occupation" of Indo-China was made in July, 1941. By the end of October Indo-China was converted into something very much like a Japanese Protectorate.

In moving to the borders of Thailand, however, Japan had moved as far south as she dared without risking a clash with Britain and America. For the first time in ten years of steady expansion, with the sole object of extending her domination over the whole of Eastern Asia and the Pacific islands, she had brought herself up against a fence highly charged with electric power of tremendous voltage. Confronted by it she assumed an air of injured innocence and, in inspired newspaper statements, cried loudly of "encirclement", an old, old technique which she had used consistently, whenever in the past she had struck an obstacle that had slowed down her march, or momentarily checked it. Even

as Australia's Prime Minister (Mr. John Curtin) was declaring that arrangements were being made for closer co-operation in the Pacific in the event of war, Japanese newspapers were accusing the United States of "strengthening the A.B.C.D. encirclement" and of "organising a new offensive against Japan in collaboration with Great Britain and Russia*'. But, as *The Times* commented (October 18th, 1941), "the so-called A.B.C.D. Powers, with whom Russia is now associated, have been compelled again and again to ask themselves where the process of Japanese penetration will end. Close collaboration between them, even if this appears in the light of 'encirclement' to inflamed Japanese minds, is the one clear alternative to the abandonment of the whole Pacific area as a prey to Japanese ambition."

An immediate strain on Japanese-American relations, imposed by Japan's occupation of naval and aerial bases in Indo-China, was eased slightly by diplomatic conversations in Washington: but that little progress had been made up to a week before Prince Konoye's Cabinet resigned on October 16th, 1941, was suggested by the newspaper *Asahi*, which insisted that "so long as the United States refuses to recognise the new situation in East Asia it will be impossible to end the crisis in the Pacific". Many in London held the view that a great part in the downfall of Prince Konoye's Cabinet was played by the deadlock in the discussions at Washington.

Commenting on the appointment of General Tojo, Minister of War in Prince Konoye's Cabinet, to the task of forming a new Cabinet, *The Times* (October 17th) remarked that General Tojo

"is a man of undoubted capacity, but is known principally as an out-and-out militarist and staunch friend of the Axis. If the choice of an Army representative to lead the Government means—as in the queer balance of political forces in Japan it well may mean—the weakening of naval influence, this too is a menacing sign; for the navy has always shown a certain prudent self-restraint in avoiding policies too likely to provoke a clash with British and American sea power. . . ."

Naturally, precautions were immediately increased by Britain, America, Australia, New Zealand and the Dutch East Indies. Fresh from conferences in Manila with chiefs of America's fighting services, Sir Robert Brooke-Popham, at the time of the appointment of General Tojo as head of the new Japanese Government, was holding consultations with representatives of the Australian and New Zealand

Governments on questions of Far Eastern strategy and defence. That in a war in the Pacific involving the British Commonwealth and the United States against a common foe joint Anglo-American, Chinese and Dutch operations would be characterised by a single strategy was at last becoming clear. Of the gradual emergence of this prospect the Japanese were becoming conscious. When they alleged "encirclement", what they really meant was that they were beginning to recognise the definite shape of some concrete Far Eastern defence system. With them, as with the Nazis, the term "encirclement", it was recognised, was synonymous with "collective security". What it meant, in effect, was that those Japanese who were the strongest exponents of expansionism were aware that the days in which they could hope to continue their predatory advance into other people's territory by the prosecution of a severely limited military action appeared to be numbered, if not over.

When, with tremendous grandiloquence, General Tojo, on his assumption of the office of Prime Minister, declared that Japan was passing through another "hour of decision" (the fourth then in 1941) and as the change of Cabinet entailed "a great flapping of the sail and manoeuvring of the tiller", *The Economist* (October 25th) commented astutely :

" . . . Had the Japanese confined themselves to the task of wearing China down, squeezing out foreign business and establishing an undisputed control over the whole economy of China, it is almost certain that the other Far Eastern Powers, more and more deeply involved in the wars of the Atlantic world, would have left Japan to go its own imperial way. The very weakness of the other Powers' Far Eastern defence has, however, tempted the Japanese into the path of ultimate defeat.

" To secure hegemony in East Asia, it was not necessary to link the two world fronts by joining the Axis; it was not vital to Japan's immediate task of conquest in China to launch out *via* Indo-China into the South Seas; it is not essential to it to-day to cast greedy eyes on the Maritime Provinces. The great temptation to the Japanese in the last year has been to discover weak point after weak point in their Far Eastern front and to want to exploit them all at once. By doing so, they have lost their greatest single advantage, the lack of any concerted opposition. By threatening every Power at once, they have at last brought home to the Powers that they are all subject to the same threat. After the

cowardice and uncertainty of a whole decade, a co-ordinated system of Far Eastern defence is at last taking shape."

A "united front" had not been actually formed, but a much closer understanding and cohesion among the United States, Australia, New Zealand, Holland and China had been achieved by the beginning of November. Conversations had reached the stage which facilitates collaboration, ensures that precautionary measures are taken, and, in Mr. Curtin's words, "substantially improves Australia's capacity to resist aggression in any new theatre of war".

Whether Japan would move south again, or north, or continue her wait-and-see policy, was a question no one could answer during the first weeks of General Tojo's premiership. What was recognised was that an attack in either direction—against Thailand or against Russia—would amount to a declaration of war by Japan against the Allies. Nevertheless, it was evident that, whichever way she turned, if Japan struck, the odds were heavily against her, even though she might be persuaded to do so by the Axis (and her own thoughts about an easy victory) following a definite deterioration in the Russian situation.

If she attacked Russia it would be partly to satisfy the Japanese Army group's desire to remove the constant fear that comes from the sure knowledge that north of Japan lay a substantial Russian army, highly trained, mechanised, self-contained and reportedly more than 1,000,000 strong; and a formidable air force. Vladivostock is no more than 600 miles from every large industrial centre in Japan. It was thought possible in December, 1941, that Russian air raids could be devastating, especially in the Tokyo-Yokohama-Fusen region. Apart from this, Vladivostock is an important entry point for war supplies from America; and the stepping-stones formed by the Aleutian Islands, between Siberia and Alaska, are important if considered as facilitating co-operation between Russia and America. It was considered that if Russia were at war with Japan, Russia's air force, proved by its encounters with the *Luftwaffe*, which is so much more efficient than Japan's air force, to be a strong, flexible instrument, would operate in a full-scale war with Japan from Vladivostock, Komsomolsk, Khabrovsk and other bases which would enable the Russians to deal blows to Japan's industrial and oil resources, besides to lay waste areas of her great cities.

As soon as Japan drove southward, the American outposts, east and north, and America's South Sea network (with

Hawaii as its centre) began to knit together with those of Great Britain, the Dominions, China and Holland. Besides America's strength in the eastern Pacific she has valuable islands in the north, such as Unalaska Island, Kodiak and Sitka, all naval bases.

These islands, like America's developing air bases of Fairbanks and Anchorage, in Alaska, are part of what is sometimes termed by strategists America's inner shield of defences—a curved shield with the curve swinging from the big air base at Fairbanks, out down past Unalaska Island, down through Hawaii and the Panama Canal. Beyond that lie the outer defensive positions, positions that thrust forward sharply, like a lance, with the point resting on the Philippine Islands, a lance shoved out from Hawaii and covering the Dutch East Indies lying directly south of it.

The value to America in this war of the defence positions beyond the inner shield will depend entirely upon the amount of co-operation existing between Britain, the Dominions, the Netherlands and herself. And, south of Singapore, Surabaya, on the island of Java, is the main naval and air base of the Dutch East Indies. It lies roughly half-way between Singapore and Darwin, the northernmost Australian fortified port, which, with Thursday Island, a naval base in the Timor Sea, commands the passage between the Pacific and the Indian Oceans. Farther south there are the naval bases of Sydney, Auckland (New Zealand) and Samoa, an island paradise which the development of air lines and an increasingly large naval base are making an important junction *en route* from Hawaii to Auckland. (An unexpected emphasis on the importance of air-lines in the Pacific was given in October, 1941, when it was announced that as a result of an agreement between the Japanese and Portuguese Governments, the Japanese had secured the right to extend the Japanese air-line from Japan to the Japanese-controlled Pelew Island, lying east of the Philippines, to Dilli, in the Portuguese portion of Timor Island, which is situated less than 500 miles north-west of Darwin, and closer to Australia than the East Indies. A daily service was planned. There was no justification for the extension of the air-line on commercial grounds; but it was plain that it would be used as a pretext for turning Dilli into a well-developed air base.)

The Big Chance

Does anyone think there is a doubt that the First Total War was regarded by Japan as a heaven-sent dispensation in her favour? She acted as if this were so from the start. She had increasingly tightened the screw on the Western Democ-

racies, pursuing her career of bloody brigandage, whittling away their interests, insulting their nationals, rebuffing their Governments, and treating contemptuously all their efforts at appeasement, as, for instance, she did when the British Government closed the Burma road for a period, only to open it again when it was clear that Japan had chosen to interpret the closing as an act of weakness, not a gesture of hope that a reconciliation might be achieved.

Even before the outbreak of war, during Germany's period of frantic preparation, she was strengthening herself wherever she could. Take the Anti-Comintern Pact, which was established in the first instance by Germany and Japan. If it is true that Japan had plenty of grounds for anxiety as to the part Communism was playing in China, and that the Nazi leaders despised the Russian Bolshevik "scum", it is equally true that there are few parallels in the history of diplomatic duplicity to the spectacle of Mr. Matsuoka at the Moscow railway station kissing Stalin a fond farewell after they had signed the Russo-Japanese agreement (in May, 1941), or to that of Ribbentrop and Stalin smilingly signing their pact (August, 1939). Have tactical motives of self-interest ever so blatantly superseded much-mouthed, so-called motives of principle? If a case can be made out for Japan's claim to special privileges and special interests in Manchuria, a case cannot be made out for Japan's present act of wholesale brigandage against China.

It is clear to all Australian students of that region that Japan was not prepared to conclude that her two great successes on the Asiatic continent—the victory over China in 1895; victory over Russia in 1905—were to be her last. But that she would aim at expanding her power until her influence could risk a challenge from Britain and America was not imagined. Before the Great War, 1914-18, Britain, Germany, France and America, besides Russia, had blocked "the Imperial Way" by taking up strategic positions in China proper. After the Great War, the notorious "Twenty-one Demands" having been presented to China by Japan, Japan acquired, as a result of them, invaluable concessions in Manchuria and Shantung, partly, of course, at the expense of possessions formerly held by Germany. Not only did the Treaty of Versailles confirm Japan in her position in Shantung, but it gave her a mandate over the German islands just north of the Equator—*lebensraum* for the return of which Germany has made no demand. She would not be likely to get them, anyhow; any more than would any other Power without fighting for them. Japan said as much when she gave notice of her intention to quit the League of Nations on March 27th, 1933. Although she denied

it, it is generally accepted that she has turned the islands into heavily fortified bases. No white man has been permitted near Bono Islands for years. Armed Japanese guards have turned inquisitive tourists away from the barbed wire protecting areas Japan wanted kept secret.

Scraps of Paper

Do not forget, either, that in 1922 she agreed, under the terms of the Washington Treaty, to return to China the rights she had in Shantung and, with Britain and America, undertook to respect Chinese sovereignty. And at the same time she consented to accept the smaller ratio of naval tonnage—three to five was the proportion—between her fleet and the Anglo-American fleets. True she received in return a promise that neither Hong Kong nor the Philippines would be developed as powerful naval bases, but as compensation this was about as popular with the Japanese people as was Britain's decision to end her twenty-two-year-old alliance with Japan because of her friendship with America.

Although the scrapping of this alliance by Britain was, and still is, criticised by some people as being a mistake, the present world crisis, together with several clear indications of Japan's ability to look after what she considers to be her best interests, leaves no room for question that the scrapping underlined one of the few good, consistent features of British foreign policy—the determination to stick close to America. Britain's position *vis-a-vis* United States public opinion would have been incredibly difficult if, at the time of the Mukden incident, the Anglo-Japanese alliance had been in existence. As it was, the wholly deplorable handling by the British Government of that situation did a great deal to put up America's hackles. Right from the first shot, American officials had no illusions about Japan's intentions in Manchuria. They recognised it as the third great attempt in modern history on Japan's part to establish in every aspect the Japanese hegemony she had so long dreamed about as her destiny in Greater Asia.

Japan has mocked international law as deliberately as Germany; she has made scraps of paper of sacred treaties, unrepenting. It is not merely that she flouted the League, to continue her unrelenting way. Throughout the war with China she has been acting in defiance of the Kellogg Pact and, even more important, the Nine-Power Pact, which relates specifically to Far Eastern affairs. She repudiated the Washington and London Naval Treaties in 1934, which meant **that** she repudiated naval inferiority as compared with the United States and Britain. The dream that once was Russia's—supremacy in the Pacific regions—was going to be made a

reality just as fast as Japanese shipbuilders could work and the naval depdts turn out the crews.

" Our Destiny "

No one dealing briefly in so small a section with so large a subject would presume to do more than outline the chief aspects of the interests and policies in the Far East of Australia and New Zealand, but it should be noted that not many people, except officials and groups of business men, know how important commercially Japan is to Australia (Japan's purchases of wool in peace-time are counted upon by the Australian wool-growers). Largely because of this fact the Australian Government sternly opposed the dock-side workers when they showed their disapproval of Japan's invasion of China by starting a boycott of Japanese ships. New Zealand hoped that with the increased industrialisation of both China and Japan she would find a market in both for her produce, but this has not been realised to anything like the extent dreamed of.

Australia's Pacific responsibilities are also New Zealand's, although New Zealand's interests in Japan and China have always been less in the forefront of the newspapers than Australia's. Broadly speaking, New Zealand's policy in the Far East has been governed even more than has Australia's by her attachment to Britain. Nevertheless, the New Zealanders have been among the first to cock an eye to the strategic position in the Pacific whenever Japan has made a move territorially, or diplomatically, or has been the subject of such a move, as she was when the Anglo-Japanese alliance was dissolved.

The regret expressed in New Zealand on the historic occasion of that dissolution sprang not from a lack of appreciation of the far greater potential value of America's friendship for Britain, but from a realisation that the dissolution of the alliance removed an important brake on Japan's ambitious leaders.

From that time on New Zealand began to think more actively about the probability, rather than the possibility, of Japan's aggressiveness. From that time on, too, she stirred herself with thoughts of a greater need of self-defence against a potential Far Eastern foe and co-operated gladly in creating the great bastion against any southward drive by the Japanese—Singapore.

Australia has had roughly two distinct attitudes towards the Far East. The discovery of gold in the Commonwealth in 1852 was followed by a wave of anti-Asiatic feeling, due firstly to the rush of Chinese immigrants. There was a similar reaction after Japan's victory over China in 1894-95. In more recent years there has been a visible change in the public

and official attitude. Apart from the close and harmonious relations which existed before 1914-18, the Australian Government's desire for peace in the Pacific manifested itself clearly in 1937, when Mr. Lyons was Prime Minister, and the Government made a gesture towards forming a Pacific Pact between nations bordering the Pacific.

Not long after he succeeded Mr. Lyons, whose death in 1939 was unexpected, Mr. Menzies gave a notable indication of the importance Australia now places upon securing for herself an increasingly strong position in the Pacific when he declared that: "We [Australia] shall never realise our destiny as a nation until we realise that we are one of the Pacific Powers."

Attack

To get a sound appreciation of what Australia has done in this war it is essential to know her position at the outbreak of it.

National defence in Australia was then always discussed from the point of view of the Navy, the Air Force and the Army. In that order she believed that she would encounter the enemy. In peace-time Australia knew that if overnight war-like action were taken against her in the Pacific—the *blitzkrieg* method then being unprovided for—she could count on:—

Only ten days' warning of a blockade by a hostile navy;

Only twenty-one days to prepare to resist attempts to seize outlying ports such as Darwin;

Only sixty days to get ready for a full-dress invasion.

Before September, 1939, peace-time defence plans were based approximately (1) on these estimates; (2) on the assumption that the only potentially hostile invader in that region was Japan; (3) on the knowledge that Australia cannot defend herself single-handed.

Fortunately, in December, 1941, she was in a much better position to meet a sudden attack by Japan. This was the strange paradox of being already at war with Germany and Italy. She had the advantage of being very much on a war footing. So when Japan struck, she did not have the initial advantage of surprise which she would have had over Australia, say, in January, 1939.

This great island continent has also learned several invaluable lessons since September, 1939. Some of these have gone a long way towards revolutionising the strategy of the Service Chiefs. Perhaps the chief lesson, apart from the power of mechanisation, is the major part aircraft can play in defending an island (as the Royal Air Force defends Britain) against

invasion and in capturing an island (as the *Luftwaffe* played in the capture of Crete).

Indeed, by July, 1941, so strong a screen of defence and reconnaissance bases for the Royal Australian Air Force had been established as a buffer against invasion, facilitating the comprehensive reconnaissance of waters in which Australia and New Zealand are vitally interested, that experts in Australia, including Government spokesmen, said that aircraft operating from them would make very hazardous any attempts by enemy raiders to interfere with Australian shipping. American Catalina flying-boats, of the type that discovered the *Bismarck* in the Atlantic, are ideal for ocean reconnaissance, and Australia has them: her land aeroplanes are also capable of conducting long patrols out to sea and of striking powerful blows at ship targets.

Distance

Distance is a paramount factor when one considers the problem of attacking Australia and New Zealand successfully. New Zealand is 1,200 miles from Australia. The distance from Sydney to the Thames is about 12,000 miles. An ordinary 20,000-ton liner takes a month to cover it. This is also the distance round Australia's coast.

The distance between Tokyo and Darwin is 3,700 miles, which is roughly the same distance as that between London and New York. Singapore to Darwin is 1,900 miles; Yokohama to Singapore 2,900, to Sydney 4,300, to Honolulu 3,300, to San Francisco 4,500. Singapore is 1,300 miles from Manila, Philippine Islands; Manila is 1,700 from Yokohama, 1,400 miles from Hong Kong.

Charting the northern stretches of Australia's coastline is a tremendous task, belatedly begun. Easily the finest charts of these stretches, the cynics say, are to be found in the archives of the Japanese Admiralty, painstakingly drafted by Japanese pearl-ers and trochus-shell fishers, who were plentiful in the region of Timor Sea for years. Experienced sailormen up in Australia's Far North will tell you that no matter how much Japanese official spokesmen deny it, Japanese naval officers have manned many a pearling boat and nosed into a vast number of nooks and inlets in that disguise.

Blockading an Island Continent

A barrage of islands, whether or not owned outright, are virtually controlled by Japan from Kamchatka to Indo-China, on down to the Marianne, Caroline and Marshall groups—a precious string of more than 600 islets, nearly 2,000 atolls, reefs, rocks—pointing to North Australia. The Mandates of Japan and Australia meet on the Equator. Only if the line had to be

drawn on land, as it is between Canada and America, could they be closer.

Japan, however, is not the only power owning stepping-stones in the Pacific. America has Hawaii, the strongest naval and military base belonging to America outside the United States itself; Midway Island; Wake Island; and Guam, apart from the Philippines.

Australia also knew in September, 1939, that Holland intended to hold her Empire in the face of any power who might try to seize it. Now, with Holland under the heel of Germany, and with the Netherlands Government operating in London, she knows it even more certainly: for none are more determined to fight to the death for what they hold than the Free Hollanders.

Nevertheless, this brilliant fan of strategically priceless specks of land commanded by Japan was expected, by Japanese experts in 1941, to enable Japan to hold the gates of the Far East against either British or American, or Anglo-American assault. It was recognised by strategists that if Australia and New Zealand could be blockaded not only could their trade with the outside world be further hampered to the Axis advantage, but that very possibly, if Japan could press home the attack by air and by sea, even State communications could perhaps be interfered with, to a certain extent, at least, since the various State capitals, separated by 500 miles and more, are linked only by coastal vessels and by railway lines stretching over mountain and plain, crossing rivers by a single bridge. Assuming it could be achieved, two immediate effects of this operation appear: A massing of exports at railheads and wharfs; and, due to the fact that there would be fewer ships to carry inter-State cargo from port to port, a totally crippling rush of additional freight for the railways. Crippling, that is, if the railways were to attempt to cope with it, which they would not be free to do, because, like road transport, they would be fully occupied with carrying raw materials, war supplies, men.

Lessons of Japan's Attack on China

Long before Hitler launched the First Total War, the possibility of a hostile power swinging fighting ships southward to isolate Australasia had been taken into the defence calculations of Australia and New Zealand. The damage that could result from a series of determined aerial attacks on Australia's inter-State links, and the chaos that would follow, were also estimated. Aerial, military and naval blows at China's vital spots are registered unfailingly by Defence Chiefs in Australia, since China, in many important respects, bears a striking physical resemblance to Australia.

Aware that a blockade successfully operated would not only hinder Australia's products from getting overseas, but would also interfere with Australia's *supplies from abroad, the Australian Government has concluded a nation-wide survey to estimate the Commonwealth's capacity to face even a short siege; to ascertain the best means of protecting the vulnerable industrial belt lying above Sydney, between Newcastle and Port Kembla, and of mobilising industry in such a way as to make the nation as nearly as possible self-contained in war. The result is a close secret.

Many coastal batteries armed with the 9-2-inch gun (a common coastal defence gun throughout the Empire, costing, fully equipped, about £300,000 a battery) are established in the great industrial centres around the principal harbours. Co-operation between land and air forces is well established.

To attack Australia, Japan would have to carry by sea everything requisite for that attack. She would need about 100,000 troops, who would have to be conveyed in transports, together with all equipment. Probably 100 transports would be involved.

Difficulties of Convoying Invaders

What the precise strength of Japan's navy is, no one knows, because she has not been revealing the fact every time she has laid down a new keel. But she has the third largest fleet in the world; the largest in the Pacific. A Japanese spokesman in Tokyo said in June, 1941, that Japan had 400 warships and many more hundreds of merchant ships. There would be no difficulty in her finding the transports. Some little time earlier it was estimated by naval experts in London that Japan's war fleet consisted of:

Nine battleships (four more were believed to be under construction);

Five aircraft-carriers (with an extra four being built);

Thirty-five cruisers, twelve heavy, twenty-three light (six more being built);

One hundred and eleven destroyers (ten more on the stocks);

Fifty-nine submarines (eight new ones being constructed);

and

Six minelayers.

At that time, too, the other largest navy outside Europe—the navy of the United States of America—consisted of:

Fifteen battleships (two new ones being built, four projected);

Five aircraft-carriers (one being constructed, one more projected);
Thirty-four cruisers (three more being built and four projected);
Two hundred and eight destroyers (thirty-eight more in the shipyards or projected);
Eighty-six submarines (twenty more being built) .

Because Japan, like other nations, has long since ceased to divulge particulars, an accurate estimate of her Air Force is difficult to secure, but conservative estimates by military experts put Japan's first-line air strength in December, 1941, at 3,500 operational machines of all types.

Convoying 100 transports from Japan to Australia for invasion would be an enormous task. As is axiomatic with all convoys, of course, the fastest ship in the convoy could travel no faster than the slowest. About three weeks would be occupied in sailing.

Of a brave ambitious argosy, setting out under heavy protection from Japanese waters while Singapore still held out, a good percentage would be destroyed by aircraft based on Singapore, and in northern Australian waters by units of the Royal Navy and the Royal Australian Navy.

At the end of the journey the Battle for the Beaches would have to be fought. Here the advantage would lie with the defenders, since, except for a few machines she would send up from the decks of her surviving warships, Japan would have no curtain of aircraft to protect the landing. If it is undeniable that no one could seriously challenge the Japanese on the land if they stormed the coast anywhere on 6,000 miles of the northern arc, say between Brisbane and Perth, except, of course, if they tried to come ashore directly opposite Darwin's batteries, it is equally true that anywhere there would be a % dangerous, if not a futile, place on which to land. Once except Darwin, a shanty town with a small motley population of whites, Chinese, Japanese, Malaysians, Aborigines, and others, and you will not find an equally heavily defended base north of Brisbane.

Chiefs of Australia's Fighting Forces, however, know what the Japanese know : that to land in the northern arc with the idea of advancing over-land to the great industrial belt on the east coast of the continent is to go out of one's way to risk being bogged in a hopeless struggle to shift the men and material intact over hundreds of miles of barren stretches, many of them largely waterless, in an effort to come up against the defenders' mam land line.

Constantly, the enemy would be harried by aircraft, includ-

ing dive-bombers. The invading fleet would, no doubt, be strong enough to prevent the British units from bombarding the supply base held by the enemy.

If to-day, however, the enemy brought into Australian waters enough transports, carrying forces stout enough to attempt a large-scale invasion, effective opposition at places where he would be likely to attempt to land could be given by Australia's expanding Home Defence Force, and the Air Force, both collaborating with the Navy. The Air Force and the Navy would threaten his lines of communication. The enemy's aim would be quick victory.

Japan's navy has been increased in strength by about seventeen times since 1894. Technically speaking, it is a good navy. One of her battle-cruisers, *Kongo*, is believed to be one of the most powerful afloat. Soviet naval experts accredit the Japanese cruisers with three chief characteristics: first-class navigational qualities, strong armour, powerful guns. It is interesting to remember that while the war in China has strained Japan's land forces, her navy has not been in battle and has steadily strengthened.

Besides her big ships and destroyers, the auxiliary fleet of minesweepers, minelayers, gunboats, transports and torpedo boats is very large. And besides possessing what experts agree is a good navy, Japan has thousands of good sailors. Consequently controversy about the part likely to be played by Japan's navy in a war with Britain or America or both was concerned not so much with the quality of either her fighting or men, as with her strategic position.

Japanese strategists always fear a position in which, at once, they would have to counter naval and aerial thrusts from Singapore, Alaska, Dutch Harbour, Aleutian Islands. Of course, too, they always have an eye cocked at Vladivostock, reflecting that one of the things that would please the Russians would be to see the collapse of the naval power of Japan—Russia's traditional enemy.

Importance of America

America, already a first-class naval power, is determined to become more powerful still. Early in May, 1941, U.S.S. *Washington*, a 35,000-ton battleship, was commissioned six months ahead of schedule. A sister ship, *North Carolina*, was commissioned in April and a third will be seen at the end of 1941 or early in 1942. These have been described as "the deadliest, mightiest warships afloat, shooting farther and faster and harder than any other battleships in the world".

Washington and *North Carolina*, rated at 27 knots, can probably do 30: they carry nine sixteen-inch guns each, twenty

five-inch guns and an undisclosed number of 1.1 pom-poms against air attack. They cost about £21,000,000 each, and join the fifteen older battleships of the American Navy, which, although slower, are nevertheless more heavily armed, have greater range than those of the Japanese, to whose navy, and that of Britain, the American Navy stands approximately in 5:5:4 ratio. Others larger than the *Washington* are on order.

With President Roosevelt's plans for a "Two-Ocean Navy", capable of guarding both the Atlantic and the Pacific shores, Australia and New Zealand are vitally concerned, because the presence in Pacific waters of great naval units from a friendly nation has obviously a profound bearing upon the political and strategic situation, and because, of America's three principal outlying bases, two, Hawaii and Panama, are of high significance to both countries.

Pearl Harbour, in the Hawaiian Islands, was, in 1941, being turned into an American Singapore. One dry dock has already been completed and more are being built. A floating dock has been towed from New Orleans. Oil-tanks are being constructed underground against air attack, and more hangars built. At Manila Bay there are repair facilities, and air bases are being prepared from the Aleutians to Samoa.

America's bases alone were never considered sufficient for American naval operations in the western Pacific: it was recognised that in the event of war they would be immediately supplemented by Britain. Like Plymouth, Singapore is open to an allied fleet. Hong Kong and Darwin are potential re-fuelling bases. American naval observers were in British Malaya, the Dutch East Indies and Australia before Japan attacked.

In September, 1939, Australia's defence forces, comparable in spirit with the best in the world, were weak in equipment. They were weak in 1941, but were strengthening rapidly. An exception was the Navy. It was ready to do battle the day war was declared. The reason was that the switch over from peace-time to war-time preparations was less revolutionary for the Navy than for the militia-men and for the Air Force. Potential blockaders could not ignore the Navy's threat, even in the halcyon days. Its presence, even though it is a small navy, would have compelled them to make blockading a much more impressive affair than would otherwise have been necessary.

Chief need of the Army then, as now, is more equipment—tanks, coastal guns, new infantry equipment such as the Bren gun, anti-aircraft and anti-tank guns, aeroplanes and so on. Mechanisation to the fullest extent was urged by Mr. Menzies

after his visit to Britain and as a result of what he saw could be done with motorised units in the deserts of North Africa.

Officered by men from various parts of the Empire, the R.A.A.F. in September, 1939, was, and is now, a strong flexible weapon of defence. What prevented it from developing into an even stronger arm before the war was chiefly the question of equipment. For a number of years it wanted to get its machines from Britain. The Australian Government tried in vain. Britain was so behindhand in aeroplane production herself that she could not supply Australia's needs. Australia was obliged to turn to America—and to begin making her own, as we have seen.

Air chiefs will tell you that if Australia has a greater aerial strength than that which it is possible for any invading powers to bring within striking distance of her shores by aircraft-carriers, Australia will never be invaded; that such a force could effectively weaken a blockade, since it would keep the coast clear, enabling States to maintain contact by coastal shipping which would handle inter-State exports and imports, leaving the railways and roads free to handle war supplies and assist in mobilisation.

Australia needs a front-line strength of not less than 225 machines and, according to the Salmond report, a reserve for every one in the front line. In other words, she needs a total of 450 machines. Already she has a great many more than this. Significant, and more remarkable still: this number is fortified by aeroplane factories capable of turning out completed machines far beyond Australia's requirements. As an emphasis on this point, before the end of the second year of the war Australia was exporting aeroplanes—and by the end of 1942 she will be exporting aircraft equalling the normal value of her total dairy exports !

Men of the Hour

Sir Robert Brooke-Popham is Britain's supreme figure in the Far East. He went to Singapore in the autumn of 1940 as Commander-in-Chief, Far East.

A tall, rather thin, bony man, with thinning hair, he is at 62 years of age saddled with one of the most vital jobs in the Empire—making Singapore stronger and stronger against every conceivable type of attack. From the moment of his arrival, the whole tempo of activity increased throughout Malaya, Reinforcements of all sorts arrived in large quantities each month. Everyone agrees that he has made an amazing success of his post.

He began his career as a soldier, became an airman in 1912,

survived the war as an active one, and in 1933 was appointed Air Chief Marshal. Before he went to Singapore he was Governor in Kenya, and had played a great part in the formation of plans for the Empire Air Training Scheme.

Commander-in-Chief, Eastern Fleet, with the acting rank of Admiral, and in command of H.M. Ships and Naval Establishments on the China Station at the outbreak of war in the Pacific was Rear-Admiral Sir Tom Phillips. His Chief of Staff was Rear-Admiral A. F. E. Palliser. Until these appointments were announced on December 1st, 1941, the Commander-in-Chief was Vice-Admiral Sir Geoffrey Layton, one of the most capable senior officers in the Royal Navy. With the death of Sir Tom Phillips as a result of successful Japanese aerial attacks on H.M.S. *Prince of Wales* and H.M.S. *Repulse* (December 9th, 1941) Sir Geoffrey Layton assumed command temporarily. He was waiting to return to Britain, having only been relieved a few days earlier. Naval headquarters are at Singapore, and during the time he was there, Sir Geoffrey, with Sir Robert Brooke-Popham, planned and co-ordinated the strategy of land, sea and air moves over vast spaces. Sir Geoffrey, who was relieved to take up another command, was Second-in-Command of the Home Fleet before he went to China in 1940 to relieve Sir Percy Noble as Commander-in-Chief.

The General Officer Commanding the Australian Imperial Force in Malaya commands and administers all Australian Imperial Force units located in Malaya. Operational control is exercised by him, subject to the orders of the General Officer Commanding, Malaya. The command and administration, in fact, are on the same basis as those in the Middle East.

The Royal Australian Air Force units located at Singapore are under the operation control and direction of the Commander-in-Chief, Far East. Australian Forces in Malaya are not employed in any role other than for the defence of Malaya—namely, the Straits Settlements, including Singapore and the Federated Malay States—without the sanction of the Australian Federal Government.

G.O.C., A.I.F., Malaya, there is Major-General Henry G. Bennett, a sound professional man (his presidency of the Associated Chambers of Manufacturers of Australia in 1933 was only one of his successful peace-time activities). He was the popular officer commanding the Returned Soldiers' Volunteer Defence Corps, June-September, 1940. He is 54. Major-General (now Lieutenant-General) Vernon A. H. Sturdee was appointed G.O.C., 8th Division, when it was first formed, and when later he was appointed Chief of the General Staff, he was succeeded by Major-General Bennett.

The energetic Governor is wiry, widely-read, diplomatic Sir

Shenton Thomas. He knows Malaya as well as he knows the contents of a good many books.

None of these men wanted a war on their hands. But, as Rear-Admiral T. B. Drew said in September, retiring from the post of Rear-Admiral in Malaya and in charge of naval establishments, each believed that "even by itself Singapore would be a match for anybody". Reason? The developments that have taken place in the past two years would ordinarily have taken seven.

When the long-gathering storm broke, Japan struck as treacherously as ever Germany has at any nation. Not only was there no warning, but when she struck there was an almost blinding revelation, especially for the Americans, that for not less than six weeks, possibly for months, Japan had been cold-bloodedly calculating her crime against humanity. (Not less than six weeks, because it must have taken the aircraft carrier from which Japanese aircraft took off to make their murderous, cowardly assaults on Pearl Harbour alone at least a week to sail to her position, and considerable preparation for the planned battle action would be necessary. This is assuming that the aircraft carrier went fairly direct to a spot about 150 miles from her target, although it is plain she would have to take some care to avoid arousing the suspicion of the United States naval and aerial patrols. The principal Japanese naval bases are in the Japanese Islands, 4,000 sea miles from the Hawaiian Islands.)

Standing before the United States Congress on December 8th, 1941, announcing a state of hostilities between the United States and Japan (he signed the formal declaration of war a few hours later), President Roosevelt declared :—

"On December 7th, 1941, a date which will live in infamy, the United States of America was suddenly and deliberately attacked by naval and air forces of the Empire of Japan. The United States was at peace with that nation and, at the solicitation of Japan, was still in conversation with its Government and its Emperor, looking towards the maintenance of peace in the Pacific.

"Indeed, one hour after Japanese air squadrons had commenced bombing in the American Island of Oahu, the Japanese Ambassador Admiral Nomura and his colleague Mr. Kurusu delivered to our Secretary of State a formal reply to a recent American message. And while this reply stated that it seemed useless to continue the existing diplomatic negotiations, it contained no threat or hint of war or armed attack. It will be recorded that the distance of Hawaii from Japan makes it obvious that

the attack was deliberately planned many days, or even weeks ago. During the intervening time, the Japanese Government has deliberately sought to deceive the United States by false statements and expressions of hope for continued peace. . . .

" . . . No matter how long it may take us to overcome this premeditated invasion, the American people, in their righteous might, will win through to absolute victory. . . ."

Mr. Churchill, speaking in the House of Commons on the same day, said :—

" . . . It is worth while looking for the moment at the manner in which the Japanese have begun their assault upon the English-speaking world, and particularly upon the United States. Every circumstance of calculated and characteristic Japanese treachery was employed. The Japanese envoys, Nomura and Kurusu, who were in Washington, were ordered to prolong their mission in the United States in order to keep conversation going while a surprise attack was being prepared—an attack which was to be delivered before any declaration of war.

" The President, you will remember, on Sunday, December 7th, had made an appeal to the Emperor of Japan reminding him of the ancient friendship between the United States and Japan, by which Japan has greatly benefited, and impressing upon him the importance of preserving the peace in the Pacific. The attack upon the United States ships in Pearl Harbour, thousands of miles away from Japan, was the base and brutal reply. No one can doubt that every effort to bring about a peaceful solution was made by the Government of the United States.

" We have, too, seen the immense patience and desire which they have shown in the face of the growing Japanese menace. But now all that is over. Now that the issue is joined in the most direct manner, it only remains for the two great democracies to face their tasks with whatever strength God may give them. We must hold ourselves very fortunate—and I think we may say that our affairs have not been ill-guided—when we reflect that in all our period of weakness after Dunkirk we were not attacked by Japan while we were alone, or indeed at any time in 1940 before the United States had fully realised the dangers which threatened the whole world.

" In all that period we were in very great danger of having an attack made upon us in the Far East to which

we could not have made any adequate resistance. But so precarious and narrow was the margin upon which we then lived that we did not dare express the sympathy which we have all along felt for the heroic people of China. We were even forced for a short time in the summer of 1940 to agree to the closing of the Burma Road by which they get their supplies. We had to bow for the time to the force of the hurricane, but later, at the beginning of this year, as soon as we had re-gathered our strength after the battle of Britain had been won, we reversed that policy, and the House will remember that both I and the Foreign Secretary have felt able to make increasingly outspoken declarations of friendship. We have always been friends of the Chinese since the beginning of this vile outrage upon them more than four years ago, and last night I cabled to General Chiang Kai-shek assuring him that henceforward we would face the common foe together. . . ."

The Plan

A girdle of flame had encircled the globe. The confederate fire-raisers of the world saw the flames they had kindled involve all the Continents (except South America) and four-fifths of the entire human race. There was only one real hope which the Japanese warlords (the declaration of war came, curiously, from the Japanese High Command, not the Japanese Government) held out to the Japanese people to sustain them in the privations which inevitably were destined to encompass them as fiercely as the flames from incendiary bombs were bound to engulf their flimsy homes. That hope was based on the assumption of a German victory over Britain and Russia.

Surprise was the first weapon Japan pulled from her armoury. There was for the Americans the momentarily numbing enormity of her deception; there was the immensity of the disposition of her ships, scattered as far apart as 6,500 miles, designed with the object of confusing her victims and of gaining time from their bewilderment. Yet within a few hours of the opening moves it was possible, out of an amazing criss-cross of operations, to detect the main Japanese plan. The quintessence of it was to gain time, to prevent the Anglo-American fleets from uniting before Japanese naval, aerial and military forces had ruined Singapore as a base for common operation against the common, evil foe. The reason for this was that all the United States bases, so admirably placed for defending her own Pacific seaboard, are too far east for quick, flexible support in the joint action then required against Japan. The fastest and best means of attempting

to achieve this desirable object was to cripple as much of the United States shipping in Pearl Harbour as possible, to try to throw the United States authorities into a quandary by fiercely thrusting at shipping off San Francisco, at Nauru, Borneo, Malaya, Thailand, the Philippines, and at the three island possessions of the United States forming stepping-stones between Hawaii and the Philippines—Midway Island, Wake Island and Guam—and at the Alaskan coast.

For their attack on Pearl Harbour, the Japanese Naval Staff had a memorable example, an adaptation of the outline of which served Hitler as a model in his attacks on Poland and other countries. An important precedent in Japanese history was established in 1904, when, within an hour of breaking off diplomatic relations with Russia, Admiral Togo's torpedo-craft, on the night of February 8~9th, struck in Port Arthur a heavy blow at the Russian Far Eastern Fleet, crippling nearly half the battleships. While it is not likely that the Japanese expected to create by aerial bombardment at Pearl Harbour the same degree of destruction as that at Port Arthur, there is no doubt that they counted very much on causing delay in the departure of the United States Fleet for Singapore. Delay of whatever length could only be a gain to them, because battleships take about ten days or a fortnight to sail from Hawaii to Singapore, and meantime, Thailand (which ceased fighting on December 8th) having opened the way for the land operations, they set out determinedly to invest Singapore from the land, landing in Northern Malaya—at Kota Bharu, for instance, only 360 miles north of Singapore, and at Tanjong Patani and Singora, in Southern Thailand. It is only fifty miles from Singora across flat jungle country to the Indian Ocean. The Japanese also occupied Bangkok—from which it was apparent that the advance southward on Singapore could be supplied by rail, and from Saigon, in Indo-China, to the east. She was well aware that until the United States and British Imperial Fleets could unite, she held sea supremacy in those waters, but that the moment the Anglo-American fleets joined at Singapore, the temporary supremacy would be lost and the position of her investing land forces become, over a period, increasingly precarious.

What was expected was a Japanese attack against Thailand (an attack which would have involved directly the British) or, as an alternative, an attack against Russia in Siberia. As *The Times* (December 8th) recorded editorially: "While portents of some impending action had been accumulating, few people expected this sudden attack on American bases in the Pacific."

GENERAL
BLAMEY (*left*)
AND MAJOR-
GENERAL
MACKAY

At a tea-party given to the leading personalities of the Beersheba and Gaza districts in Palestine, these two famous Australian leaders chatted with the Commanding Officer of the Beersheba Camelry Police.



THE HEALING TOUCH

Wherever there is a battle there is a modern Florence Nightingale, from any one of the four corners of the Empire or from an Allied country. Matron of the Free French Nursing Sisters attending British Imperial wounded at an advanced dressing station, Syria.



The dastardliness of the attack was equalled only by the brilliance of the deception. As a purely tactical manoeuvre, the assault on Hawaii will probably never be eclipsed. How it was performed without the United States authorities being aware of its imminence, is likely to remain a secret until after the war.

Perhaps the nearest Hitler has ever come to matching such a surprise was in his campaign against Norway. President Roosevelt himself characterised the deception as " brilliant ". United States Congressmen, like ordinary citizens, were asking why the United States Fleet, a large part of which was lying in Pearl Harbour, was caught off guard; but the United States Navy department chose at that time, for reasons of State security, not to reply.

II BEHIND THE BATTLE-FRONTS

Chapter VIII

The Spirit of Kinship : and Why the Dominions Fight

" Any man can stand up to his opponents : give me the man who can stand up to his friends."
—William Gladstone.

" Democracy which cannot defend itself has no right to exist."
—Dr. Emil Franke.

A GAY April day, the sky blue, the crystal-cut air as fresh as the taste of a nasturium leaf, pale buds were bursting on the trees in showers of variegated green. Washington was brilliant in the cold-warm sunshine of the early spring of 1937 and there was a crisp, living stillness everywhere. I went to the White House to see the President.

Franklin D. Roosevelt sat behind his vast desk, the world-famous smile blazing in his compelling face, a friendly hand outstretched. I watched him hold one of his usual Press Conferences; he had agreed to see me afterwards.

He knew I was on my way from Sydney to London for the Coronation. He was preparing to go on one of his deep-sea fishing trips in the Caribbean.

" Well," he said, chatting about the coming ceremony, " a lot of your folks in New Zealand and Australia are passing through this way to England. Up in Canada, too, they're moving across, and we hear a good contingent is going from South Africa. We like to see it. It's great. A lot of us are going from here as well."

The President was correct. It is great. When such impressive, temporary migration occurs it is a spectacle without parallel in the world.

His cool, creamy room, at first glance, gave an impression of a print of a study in a spacious Colonial house of the earliest American period. Coming quickly from the brilliance out-

side, riding on the crest of anticipation, I felt my mind falter suddenly, shot through with the thought that not only the room was suggestive. Sprawled where he was, his back to the long windows, his massive head, all its lines leading to penetrative eyes, close to massive shoulders, it seemed his rugged physical quality was a natural, an essential, part of the room. A more masterful man than even his photographs show. It struck me that he was the embodiment of the moving spirit of all America's Presidents.

At the same time, oddly, since I had never met him before, I felt I understood him and that he understood me. A silent, **E**dwerful, sympathetic current of understanding was flowing, listening to it was like listening to timelessness. Others, older men, from the Dominions, men with wide knowledge, have experienced it with Roosevelt: once, they say, with a contemporary British Prime Minister, Churchill, whose mother was American. Why? Is it because Australians, New Zealanders, Canadians, South Africans, like the descendants of the earlier Americans, are all members of thrusting countries, laced together by an awareness of the bond of pioneering sacrifice? I wondered.

The President laughed, grey eyes sparkling. "No," he said. "You'll find a lot of Americans there too. You can't have that all to yourselves."

A year later, in London, I had the opportunity to recount this to Mr. Neville Chamberlain, then Prime Minister.

"The President is right," he said. "It is great. Make no mistake : it fills us with great pride."

Writing an Answer in Blood

The previous occasion on which people from the Dominions flocked in masses to Britain was to attend the Jubilee celebrations; the occasion immediately before that was provided by the Great War. A realisation that the independence of each member of the Empire, and the maintenance of those principles for which they stood, were, to a very large extent, dependent on the life and the independence of the others, was the underlying force causing that memorable flow of men, women and material to Britain. In other words, the challenge war held for British unity, no less then than now, was accepted on the battlefields outside the Empire in order that that very unity should be preserved as an effective instrument for peace and justice in the world.

Would the Dominions do it again, spending lives and treasure to maintain an ennobling unity?

Many in Britain wondered whether they would. At the time of the Munich Agreement sceptics and critics demanded,

even in the House of Commons, whether any pledge or guarantee, written or implied, had been given by the Dominions and colonies, separately or collectively, that in the case of an attack on the United Kingdom by any country they would come to the assistance of Great Britain. Mr. Chamberlain replied to them all, "No, sir."

It might be said now that British politicians should have known better; but the plain fact is that some very prominent Parliamentarians, astounded by the agreement reached with Hitler by Chamberlain and Daladier, appeared to fear a crack up within the Empire itself as an almost logical outcome of the Agreement they branded as amounting to a double-crossing of a small, helpless country and a besmirching of British honour. They hopelessly misread the meaning of the criticism of that celebrated Agreement which was hotly expressed throughout the Empire.

"Ah!" The whistling intake of their breath as Mr. Chamberlain made that reply was intended to suggest there was truth in the gloomy forecast that had recently been so widely disseminated—that "in the event of another world crisis some of our most important Dominions might break away".

Writing it in caterpillar tracks in North African deserts, in vapour trails in the sky, in withering salvos at sea, in blood in immortal battles in Greece, the Dominions have given their answer. Australia and New Zealand are at war because they back Britain in her challenge to the Hitlerian doctrine of brute force as the sole arbiter in international dispute. More: they fight because they are satisfied that Britain is in danger and that both share equally the same danger. "If we are to continue to enjoy peace and live in undivided possession of our countries," their people say, "we must fight resolutely and win decisively." For none contemplates without a fearful mind the fate of each without the buttressing of Britain's might, just as no intelligent person in Britain contemplates without a qualm the destiny of proud Britain without the closest adherence and forceful support of the King's subjects throughout the world.

Politicians Astray

It is history, of course, that the proceedings of the Imperial Conference of 1926, and the enactment of the Statute of Westminster in 1931, gave formal sanction to the national status of all self-governing Dominions. Dominion independence was finally established by the dual recognition given by international practice and by British constitutional

law. An encouragement to nationalism is a natural outcome of this position; and in its turn a demand, created by perfectly natural circumstances, that each Dominion must form a policy different from those of other members of the British Commonwealth, must be met. Economic progress alone, for one thing, makes it imperative. Where many people, including a surprising number of Britain's politicians, go astray is in assuming that these several separate policies are necessarily incompatible with each other and, chiefly, with the foreign policies of the United Kingdom.

Nazi propagandists, very early in the war, dragged out the old, familiar, shop-soiled "Imperialist" War talk, not only to check American aid to Britain, but also to try to confuse the peoples of the Dominions. They failed in the Dominions, partly succeeded in America. As late as July, 1941, Mr. Raymond Gram Swing, the well-known American publicist and broadcaster, at a luncheon given in London by the *Sunday Express*, and at which there were more Ministers of the Crown than at any social function since the outbreak of the war, said that, even after America's occupation of Iceland, there was still in America some anxiety- lest this was not a war of the common people. This faithful recorder of American opinion let it be seen that the transformation in American policy came about when at last, after successive British Governments had shied timidly away for ten years from the European boggy, the British cast off their fears and showed fight.

" Shop-soiled Imperialist War "

One might well ask : Why should any doubts remain in America? Is it because British officials failed for too long to appreciate that, irrespective of who puts it around, talk about " Imperialist" wars is liable to stick in the minds of several millions of America's mixed population, and that an important job of Britain's emissaries in the U.S.A. is to dispose of it? Any well-informed American observer will tell you that unless the British themselves take a step to abolish it, these susceptible Americans will ask, " What're we to think?"

Fortunately, the fact that this is a war of the whole people was being borne in upon the vast bulk of American opinion by the end of the second year of the war. Let it be recorded that a spectacle which did as much as anything to bring this about—as much as the natural, deep-rooted repugnance felt by every true American citizen at the exhibitions of Nazi brutality—was that of the free young Dominions rallying swiftly, reasonably, to the side of Britain. And among the

great national figures who helped, besides Roosevelt and Churchill, were Smuts, Mackenzie King, Menzies and Fraser: and a company of personalities like Knox, Gram Swing, Knickerbocker, Dorothy Thompson, Quentin Reynolds.

Mr. Menzies' visit to America in May, 1941, like Mr. Fraser's in September, and like the visits to Britain of Mr. Willkie, Mr. Harry Hopkins and Mr. Sumner Wells, contributed greatly to the task of informing Americans that this war is one of the whole people, for, as every citizen of the Empire knows, it is a war not merely for the preservation of the British Empire, but for the preservation of the liberty of the whole world. They know that without victory there would be nothing worth living for. They also know that the turn of America would be just round the corner. For this war is another German attempt to realise the old, old Prussian dream of an entire planetary empire in which, once achieved, America would be no more than a large but helpless colony, as helpless as the fragments of the crumbled British Empire, because, with all Europe, Asia and Africa at her feet, Germany would be able easily to outbuild all the other countries of the earth in all three Services.

The spectacle of the Anzacs fighting, undaunted, against great odds in the first two years of the war, fighting of their own free will in defence of their hearths, had begun to make it very difficult by October, 1941, for men like Colonel Lindbergh to maintain that "Britain owns too much of the world's wealth and Germany too little"; for one of the inferences to be drawn from such a statement is that the British Commonwealth of Nations is "owned" by Great Britain, which a number of ill-informed critics are not averse to picturing as a plutocratic landowner fighting an imperialist war to preserve his estates. It is, of course, the set theme of a good deal of Nazi propaganda. Hitler likes to pretend that it is a monstrous injustice that a tiny collection of islands in the North Atlantic, with a population of only 45,000,000, should "own a quarter of the earth".

The truth is that Great Britain does not "own" the British Commonwealth of Nations. The British Government holds no proprietary rights in Australia, New Zealand, Canada, South Africa, Ireland or Newfoundland. Australia, New Zealand and the rest are owned by the people living in them; from them the British Government does not draw any tribute whatsoever. It is a stimulating reflection that through a gradual, steady process of de-imperialisation, Great Britain has ceased to govern the larger and by far the more valuable part of what was formerly her Empire and has given the peoples living in them complete independence—

independence of a kind for which the thirteen American colonies had to battle. Australia to-day is as independent as the United States of America.

A Greater English-Speaking Unity

At this moment of history the peoples of the American Union and of the British Commonwealth are, perhaps, more intently curious about each other than at any time since the war of 1914-18. It is a vigorous, well-founded, natural and creditable curiosity. If it had been maintained and developed at the close of 1919 instead of being allowed to wither in the barren sands of idle criticism and scepticism, the shape of the world to-day would have been different. With great force, Miss Dorothy Thompson, the American journalist, echoed the thoughts of millions in the Empire when she said in a B.B.C. broadcast on leaving England at the end of August, what she is now telling America : that the things in which Great Britain and America are alike are great, and the things in which they are unlike are small.

" Together we have great power, to use not only for ourselves, but for all men. And we are unique in this, that only two nations on earth, the Germans and the Japanese, would see in our intimate alliance and perpetual brotherly collaboration anything except a great new hope for the world in the struggle, and in the peace to follow it.

" Therefore, let us try with all our hearts to understand and to love each other; to be sparing of criticism of each other's characteristics; to study each other's history; to refuse to rake up old quarrels; and to reach each other through every institution which we hold in common—through our churches, our trade unions, our libraries."

But already the leaders of the two great English-speaking blocs, satisfied that the rock on which the peace of the world must rest is one which they must play a great part in shaping, had a few days earlier, at their historic meeting at sea, outlined in a dramatic declaration the principles of a peace settlement. Those eight principles were :

First: Their countries seek no aggrandisement, territorial or other.

Second: They desire to see no territorial changes that do not accord with the freely expressed wishes of the peoples concerned.

Third: They respect the right of all peoples to choose the form of Government under which they will live; and they wish to see sovereign rights and self-government restored to those who have been forcibly deprived of them.

Fourth: They will endeavour, with due respect for their existing obligations, to further enjoyment by all States, great or small, victor or vanquished, of access, on equal terms, to the trade and to the raw materials of the world which are needed for their economic prosperity.

Fifth: They desire to bring about the fullest collaboration between all nations in the economic field, with the object of securing for all improved labour standards, economic advancement, and social security.

Sixth: After the final destruction of Nazi tyranny, they hope to see established a peace which will afford to all nations the means of dwelling in safety within their own boundaries, and which will afford assurance that all the men in all the lands may live out their lives in freedom from fear and want.

Seventh: Such a peace should enable all men to traverse the high seas and oceans without hindrance.

Eighth: They believe all the nations of the world, for realistic as well as spiritual reasons, must come to the abandonment of the use of force. Since no future peace can be maintained if land, sea, or air armaments continue to be employed by nations which threaten, or may threaten, aggression outside of their frontiers, they believe, pending the establishment of a wider and permanent system of general security, that the disarmament of such nations is essential. They will likewise aid and encourage all other practicable measures which will lighten for peace-loving peoples the crushing burden of armament.

These eight points were accepted throughout the Empire as a statement of war purposes and peace aims. Britain had spoken for the Empire peoples.

Safeguard Against Failure

Because Australia and New Zealand are fundamentally concerned with the securing of a military victory, they must be, and are, equally concerned with the winning of the peace. They remembered that the Allied victory was complete in 1918; that Germany was rendered powerless; that, in Mr. Churchill's phrase, the Allies began to squander the victory.

Realists in the Dominions recognise the two between-war decades, 1919-29 and 1930-39, as a defeatist period. Instead of the world being made safe for democracy, the rulers of the Allied and Associated Powers, through short-sighted concentration upon problems of immediate political convenience and neglect of longer-term interests, allowed a situation to develop which has proved itself to have been fraught with far greater danger than the worst crises of the Great War.

It was, in short, a period of catastrophic failure, and the political reasons for it are well enough known. But it is sensible to ask, during the First Total War, whether the failure to secure economic co-operation between the nations made the political failures inevitable, and to ask how similar failures can be avoided after this war.

If one lesson more than another stands out from the past it is this : the only hope for the future of civilisation lies in complete political collaboration between the countries of the British Commonwealth and the United States of America, at least for the first ten years following the war. It will have to be the most intense and sincere kind of collaboration. There will be no room for sham protestations. Democratic countries can, however, maintain such political collaboration only if their populations feel that their vital economic interests are not being sacrificed. It is worth remembering that an immense increase in economic nationalism was witnessed in 1929-39; it resulted in a serious shrinking of markets.

The Monetary and Economic Conferences of 1933 utterly failed to reach any agreement on trade barriers or on monetary policy, and succeeded in agreeing only about the need for the restriction of the production of wealth in a poverty-stricken world. As Mr. Bruce, in a concluding speech at the Conference, observed: " Such a result must inevitably lead to the growth of Fascism or Communism."

Far-sighted men in Britain, America and in the Dominions already saw, in September, 1941, that if a basis of political and economic agreement could not be fairly securely established before the end of the war, then there would be more chance of conflict, not of co-operation, in the post-war years.

Plainly, if, in the post-war world, the trend of 1929-39 is repeated, instead of economic collaboration between America, Britain and the Dominions, we shall see violent clashes of interest which, then, will be inescapable, a natural result.

Again, if plans for dealing with economic co-operation in the post-war world are deferred until the war ends, the political pressures—which will be set up by the insistent demand of men in the Services and in the armament industries for demobilisation, together with the recommencement of

competition for export markets (especially from America)—will seriously prejudice the possibility of obtaining sane and sound long-term plans.

A great line of defence, however, has been indicated in the Roosevelt-Churchill Declaration. If it is resolutely pursued during the war, it should enable plans to be evolved which should have a profound effect on winning the peace. For what the world will wish to see at the end of the war is some concerted action, at least between the great English-speaking *bloc*, to give a real meaning to the phrase "freedom from want". If, as a consequence of plans already prepared between the United States, the United Kingdom and the Dominions, we can assist our own and other countries to re-organise their economic life along lines deliberately intended to secure a progressive improvement in living standards, there should be a considerable increase in world demand for food, for instance, for raw materials and for manufactured goods. An outcome of this would be an expansive economy in which there should be no difficulty in finding markets for both primary products and manufactured goods.

Interests in Other Countries

External relations conducted by the various Dominions raise problems involving trade matters to the exclusion of almost everything else—except commendable curiosity about the peoples in other lands.

Australia's foreign policy, for example, is directed towards the steady maintenance and development of associations with existing markets, while at the same time seeking ways and means of edging legitimately into new markets. Refraining from doing anything inconsistent with her own interests, Australia contrives to make every possible contribution to British power, an ambition shared by all other members of the Empire.

To-day the interest which Australia, Canada, South Africa, India and New Zealand have in several foreign countries is none at all. In others they have a slight interest; in a number their interest is very considerable indeed. Trade, principally, dictates this interest. No Dominion is ambitious for territorial expansion. Yet no trade agreement is negotiated without the closest relationship to Empire interest, as a whole, rather than to purely local conditions. By no means a negligible feature of the Anglo-American trade treaty by which Britain gains more than she loses, was that the Dominions waived rights they held under existing agreements to enable a greater good to be achieved by a treaty which, more than any other in recent times, aims a smashing blow at the sturdy

hurdles put **up** against international trade during the depression.

Foreign Policy

Where the Dominions' foreign policies touch matters other than trade, they are (more or less of necessity) in an embryonic stage. They draw their strength and generally take their colour from the foreign policy of the United Kingdom, London being the focusing point of the Empire for most international questions. In spite of the fact that geographical positions must necessarily involve a slight difference of approach in each Dominion, it remains incontestable that each Imperial unit does get extraordinarily near to having a view almost identical with its neighbour's and with the United Kingdom's. True, it would be just as futile to pretend that the view of any single individual Dominion on Britain's foreign policy is unanimous and undivided as it would be to say that of Britain itself, at least so far as public opinion is concerned. Nevertheless, invariably it is the method that is questioned, not the aim.

Where there is division in the Dominions on the question of war involving the United Kingdom, it is of opinion only about the extent of a Dominion's participation. Obviously, to a very great extent, this must depend on the point, or points, from which aggression would come.

Isolationists are overwhelmed, preaching against the Empire spirit and being unrealistic. Whether the fate of the Dominions is bound up indissolubly with Britain's is not always for decision by any choice the Dominions may make. Now, as in the Great War, that decision, in the last analysis, lies with the enemy. A proclamation of absolute neutrality by Canada, for instance, would certainly not save Canada from a possible visit in force by the Nazis if Britain were crushed. Realists like Senator Meighan and Mackenzie King know this.

Yet, according to the Toronto correspondent of *The Times*, at a dinner given by 900 prominent citizens to Mr. C. O. Knowles, editor of the *Toronto Evening Telegram*, who was entertained in July, 1941, in appreciation of his newspaper's sponsorship of the British War Victims' Fund, Mr. Malcolm MacDonald, High Commissioner for the United Kingdom, while expressing British gratitude, described the experiences of bombed British cities and the fortitude of their inhabitants, and said also that he sometimes thought that people **in** North America were still inclined to rely too much on British heroism, which needed to be sustained by even greater help **from** that side.

On the same occasion, Senator Meighan said that even if Canadians multiplied their help, they could not call themselves generous. He deplored as "our great delusion" the assumption that only the fate of other peoples was in the balance, **and** declared that if the embattled fortress of Britain fell it **was** not Canada's first line of defence, but the last that would have gone.

Dominion Isolationists

Isolation for Australia, for instance, as the nation knows, would be exactly as her veteran Welsh statesman, Mr. William M. Hughes, has described it—national suicide. Australians are aware that they can determine the nature and extent of their participation in a war, if the enemy does not do it for them, but they cannot, either in honour or in safety, stand aside.

The European crisis of 1938, arising out of the German-Czech clash and culminating in the Munich Agreement, found opinion divided in the Dominions, as sharply as it was in Britain; but the division did not affect the general determination that, being a partner in the British Commonwealth of Nations, an attitude of neutrality, had war come then, could not be taken. Obligations no less than the manifold benefits of Imperial partnership are appreciated by the Dominions.

It is noteworthy that the keenness of the Australian and New Zealand newspaper proprietors to give to their readers the fullest, most impartial and accurate interpretations of the United Kingdom scene, always present, is even more in evidence in a crisis of any kind. At the Munich crisis I received cabled instructions to analyse a cross-section of the British Press, and also the general British reaction. I spent two days questioning dozens of people in the highest official circles, in Parliament, and in the street, analysed a cross-section of the British Press (I selected fifty-three daily papers publishing from Land's End to John o' Groats, apart from the national-sale journals of Fleet Street) and drew my own conclusion. I cabled to a chain of Australian newspapers a thousand-word analysis beginning:

"If peace means an escape from a threatened armed conflict, Britain is enjoying peace: if it means peace of mind about the present and future position of the Empire, then no section of the community is fully enjoying peace. . . . Turning to the architects of the Munich agreement who hope that the agreement means a new phase in Europe, one is forced to the conclusion that

the hopes for a peaceful solution to all the tremendous problems ahead are based primarily on the presumption of good intentions."

Revelation

That was written with the sound of London's West End jubilation still echoing in one's ears; while the photographs taken in front of Buckingham Palace, where Mr. Chamberlain took a smiling salute, were still front-page news in the national Press.

Editorially, on the same day, *The Sydney Morning Herald* urged that a study of the tragedy of Czechoslovakia should provoke serious thought in Australia. It asked :

" To what extent can we be assured against the disappointment the Czechoslovaks have suffered? Even granting that the Czechoslovaks were not entirely blameless in their attitude towards the Sudeten minority, that to some extent they may have invited intervention by Germany, have we not a White Australia policy which is disliked abroad? The question we have to ask ourselves is not simply whether we can or would fight in our own war or in the general cause of democracies, but also whether, in the light of recent examples, Australia might not conceivably provoke demands which would line up the powers for war."

Sensible, pertinent, uncomfortable questions were asked: Are we safe because difficult of approach by an aggressor? So was Abyssinia. Are we inoffensive in our foreign policies? So was Austria. Shall we plead that if this land were more heavily peopled we should, for that reason, feel safer? But that condition did not save China.

That the policy of appeasement, further strengthened by the Munich Agreement, would succeed, was the instinctive hope of the Australians and New Zealanders. Nevertheless, at least half the population of each Dominion had serious doubts, and the events soon after Munich were to show them that that Agreement was not taking the Empire very far along the route to lasting peace. Before the outbreak of war they recognised that the bitter truth was that at any time they might have to resist an attack on Australia, or send men oversea to defend a cause for which they were ready to fight. What Munich revealed was that the time factor on which they were working must be reduced by speeding up defence preparations.

Yet some people in Britain made the mistake of believing that because the people of the Antipodes appeared to be about

half for the Agreement and half against it, there was justification for the assumption that while the Dominions were prepared to accept the benefits of the Imperial partnership in peace-time, they would be ready to scuttle for the poor shelter of a precarious neutrality in war-time ! They did not identify it as the healthy expression of critical opinion that it was. (How much Australians love their right to criticise was stressed soon after the outbreak of war by the Leader of the Opposition in the Australian Federal Parliament when he said: " We will not support treason, sabotage, insurrection or activities which will be helpful to the enemy. But there is a radical distinction between helping the enemy and the exercise of the normal right of the Australian people to be free citizens in a country which is fighting for the preservation of freedom.")

Like the Nazis, who hoped for a split in the British Imperial front, these British critics forgot that even the most confirmed Dominion isolationist would have to ask himself how neutrality itself could offer real protection for national freedom from the scourge of war. For the degree of freedom by such a protection would depend entirely on the attitude of the aggressor power, or powers, then engaging the United Kingdom. Neither could he deny that a natural corollary to any Dominion's affirmation of the right to remain in the Empire on the basis of limited liability, or to desert when war threatens, is the assertion of a similar right by Britain. But New Zealand, Australia, South Africa and Canada could not defend themselves unaided, their resources, human and material, being slender compared with the vastness of their estates.

Even if each Dominion were strong enough in arms to stand alone, however, neither that fact nor theories in constitutional sovereignty would prevent them from throwing in their weight with Britain. The First Total War again proved that the bonds of Empire are far too strong.

Europe's Pactomania

The war was not a shattering surprise to the Dominion peoples. Ten years ago, when Hitler was growing early dictatorial teeth, when the League of Nations was lusty in its prime, when the whole of Europe was breaking out in rashes of pacts of non-aggression, of mutual assistance, of friendship—all, of course, aimed " at the pacific settlement of disputes "—the view was held by some responsible persons in the Pacific countries that European statesmen, in attempting to cure the world of war, were themselves running a grave risk of catching " Pactomania", a sure forerunner of dispute. They saw as a symptom of the probable second world conflict the hard fact that since the signing of the Treaty of Versailles, 1919,

about 250 pacts had been signed by 1934. Another fact of significance, as they saw it, as if through the other end of a telescope, was that probably no man in Europe knew the exact "legal" relationship of all the countries to each other as a result of so much pact-making, and that all European statesmen, like M. Barthou, the then chief French pact-master, were hoping for the best and meantime acting on the principle that "another little pact can't do us any harm".

Even Isolationists in South Africa and elsewhere, studying this outbreak of Pactomania, had this problem to solve: "If all this network of pacts breaks down in a crisis, and Britain is involved, how silence the accusing conscience of the ordinary individual who, standing aside and watching Britain engaged in a struggle for life, recognises that as an idle witness he is guilty of surrender of moral pride, individual liberty and democratic freedom—the annihilation of his heritage, in short? For, Canada alone excepted, no Dominion thinker believes that his country's declaration of neutrality and assertion of freedom from Imperial commitments and non-cooperation in Britain's wars would not be answered by a visit from the predatory power which, in itself, would be a challenge to his Dominion's independence."

An Ideal

An ideal for which the Government of Great Britain is acknowledged by the Governments and peoples of the Dominions to be striving is that on all large questions it should speak not only for the inhabitants of Britain, but also for those of the Empire. Frequently Britain does this. When Mr. Churchill, without consulting Parliament, pledged in June, 1941, all aid for Russia, he was voicing the sentiments not only of the peoples of the British Empire, but also of America. Mutual trust is the only basis on which this ideal can be built. This quality, so indispensable to successful common action, has never been stronger than it is to-day. One result of the Munich Agreement is that the Dominions have shown, in the debates in their Houses of Parliament and in their spokesmen's speeches, that they are eager to handle wisely their own policies and problems for an effective contribution to a wise Empire policy and a more real Empire unity. Visits to London by Dominion Prime Ministers are made in the belief that they are best able to advocate the place and needs of their respective Dominions in the Empire war plan: in Britain, on the other hand, there has always been a desire that the association of the Dominions with the War Cabinet—as in peace-time—should be as intimate as it can be made, although the difficulties in the detachment of any Prime Minister **from**

the leadership of his people have sometimes proved almost insuperable, particularly where the political balance in the Dominions has been extremely delicate.

The degree of responsibility resting on the shoulders of the British Government, it is recognised in the Dominions, outweighs that borne by all sister governments. It is also recognised that while on outstanding questions deliberations, generally, can be leisurely, action must sometimes be taken swiftly, courageously and without all the time that could be desired to inform the sister governments. Even so, the occasion has yet to arise in which there has been a serious lack of support for any action taken by the United Kingdom.

To say that, however, is not to contend that a greater unanimity would not be welcomed, or to imply bankruptcy in ideas on the question of how best to achieve it. Rather does it draw attention to the clamour, heard in every city in every Dominion where interest in oversea affairs is increasing daily, for quicker and closer collaboration in the Commonwealth. As the Canberra correspondent of *The Times* reported in August, 1941:

"Australians at large were never more convinced of the need for a closer link between Downing Street and the Dominions than when Mr. Churchill, reviewing the campaign in Crete in the House of Commons in June, did not refer to the anxiety so freely expressed in the Parliaments and Press of the Dominions for measures designed to co-ordinate Dominion views in the fashioning of an Imperial war policy.

"It is true that Mr. Churchill subsequently said, in reply to a specific question, that he would warmly welcome an Imperial Conference; but this did not dispel the misgivings evoked by his failure to discuss spontaneously what is regarded in Australia as a vital need. . . .

"Australians do not look upon the constitution of the War Cabinet as a concern of the United Kingdom exclusively. They see it as their War Cabinet also and want Mr. Churchill to assert his right to the services of the ablest men the British Commonwealth can produce."

Actually, no such widely separated group of nations as those forming the Commonwealth can, even in peace-time, keep abreast of Time and Events nowadays unless it appreciates the need for that "breathless speed" to which Sir Samuel Hoare referred at Cambridge just after the Munich Agreement, when he confessed that he was convinced that the new chapter of the world's history must tune up for quicker

SEARCHING FOR
THE HIDDEN
FOE

Combing the ruins of
the Temple of Baal for
any snipers; Eastern
Syria.



SYRIAN
ARMISTICE

General Wilson signing the Allied terms for an armistice after thirty-five days fighting. General Catroux (Free French) is on his right; General Lavarack (Australia) on his left.



movement the well-trying machinery for the pooling of Imperial ideas.

Speed

Quicker means of communication between the Empire's Cabinets, together with a more highly developed and centralised machinery for the formation of an even sounder common viewpoint, is urgently desired by the Dominions. Basically, it is a matter of machinery.

Among the best suggested peace-time methods, few are peers to the establishment of a Permanent Empire Council, or something of the kind, for which the working out of the broad principles of Empire trade, defence, economy, migration and kindred vital subjects would be the task. Such a body would be able to feed each government with the background material of all important matters, a most valuable aspect, as in a crisis a sound knowledge of its background can only help to obviate unnecessary criticism. A new point of view would be devised for the Dominions by a body of this kind, and only from the common outlook it would help create could united action spring swiftly. A further contribution to the preservation of the essential unity of the Imperial structure would be given by a decision to establish such an organisation. It would amount to nothing less than a resolution to march in step with Time. It is to be expected that in the post-war reconstruction period this aspect will be fully examined in the light, possibly, of a wider English-speaking co-operative movement.

Even if the ideal solution in war-time were an Imperial War Cabinet—and it is not—the position was revealed, during the first two years of war, that so indispensable are the various Dominion Prime Ministers in their respective countries that it was impossible for an Imperial Conference to be summoned. Nevertheless, the degree of co-operation maintained between the Dominions and Britain was, perhaps, the more notable.

" It's Bad—It's Good "

A significant fact is that not all the Dominions agree that in this war, unlike the last war, an Imperial Conference is absolutely necessary, although it may be desirable for the freer discussion and interweaving of the various national war programmes. During the first two years of the war only Australia debated asking Britain to help her secure representation in London by the appointment of a Minister, possibly a Minister Plenipotentiary, so that she might have her views on matters of vital importance to her expressed directly to the British War Cabinet. Mr. Menzies gave this

movement its greatest impetus in Australia when he insisted, during the Far Eastern crisis in August, 1941, that the Australian Prime Minister should be in London, in order to ensure that the Australian point of view was adequately expressed in the War Cabinet. Unless, however, all political parties approved his visit, he said, he would not go. Approval was not given : Labour, for example, wanted to see the Commonwealth represented in the British War Cabinet, but held that the place of the Prime Minister was in Australia.

On the other hand, Canada, like South Africa, believes that there is in existence to-day the most perfect, continuous conference of Cabinets that any group of nations could possibly have. Mr. Mackenzie King, for example, declared in September, 1941, that he could not conceive of more effective means of communication than those operating between the Canadian Government and the Government of the United Kingdom and the Governments of the various Dominions. New Zealand, officially, has not expressed dissatisfaction with the existing system.

The chief features of those communications are these : Each Dominion Prime Minister can communicate directly with the Prime Minister of Britain, and receive communications direct from him. These communications go through no second channel; they are personal and official. Priority is given to all Government messages, and transmission is merely a matter of flashes. If any Dominion Government wishes to put its views directly to Mr. Churchill it has only to write them. The responsibility for considering them fully, or of ignoring them, is his, just as it would be if the Dominion Prime Minister concerned was giving his nation's views to him verbally.

A second line of communication is through the High Commissioners. Regularly, each day, they meet the Secretary of State for the Dominions and are given personal accounts of what takes place at War Cabinet meetings. The weakness in this link is that the Secretary of State for the Dominions is not a member of the War Cabinet, although it is true that there appeared to be a readiness in Whitehall to recognise this weakness, for when Mr. Eden was made Dominions Secretary it was announced that he would have special access to the War Cabinet. When Mr. Eden became Foreign Secretary, the favour was extended to his successor, Lord Cranborne.

A third line of contact is provided by the Dominions Office, Whitehall, and the various Dominion Departments of External Affairs. Still, the British Government's belief in the necessity of strengthening existing communications was

manifested during the first two years of the war by improving the status of British High Commissioners in the Dominions : as vacancies occurred, former Cabinet Ministers were appointed. Mr. Malcolm MacDonald went to Ottawa, Lord Harlech to South Africa and Sir Ronald Cross to Australia.

Difficulties

An explanation of the divergence of views on the merits and disadvantages of the present system of collaboration is partly that during 1939-41 the war involved Australia and New Zealand in more fighting than Canada or South Africa, and partly in the threats held by the Far Eastern situation. Canadian soldiers were not in action between September 3rd, 1939, and September 3rd, 1941. South Africa's successful fighting in the East African campaign was not, fortunately, marked by as many casualties as was the fighting in which the Anzacs took part in Libya, Greece, Crete and Syria, or by as much criticism as the campaigns in Crete and Greece.

True each Dominion is in the war by its own wish and nobody else's. True, too, that each can withdraw to-day. This, however, is pure theory. In practice, with the possible single exception of Canada, all the Dominions are bound in war by the decisions taken by the British Government. Britain alone can provide the balance of strength each Dominion needs for its safety. Neither Australia nor New Zealand nor South Africa nor all three together could defend Singapore against the Japanese. Strategically, the Empire is as interdependent as it is economically. This is at the root of suggestions for closer Imperial collaboration.

Difficulties are numerous. They practically cancel most of the suggestions, which include—

- (1) A Dominion Minister in London;
- (2) An Imperial War Cabinet;
- (3) An Imperial Conference;
- (4) The appointment of outstanding Dominion men to the British Cabinet, which amounts to an extension of an existing practice by which the British Prime Minister includes fresh talent in his Cabinet, choosing men outside Parliament; and
- (5) The inclusion of the Secretary of State for the Dominions as a permanent member of the War Cabinet.

If a Dominion decided to station a Minister in London to put its views directly before the War Cabinet, assuming agreement between Britain and the Dominion concerned on the point that the Minister, although not the Prime Minister,

would be invited to attend the War Cabinet, the Dominion Government would have to face the problem of how much executive power it would give its Minister. And it would seem that no Dominion Government would allow a Minister to have a status any higher than that which the British Government gave to Mr. Duff Cooper when he was sent in August, 1941, to Singapore—to examine and to report.

Similarly with an Imperial Conference, no binding decisions would be taken by the various Prime Ministers assembled in London. To envisage the Prime Minister of each Dominion as the head of a happy, factionless National Government would be easier than to imagine that each Prime Minister, attending an Imperial Conference, would be given a free hand by his Government to commit his country to a course decided at the Conference. It is as old as the problem of how to enable the Dominions to take part in Imperial decisions while simultaneously preserving their separate legal identities with their respective, separate legislatures.

The principal difficulty of the suggestion that an Imperial War Cabinet might prove to be the solution is, of course, emphasised by the natural question, "Who is going to be the representative?" While all Dominion Governments favour short visits to London by their Prime Ministers, no Dominion has yet intimated that it is prepared to let its Prime Minister stay in London for an indefinite period, nor is it reasonable to expect it. Political difficulties that could "arise from the appointment of another Minister to deputise in London for the Prime Minister are obvious.

Again, if the British Prime Minister, casting his eye round the Empire, and letting it rest on Mr. Fraser, decided to co-opt him, no solution would have been attained from the broader Imperial standpoint. For though New Zealand would be represented, the New Zealand Government would not be bound by anything the newly-strengthened British Cabinet decided, or by anything to which Mr. Fraser might whole-heartedly agree as a member of it. The same would apply to the Australian Prime Minister and Australia, and to every representative and every Dominion. In other words, no Dominion would be affected: collaboration by means of the existing lines of communication would continue.

It is worth remembering that the Delhi Conference, which theoretically had as its purpose the co-ordination of the supply programmes of the Empire countries east of Suez, was an important Imperial gathering: but none of its recommendations was in any way binding on those who took part in it.

Certainly it is not conceivable that other Dominions would consent to be represented by any one man drawn from any

one of them. It would be a task quite beyond the capacity of a single Minister.

Perhaps the best solution is not a new one at all, but an old one revived by *The Times*: that the Secretary of State for the Donations should at all times be a member of the British War Cabinet. "No member of the Government should be more highly regarded. None should stand nearer to the Prime Minister," says *The Times*, advocating, at the same time, that the Dominion Prime Ministers should be recognised as regular members of the War Cabinet instead of sitting as *ex officio* members when they visit London.

Chapter IX

Australia Goes to War

" We are in this fight to the finish."

—John Curtin (member of the Australian Labour Party), speaking as Prime Minister, 1941.

" Give me 100 per cent, war effort."

—Arthur William Fadden (member of the Australian Country Party), speaking as Prime Minister, 1941.

" We are trustees of the future."

—Robert Gordon Menzies (member of the United Australia Party), speaking as Prime Minister, 1941.

ONLY in some respects is a war effort much the same in one country as it is in another. On the field of battle it is the same. A soldier sails from Sydney, or from London, for North Africa, ploughing at sea through storms and calms, across minefields and over waters likely to be infested with U-boats. He lands in Alexandria, sees the sights of Cairo, drinks, sings, spends his money, enjoys the company of his friends and acquaintances, his sport and his jokes, trains hard in a hard school under a merciless sun, resists the biting cold, tramps with full fighting kit in faultless line on parade, bounces in lorries for hours in choking dust over blasted, pot-holed roads, goes victoriously from battleground to battleground, or has a leg shot away, an arm blown off, perhaps both, or dies or comes through scatheless.

In industry, too, there is some similarity, particularly in the sense of men and women working night and day. But in the first two years of Total War there was no similarity between the way in which the family of the Sydneysider lived and the way in which the Londoner's family carried on. Yet there was a bridge between the two. It was the common recognition that Liberty is synonymous with Life.

A natural difficulty was that the vast difference in the two ways of life in a war in the Northern Hemisphere involving the Empire tended to make it hard—due to the facts of geography—for every family living in the Southern Hemisphere to appreciate with the same acuteness and constancy the threat to Liberty which regular bombing, for instance, underlined so brutally to every family in the United Kingdom.

Power of Belief

Air-raid shelters were ready in Australian cities by the end of the second year of war; in New Zealand black-out regula-

tions, strictly applied, hinted to the New Zealanders, particularly the city-dwellers, how drab London must look with its lights dimmed. Each Dominion, too, had its Home Guard. Nevertheless, these physical factors by themselves were not enough to maintain a determination to wage war until victory is won.

Fortunately, because they had not been the victims of aerial onslaughts, families in Australia and New Zealand, like those in the United States and Canada, could not draw greater determination to unify still more their national effort by walking among the ruins of High Street, by watching scores of women and children trying to salvage a few sticks of furniture from piles of smoking rubble that once were tenement stacks, blocks of flats, collections of cottages, by witnessing the straggling marches of the pathetic homeless, by experiencing the same rationing, or by enduring the wearying strain of bracing the nerves nightly against bombers emptying death and destruction indiscriminately over cities and towns and villages.

They had to be spurred to a greater understanding of the effort required of them to overthrow the enthroned bestiality of Nazism by seeing the magnitude of the determination of the Nazi assault on Liberty in a perspective that is supplied not by a first-hand experience of the horrors of modern warfare, but by their belief in their great spiritual values, their assessment of the enormity of the crime planned against the bulk of mankind, by their Press, the lists of casualties among their armies of husbands, sons and daughters on the battlefields overseas, and by the urgent appeals of Ministers back from visits to Britain at an epoch-making time.

Bearing these facts in mind, the achievement of Australia and New Zealand since the outbreak of the war is nothing less than stupendous. It is a remarkable tribute to the intelligence of independent, robust, self-reliant people, a revelation of their interpretation of events, of the power of their faith, and of a determination to face things for what they are. Their united spirit, which is animating their desire to win the war, will play a very great part in achieving the final victory.

A Year of Fate

Like the saga of the wonderful feats of arms of the Anzacs, the saga of the colossal effort on the Australian and New Zealand home fronts is one of resolution, courage and ingenuity. Unlike the saga of the troops, this other saga is practically unknown, even unwritten. Few in Britain, fewer still elsewhere in the world, know of the immense amount of creative and organising work which preceded the presence in the skies,

on the seas, in the battlefield, of the Anzacs, and back of that, again, the tremendous industrial effort in equipping to so very great an extent the Anzac forces from Australian and New Zealand resources. If what Australia has done in munition production in the first two years of the greatest of all wars, from the manufacture of aeroplanes down to the running off of cartridges for Spitfires by the million rounds, does not open the eyes of everyone to her immense future possibilities when it is all told, as some day it will be, then nothing will.

Still, in June, 1941, the Australian Prime Minister, Robert Gordon Menzies, having just returned from a 40,000-mile aeroplane trip round the world, significantly thought it necessary to call to the citizens of Australia to recognise that " this year is a year of fate " and to follow the honoured example of the Anzacs fighting in the Middle East: to realise, " every man of us, that this war is his business and nobody else's ".

In September, New Zealand's Prime Minister, Peter Fraser, back from a flying visit to the Middle East, Britain and America, made the same plea.

Ignorance

Sharp criticism about Australia abroad invariably springs from ignorance. Lingering in the minds of a surprising number of people in Britain, for example, is the hazy belief that Australia is a sheep-station; that its industrial experiment is a temporary one, given a war-time spurt, and principally distinguished by strikes, lock-outs and stop-work meetings.

Unconsciously they probably believe that bit about strikes, lock-outs and stop-work meetings because Labour first achieved real power as a political force in Australia, and because they have forgotten that not only, at times, has it governed Australia with no little success, but that Labour also managed Britain's State affairs and has given them more Philip Snowdens than Ramsay MacDonalds, just as the Conservative Party has yielded more Winston Churchills than Lord Baldwins. No doubt the spectacle of Australia's war effort is helping to blow these cobwebs from such minds : but it strikes a Dominioneer as a trifle ironical that it is taking a war to do it.

Statisticians long ago laid that boggy of industrial unrest which not infrequently is held up against Australia. They proved it was a libel—rather, the figures did. Between 1925 and 1935—to take a decade covering the tail-end of a boom period, a depression and a stable period—disputes in Australia involved a loss of 11,311,711 working days. Compare this with a loss of 194,940,000 working days in Great Britain and Northern Ireland for similar reasons. Because Australia has roughly one-seventh of the population of Britain and Northern

Ireland, the true mathematical comparison of working days lost through industrial disputes puts Australia in the better position. If the Australian position is analysed over an even longer period it reveals a steady improvement which few countries could match. For instance : the average loss in days through industrial disputes incurred by each Australian worker for the seventeen-year period ended 1935 was 1·04 per year; while for the five years ended 1935 the loss in days by each worker each year decreased to 0·18.

To get any sort of a panoramic view of what Australia and New Zealand accomplished in the war after, say, its first two years, it is necessary to glance at a bald indication of the way they both rapidly gathered speed and strength, though faced with heavy handicaps.

Australia's Millions on Defence

Take Australia's defence.

Australia, in 1939, spent £14,000,000 on defence, a record peace-time expenditure. "A lot of money going into guns and shells," people thought. It was a lot of money. A few critics thought the Government was practically bulldozed by war-mongers to be so lavish. A country with just seven million of population and so big a bill for what is popularly epitomised as powder and shot is pretty nearly as odd a sight as a dish of duck without green peas. Or so a good many thought, it seemed. Certainly as a peace-time feat it was good, if you are conservative in your vocabulary; excellent, if you want to be fair in your praise about it.

But in the 1940-41 financial year what was the position ? It was stupendous. They were spending just on £200,000,000 to the same purpose: and let Britain's celebrated " Little Man " draw strength from the fact that in the Budget presented to Parliament in December, 1940, the Commonwealth Income Tax was trebled without a division.

Questions and Answers

Why? For what purposes was the Menzies' Government boldly laying out such enormous sums, expanding the foundations of great industrial enterprises, recruiting large land, air and naval forces ? I give three simple, expressive answers :

(1) Self-defence and an awareness on the part of the Cabinet, and the people, that, like New Zealand, they share with Britain the great responsibility of not only defending themselves as best they can against possible attack, but of taking an active and costly part in operations overseas;

(2) to contribute their utmost to the joint Empire task of seeing that liberty triumphed over tyranny;

(3) to see that the gallant forces of men—and women—were adequately equipped, since it was obvious to both the Australian and New Zealand Cabinets (and to the British Cabinet) that they could not count on Britain as a source of limitless supplies.

Bear these three factors in mind, and you have three golden pegs on which to hang a canvas depicting, in broad brush-strokes, the whole background of the great effort of the two Dominions.

That Munich Shock

Australian Army chiefs, who never forget that Field-Marshal Lord Roberts once said that the history of the world would be decided at Singapore some day, plan nowadays in terms of local defence and expeditionary forces. This is new.

Circumstances with which Australia was faced in the Great War were utterly different from those with which she had to deal from the outbreak of the First Total War. Problems of defence, acute, in some aspects extremely dangerous, which exist to-day were non-existent in 1914. Then the safety of Australia had not been thought to be in question, a condition which enabled the people to concentrate the whole of their military effort upon enlisting and training the first Australian Imperial Force. Partly trained, just over 20,000 "Diggers" had been sent overseas by December, 1914. To achieve this, militia training was strictly subordinated to the training of the A.I.F. Contrast that with the position to-day: it is now essential that the raising of the expeditionary force should not retard the training of the militia—and yet both must be substantial!

Trying to imagine how the Army bosses felt at the time of Munich is no more difficult than it is now, looking back on it, to realise how the British General Staff felt. A fairly sick feeling in the pit of the stomach was common to most brass hats in Australia, at any rate, for they never confuse realism with pessimism.

A Revolution in Khaki

Their feeling of slight nausea came from the hard, indigestible fact that Australia had a militia force which, at times of street parades and on other occasions for flag-wagging, she was happy enough to find added up to so many thousands. They looked all right—all Australians are fine physically—but their record as trained soldiers did not bear scrutiny. Few of them had experienced more than nine days' consecutive

camp training in a year. Neither was it a really large force.

Yet by the end of the second year of war Australia had a Defence Force for the nation which was created, with great determination on the part of the leaders and enviable co-operation on the part of the men, on the solid basis of having, at the moment the sudden emergency call should come, 250,000 soldiers, all with not less than ninety days' consecutive camp training. A revolution in the nation's internal defence has been achieved. It marks a stride towards the achievement Mr. Menzies had in mind in May, 1939, when he said : " Let me be clear on this: I cannot have a defence of Australia which depends upon British sea-power as its first element: I cannot envisage a vital foreign trade on sea routes kept free by British sea power, and at the same time refuse to Britain Australian co-operation at a time of common danger. The British countries of the world must stand or fall together."

Dual Purpose

Chief points about having a local Defence Force are two: it affords Australia real land defence, and is the best of all possible recruiting grounds for the Forces that are to be sent abroad.

There is no conscription for oversea service, which is purely voluntary; but there is compulsion for training and local service. This system ensures that whenever the country wants to strengthen its local Defence Force, it can do it by bringing in fresh drafts of trainees under the compulsory provisions of the Defence Act. Quite a number of people believe that there is no justification for compulsory military training. Some critics even blamed New Zealand, saying that because it was a conscriptionist country the Australian Government were being encouraged by its example !

Progressive stages have, then, resulted in a strong organisation for the service abroad of an Imperial Force. The basis of this force at the end of 1941 was an Army Corps and four Divisions. An Armoured Division was well on its way to completion. About 130,000 soldiers were abroad at the end of 1941, mostly in the Middle Eastern theatre of operations, although increasing numbers were going to Malaya. An even stream of reinforcements was flowing.

Men Behind the Army

Supreme arbiter in military affairs in Australia is the Military Board. Upon its advice, and that of the other Services, policy is initiated by the Australian War Cabinet. Its headquarters are the old bluestone Victoria Barracks, set

behind squat palms, leafy trees and broad strips of grass in St. Kilda Road, Melbourne. It also instructs the general officer commanding the Australian Force in Malaya : and the Minister for the Army instructs General Blarney. General Blarney receives instructions in operational matters from the British Commander-in-Chief, Middle East. Similarly in Malaya, the A.I.F. is subject to the British Command in operational questions, control being otherwise with the Australian Military Board.

The President of the Military Board is the Minister for the Army. Members of the Board (September, 1941) are the Chief of the General Staff (Lieutenant-General V. A. H. Sturdee); the Adjutant-General (Major-General V. P. H. Stantke); the Quartermaster-General (Major-General J. H. Cannan); and the Master-General of the Ordnance (Major-General E. J. Milford), with a Finance Member who is a civilian, Mr. H. C. Elvins. The Secretary of the Army Department (Lieutenant-Colonel J. T. Fitzgerald) is an *ex-officio* member.

A number of directors of departments, usually colonels, are subject to each of the members of the Board. There are also a Deputy-Chief of the General Staff (Major-General S. F. Rowell), who acts in the absence of Lieutenant-General Sturdee, and an Assistant Chief of the General Staff (Brigadier Bertrand Combes).

The nation is divided into Commands, which are at the four points of the compass. In September, 1941, they were: Northern, Major-General R. E. Jackson; Eastern, Lieutenant-General C. G. N. Miles; Southern, Lieutenant-General E. K. Smart; Western, Major-General J. M. A. Durrant.

Prominent among the Australian senior officers are Major-General Northcott, whose enthusiasm in organising the new Australian armoured division will probably have a great influence in reshaping the army on mechanised lines; Major-General T. R. Williams, chief military adviser to the Department of Munitions, who, as Director of Mechanisation, did considerable work on the selection of special types of transport vehicles for use in Australia; Major-General F. A. Maguire, Director-General of Medical Services, who succeeded Major-General Rupert Downes, now overseas as Inspector-General of Medical Services.

First Volunteers

On September 15th, 1939, twelve days after the outbreak of war, Mr. Menzies announced the Government's decision **to raise a special volunteer force of 20,000 for service either in Australia or overseas.** This force was named **the Second Australian Imperial Force, to distinguish it from the Australian**

Imperial Force in the Great War. The word " Second ", however, was later officially omitted. By November, a division had been enlisted. This was called the Sixth Division, because it was agreed that the system of numbering the divisions should be carried on from the Great War, in which five divisions were sent oversea.

In March, 1940, Mr. Menzies announced the Government's decision to build the A.I.F. to complete army corps strength and to provide for its unlimited reinforcement. As a result, three more divisions—the seventh, eighth and ninth divisions—and corps troops were raised. Instead of damping the ardour of volunteers, the collapse of France acted as a spur. There was a renewed rush to join the colours. The Government's intention to raise and equip in Australia an armoured division was announced in January, 1941, and it was soon being formed.

The first contingent of the A.I.F. to proceed oversea left Australia in January, 1940, and arrived in Palestine in February. Further contingents arrived in the Middle East at intervals.

In June, 1940, just after the famous retreat from Dunkirk, and when invasion of Britain seemed imminent, a large contingent of Australians (and New Zealanders) arrived in different ships in a northern port in Britain. How they cheered at the sight of the kingdom ! Clustered round the sides of the great passenger liners that brought them safely across thousands of miles of sea, much more of which was then infested with lurking U-boats than was the case a year later, they waved and whistled. Over the still waters of the river in the morning the famous Australian bush call, " Coo-ee ! " echoed. Under Major-General H. D. Wynter, this large contingent of the A.I.F. remained camped in various parts of Britain until the end of 1940, when it was transferred to the Middle East. In August, 1940, two Forestry Companies and one Railway Unit arrived in England from Australia. While the Forestry Companies remained, and still operate, in Great Britain, the Railway Unit later joined the main body in the Middle East. In July, 1941, another Forestry Company arrived in Britain.

A large A.I.F. contingent also arrived at Singapore in February, 1941, for service at various stations in the Malay Peninsula. Other contingents followed.

Great Expanding Force

It was with the dispatch of the A.I.F. to the Middle East that steps were taken to provide adequate reinforcements and to create a reserve of trained men upon which to draw for future officer requirements. Continuous camps of militia maintained not only a steady stream of partially trained volunteers for

the A.I.F., but also a system of training and education for officers and N.C.O.'s. With the capitulation of France the number of men for enlistment "increased to such an extent that it became necessary in July, 1940, to suspend recruiting temporarily. Recruiting was renewed in January, 1941, to the extent of 5,000 each month. This figure was later increased to 8,000; later still to 10,000 a month.

In the Great War, Australia raised and maintained an army of five divisions for overseas service. In the First Total War Australia had raised four divisions by September, 1941, in addition to the Home Army and to the work of forming an armoured division. The new strength of the A.I.F. then was approximately 120,000 men, at least largely equipped with all the weapons of modern warfare. Much of this equipment was, and is, manufactured in the Commonwealth.

To a great extent the blue-print of the armoured division is like that used for similar divisions overseas. Skilled personnel: 10,000 officers and men, fully equipped with tanks and more than 1,000 other vehicles. All existing armoured units in the A.I.F. and the Australian Military Forces have been embodied in the new corps. Training areas have been selected and an armoured training centre has been established for the training of officers and instructors.

The whole of the Australian army is being mechanised. The artillery is being organised upon the British Army plan. Fire-power relative to man-power is being increased. There will be 60 per cent, more guns, which will be 25-pounders, instead of 18-pounders. Throughout the infantry the aim is that the rifle will be superseded by the machine-gun as the primary weapon.

Home Defence Force

As we have seen, in the Great War Australia was not forced to contemplate the possibility of attack, but in this war she is : so, in addition to providing fighting men for foreign battle-fields, she had to create that land army of 250,000 men for the defence of her shores. First step towards its establishment was actually taken in December, 1938, when, following the Munich Agreement, the then Prime Minister, Mr. Lyons, appealed to the young men of Australia to increase the Military Forces from 35,000 to 70,000, an objective achieved in April, 1939.

On September 15th, 1939, Mr. Menzies announced that the Government proposed to call up the Militia in two drafts, each to receive one month's continuous camp training. He also announced that several thousand Militia men then engaged on guard duties would be replaced by detachments or

garrison battalions formed from a reserve of A.I.F. men who served in the last war. Three weeks later he announced that, at the end of their month's training, the Militia forces would be trained for a further period of three months. And a few days later he said that the Government intended to maintain the Militia strength at not less than 75,000 : in order to raise additional men, it had been decided to reintroduce compulsory military training for home defence. Compulsory training for home defence, which was originally introduced in Australia in 1911, had been suspended since 1929.

The First Call-Up

The first phase of this universal service system was brought into operation in January, 1940, by the calling up of unmarried men who-attained the age of 21 years during the year ended June 30th, 1940.

In June, 1940, the strength of the Militia was 76,230, while the strength of the Permanent Military Forces, which before the war was 3,693, had increased to 18,398, including certain personnel called up for full-time duty during the war. In that month, too, Mr. Menzies announced the Government's intention to aim at a force of 250,000 for local defence. This would comprise the Permanent Military Forces, the Militia, the Militia Reserve, garrison battalions (all returned soldiers), a reserve of returned soldiers, the A.I.F. in training in Australia, further drafts of universal (compulsory) trainees and volunteers. It was expected that there would be between 30,000 and 60,000 in training in Australia for the A.I.F. at any time during the war. At the same time Mr. Menzies also announced that men trained for home defence would spend seventy days a year in camp.

Next step was the calling up in July, 1940, of men in the 21,22,23 and 24 age-groups, while in January, 1941, the call-up was extended to include single men and widowers without children of the 19 and 25-33 age-groups. These men were required to register before the end of February. Without this Group Australia's home army at the end of February totalled just under 210,000, a clear indication that the objective of 250,000 men before June 30th, 1941, would be fully realised, which, of course, was so.

During February, 1941, the Minister for the Army (Mr. Spender) announced that the military training would be intensified and that military camps would be extended from seventy to ninety days. He also announced that in future half or more of the total personnel of the Australian Military Forces would be in camp under training until further notice.

The practical effect of this decision was that there were continuous ninety-day camps in Australia.

To accommodate this huge increase in Australia's home forces there were in September, 1941, between thirty and fifty camps—exclusive of A.I.F. camps—throughout Australia; and in August, 1941, Lieutenant-General Sir Iven G. Mackay, fresh from experience in the Balkans and the Middle East, took up his new position (just created) as Commander-in-Chief, Home Defence Forces.

In March, 1941, a Volunteer Defence Corps, or Home Guard, was formed, to function under the operational and general administrative control of the Army. The provisional establishment of the V.D.C. was fixed at 50,000, and it was agreed to incorporate persons with special qualifications in addition to ex-Service men. Lieutenant-Colonel J. F. Murphy, C.M.G., D.S.O., of Sydney, was appointed Director of the V.D.C., with Deputy Directors under each command.

Royal Australian Navy

It is a truism, of course, since you can never say that any naval force is purely local, that all naval forces have great fluidity—which prompted Australian sailors, seeking the Duce's ships of war early in the piece, to make the wise-crack that they doubted whether any navy ever had as much fluidity as the Italian Navy.

Small though it is, the Royal Australian Navy is the biggest of the Dominion navies. While theoretically it is for purely local work, it moves questingly in several seas—as lusty episodes in the Great War and in this war have shown. Primarily it was designed to defend the trade routes, but with the declaration of war it was placed at the disposition of the Royal Navy itself. On the other hand, assurances were given to the Government by Britain with respect to the capacity and availability of the Royal Navy, regarded as Australia's first line of defence, to give Australia protection against any major aggression, although at the time the assurance was given the French Fleet was actively co-operating with the Royal Navy.

At the beginning of the First Total War, the Australian Navy, which has served in the Mediterranean, the Pacific, the Red Sea and elsewhere, was already fully mobilised, all reservists having been called up. It was the first Australian force to be on active service from the very outbreak of hostilities.

At the outbreak of war the main fleet consisted of two eight-inch cruisers (the *Canberra* and *Australia*), four six-inch cruisers (*Hobart*, *Perth*, *Sydney* and *Adelaide*); five destroyers

{*Stuart, Vendetta, Waterhen, Voyager and Vampire*); and four sloops (*Yarra, Swan, Parramatta and Warrego*, one of which, the *Warrego*, was then in course of construction). Fifty-four-year-old Rear-Admiral John Gregory Grace, R.N., Commanding R.A.N. Squadron since 1939, an Australian, born at Canberra, served during the Great War as torpedo officer in H.M.A.S. *Australia* (1913-17) and H.M.S. *Hood* (1918-20). Admiral Sir Roger Keyes knows him as a good seaman : he was at one time on Sir Roger's staff at the Mediterranean station.

Expert naval opinion has been consistently against submarines for the Australian Navy. The chief role of the submarine is not coast defence; consequently it is not considered an effective weapon for the coastal defence of Australia, or, for that matter, for any of the Dominions. Under the Empire naval-defence scheme, Australia's part is to provide for the defence of trade in Australian waters by cruisers, destroyers and sloops. Critics and naval experts agree that it would be a great advance to have a capital ship as well. Just five months before the start of the war, however, the Government decided that as a capital ship could not be obtained before 1943, the idea had better not be adopted for the time being.

Fast Motor Boats

By September, 1941, the Fleet had been augmented by the chartering and arming of five merchant vessels as armed merchant cruisers, while over 200 merchant vessels had been defensively armed in Australia with trained gun-crews from the R.A.N.V.R. A number of vessels was taken over for conversion and equipping as mine-sweepers, and for other war-time duties. Over thirty had been equipped, manned and put into commission within nine months of the outbreak of the war.

Of the cruisers, the *Australia* and *Canberra*, built in 1927, are of Great Britain's eight-inch-gun "County" class. The 6,900-ton *Perth* and *Hobart*, built in 1934, are armed, besides eight six-inch guns, with eight four-inch guns and eight torpedo tubes; while the *Adelaide*, 5,100 tons, laid down in 1918, was refitted and modernised in 1938. The flotilla leader *Stuart* and her four "V" and "W" class destroyers were purchased from the Royal Navy. Built in 1917-18, they are still capable of good service. The 1,850-ton "Tribal" class vessels are armed with eight 47-inch guns; the 1,060-tons escort vessels *Yarra* and *Swan* each mount three four-inch guns, and the *Warrego* is armed with four-inch guns in the latest dual-purpose twin mountings. Besides the ships re-

quisitioned for mine-sweeping and patrol work, and the mine-sweeping and anti-submarine vessels being laid down, a flotilla of fast motor-torpedo boats was ordered in the early stages of the fight.

Much of the daily work—patrol and convoy work—is, in the very nature of things, gruelling and unspectacular, and it is to the credit of the R.A.N., that so many Australian and New Zealand troops have been transported oversea without mishap. Not that even in the first two years there were no operations in which units of the R.A.N., did not have a chance to distinguish themselves remarkably. Outstanding was the achievement of H.M.A.S. *Sydney*, which sank the Italian cruiser *Bartolomeo Colleoni* on July 19th, 1940, after a running fight in the Mediterranean, and the well-armed German raider which sank her in the Pacific in November, 1941.

Expansion

A naval shipbuilding programme which was put in hand early in 1939 included, apart from three "Tribal" class destroyers, over forty patrol and other auxiliary vessels. One of the destroyers, the *Arunta*, and a number of patrol vessels had been launched by the time Australia was marking the second anniversary of the outbreak of war.

In terms of personnel the Royal Australian Navy was then nearly three times stronger than it was on that momentous Sunday in September, 1939. In addition, a large number of officers and men of the R.A.N.V.R. had been trained in Australia, and had gone oversea for service in anti-submarine work with the Royal Navy. Personnel provided for in the 1939-40 estimates was 555 officers and 5,752 ratings. Reserve forces totalling some 500 officers and 5,000 men were called up on the outbreak of war to bring the seagoing fleet to war complement, and to man auxiliary craft for local defence.

Naval bases had been established at Darwin, Northern Territory, and Port Moresby, Papua. A graving-dock for capital ships was under construction at Sydney, at a cost of nearly £3,000,000. There, too, in the shadow of the great bridge, is a first-class dockyard with armament, store and victualling depots, and an anti-submarine school. Australia's shipbuilding facilities are big and useful enough to allow her to offer to undertake naval construction for the British Government.

" That's Grand ! "

The Naval Stores and Naval Victualling Branches of the R.A.N. had set up a thorough and widespread system of storage and distribution to provide fuel and stores at strategic

points for ships of the R.A.N.. Besides supplying the wants of the R.A.N., the Naval Board had arranged the supply of approximately £2,000,000 worth of victualling stores for the use of the Royal Navy, the A.I.F. abroad and the Indian Army.

In 1912 the Commonwealth assumed control of the former Australian Station, and her sea forces were granted the title of Royal Australian Navy. Australia trains her own officers and ratings, the former at the Naval College, and the latter at the Naval depot, at Flinders. In June, 1937, the first R.A.N. officer was promoted to captain, and now, with the exception of a few senior officers and warrant officers, the personnel is entirely Australian. The Navy is controlled by a Naval Board, which at the outbreak of war was under the direction of Sir Frederick Stewart as Minister for the Navy and of Admiral Sir Ragnar Colvin as Chief of Naval Staff. Sir Ragnar retired, through ill health, in June, 1941. He was replaced by Vice-Admiral Sir Guy Royle, who was Lord Commissioner of the Admiralty and Chief of the Naval Air Services from 1939. All British admirals who go on duty to Australia welcome the opportunity.

Sir Ragnar Colvin, with whom I lunched before he left London for Melbourne, remarked : " Having an opportunity to help a young naval force gives one a great feeling—and that's grand ! "

Miracles in Munitions

Chances for miracle-working in munition production in Australia are at present beyond computation. At the Delhi Conference, the British Government, particularly British manufacturers, discovered this, to their great astonishment. Far from having recovered from the shock, some of them still remain startled, according to the British Press.

Twenty-five years ago Australia was sending men to Britain to help make munitions. With the exception of rifles and -303 ammunition, she was dependent almost entirely on the resources of the United Kingdom for the technical equipment of her armed forces. With what plant she had she confined herself to rifles and small-arms ammunition; but she could produce nowhere near sufficient quantities for her needs.

To-day she is an exporter of munitions, supplying her own forces with a substantial proportion of arms and equipment, and is making shipments on account of orders for munitions from the Governments of the United Kingdom and sister Dominions. If anyone wants a measure of the nation's capacity for drive, adaptability and construction, this is it.

Small-arms ammunition is still of tremendous key importance, especially with the increasing demands made on production by the Empire's air force, with Spitfire's eight machine-guns tattering enemy targets with hails of bullets by the thousand. Australia is producing small-arms ammunition by the million rounds.

Almost unbelievable fact: between sixty and seventy million rounds of ammunition were sent to Britain in 1940. Another: Production of small-arms ammunition, after Mr. Menzies had been Prime Minister for a year, was twelve times greater than when he took office. It practically doubled itself monthly, in itself a tribute to his drive. By the end of 1941 it was about twenty-four times as great as it was in April, 1939! It is expected to be as much as 60 times as great.

Obviously, production on such a scale is a tower of strength to Britain—and to Australia and to New Zealand, both of whom need no longer depend on oversea supplies. What it means, inevitably, is that in due course Australia will become a major supplier of small-arms ammunition to the Middle and Far East.

Only through the intense industrial development of Australia, which has been a marked aspect of the national growth since 1918, has such a remarkable result been possible. During the years prior to 1939 munitions production was concentrated in a group of Government-owned munition factories. Since the war these establishments have been extended and fresh factories set up mainly in the smaller States under a scheme involving a capital outlay of approximately £20,000,000.

Range

Output of ammunition has been supplemented by the creation of new factories and by production from more than forty munition annexes, at which gun ammunition and other munitions components are "shadowed". Plans provide for the setting up of more and more annexes.

Production includes, besides gun ammunition, hand grenades, mortar bombs, aircraft bombs, naval mines, optical munitions, prismatic compasses, gun forgings, gun manufacture and engines for ships for the Navy.

Anti-aircraft guns, both three-inch and 37-inch, are being produced, and the production of Bren guns is now well under way. New production also includes 25-pdr. gun howitzers and 2-pdr. anti-tank guns.

Four-inch guns for the Royal Australian Navy are also to be produced at the Government ordnance factories, and the production of the Bofors 40-mm. anti-aircraft gun **was**

under consideration in 1941, when design and experimentation were proceeding for the development of a cruiser tank adaptable to the requirements of Australia and Empire defence. Arrangements were in train in June for the construction of this tank in commercial engineering shops. Important also as a war-time development has been the establishment of an optical industry designed to produce a wide range of instruments for use in all services.

Australia's "Beaver"

If results in vital matters of supply are the yardstick, Essington Lewis, head of the Broken Hill Proprietary Steelworks, is Australia's counterpart to Lord Beaverbrook, whose *blitzkrieg* in various Government departments since Mr. Churchill assumed power shocked a good few people, especially a certain type of Civil Servant. He is the biggest industrialist in the country.

One day Mr. Menzies went to him and said flatly, as he can, in the manner of Beaverbrook or Churchill: "Will you come and help the country by becoming Director-General of Munitions with a charter as wide as the seas and as high as the sky?"

"Yes, I will."

"Can you gather about you all the best men in the industrial world in Australia?"

"Yes, I can. If I am to have a clear and wide authority, then I can get other men to share it."

Clear-cut, not swathed to suffocation point in red-tape, there was the beginning of a movement which revolutionised within a few months munitions-production developments and organisation. Mr. Lewis, precisely, speedily and with vast confidence, got together a Director of Machine-Tools Production, a Director of Gun Ammunition, and so on—eight various directors. With him at their head, there sat down to the problem the nine greatest industrial experts in the Commonwealth. Behind them stood the Prime Minister, behind him stood the Government. Broadly, they were told to write their own tickets. They did.

Face to Face

Just as did the "Beaver's" celebrated direct approach shock persons who ordinarily would never expect to hear from a Director or a Minister, so did Mr. Lewis's direct approach surprise: but in a pleasant way.

Chiefs of Staff were asked in effect: "Tell us exactly what you want for your forces; tell us to what extent you **plan their** development over the next three years." Chiefs of

Staff, who had, like Chiefs of Staff everywhere, always a certain amount of suspicion as to what sort of hash politicians would make of any department directly or indirectly affecting the Services, wrote their own ticket, hardly believing their ears, and a bit thrown off balance by this business-like method of first-class business men.

Result: Within six weeks of the creation of that new organisation the Government had approved a programme of construction until 1942. It speeded up the expansion amazingly: by the end of the second year of war, munition production was two dozen times what it was at the outbreak.

Menzies Wisdom*

Of the several times Mr. Menzies has shown great wisdom in taking a big decision, this was hailed as one of the shining ones. That decision to reorganise the work of the munitions supply is already a milestone in the nation's industrial progress. He freed Mr. Lewis from all hampering regulations, gave the utmost authority not only to get things done with the existing Government machinery, but also to press into service civil factories. It was a free hand on a high, wide and handsome scale.

Large additional expenditure was approved for further plant and equipment and reserves of material for munitions production. Sure of itself, the Government there and then authorised allocation to Britain of a large output of various types of munitions from Australian factories. Business men, accustomed to securing production on a huge scale, began turning out the goods as a result of these new and unorthodox official methods. A network of committees is thrown over the various States, their job being to know every workshop in their State, to see that no scientific or industrial resource in the whole Commonwealth is being inadequately directed.

Typical of a minority criticism was the charge that while the patriotic endeavour of the members of these State Committees was beyond question, they nevertheless represented interests that had fought the Labour Movement "from time immemorial" (good old phrase!), and that to them, under the National Security Act (since they were trusted advisers of the Government), was given power to destroy all that had been achieved by Labour. But the leader of the Opposition, Mr. Curtin, with a deeper appreciation of the position, made it clear that if Labour came into power on the morrow it would not repeal the Act, because there could not be any defence for the country if it were repealed.

Under the National Security Act the Cabinet possesses

the greatest authority it has ever had, or could have under a system of Parliamentary government.

The most vital clause in the new measure reads :

" Notwithstanding anything contained in this Act, the Governor-General may make such regulations requiring persons to place themselves, their services, and their property at the disposal of the Commonwealth, as appear to him to be necessary or expedient for securing the public safety, the defence of the Commonwealth, and the territories of the Commonwealth, for the efficient prosecution of any war in which His Majesty is, or may be, engaged : provided that nothing in this section shall authorise the imposition of any form of compulsory service beyond the limits of Australia."

By this Act Australia joined Britain and New Zealand in the completeness of the power vested in the Executive Government for the conduct of the war.

Mr. Curtin and Mr. Menzies were in agreement about it. Mr. Menzies said:

" The greater the emergency, the wider must be the scope of the authority which the Government must be able to exercise to do those things that are necessary to produce victory, and to produce safety for Australia as a result of a victory."

Nobly, Mr. Curtin said:

" In the history of every country there is reached, probably, the stage when only one consideration must be taken into account, a consideration which rises paramount over every other aspect of the life of the country; that is, the consideration of assuring the safety of the country against an imminent danger."

Industrial Panel

Those few critics, fortunately not representative of the Labour Party, who challenged Mr. Lewis's appointment on principle did so knowing (1) that Ministers had to get the maximum output of munitions; (2) that it was desirable that there should be power to make necessary arrangements to train fitters and other tradesmen for occupations in which there was a deficiency of skilled labour; (3) that the Opposition agreed to that, saying it was proper that they should be trained, although naturally enough they wanted to know what were the conditions under which they were to be trained; (4) that regulations gave the Government power to carry out

all the objectives of the country, and authority to fix conditions of training regardless of anything else—and finally (5) that that involved Ministerial responsibility which the Government had shown it appreciated when it had constituted an industrial panel, which in turn had its responsibility—the responsibility of giving the Government advice.

On one occasion when Mr. Menzies said in Parliament, "I informed the panel at its first meeting that all regulations which touched employment in any way, although made in the past, would be forwarded to it and that if it had any suggestions to make in relation to any of them they would be considered," Mr. Curtin paid a tribute to the Prime Minister by remarking that Mr. Menzies' difficulties in regard to the constitution of the panel were difficulties which any Prime Minister would experience in Australia, because there was no complete unified organisation of labour. He also added that he would say to the trade-union movement and to the Australasian Council of Trade Unions that he was quite satisfied with the panel existing then (August, 1940): it was composed of men who were competent to represent the trade-union movement.

The Ministry of Munitions was set up in June, 1940, and in the first three months of its existence expenditure amounting to £100,000,000 was approved for munitions production, including that for capital establishments connected with it.

All special needs in various types of steel are met by Australia's steel mills. So far as basic steel requirements are concerned, she is independent. Vanadium, nickel-chromium, titanium, manganese and other special steels roll from the mills in tons. Armies of workers toil in South Australia, New South Wales and Tasmania in the limestone quarries, at iron-ore deposits, in the coal-fields. Amalgamation of big steel interests has welded a strong, thrusting front.

Chief among the nation's mills are those of the Broken Hill Proprietary Company, at Newcastle, New South Wales. Thirteen open-hearth furnaces yield an average of 72,000 tons of ingots a month. Almost as active are the Australian Iron and Steel Company's works at Port Kembla. At Whyalla, on Spencer Gulf, a blast furnace is in construction for the production of pig iron in South Australia. The iron and steel industry was pioneered in the middle of last century, but the strides were made when the Broken Hill Proprietary Company established its plant at Newcastle in 1915. How well established is the nation's iron and steel industry is clear from the fact that since the start of the First Total War 400,000 tons of steel had been exported to Britain by the middle of 1941.

Aircraft Production

I motored out of London, from Westminster Yard, in the shadow of Big Ben, one summer's day during the war with members of both Houses of Parliament, to an aerodrome to watch representative units of the R.A.F. go secretly through their paces. On the way out, two Members of the Commons were surprised to learn, in the course of our conversation, that Australia was building aeroplanes as fast as I suggested she was doing. I remember Lord Hankey appeared a little amused at their astonishment. But this was not remarkable, really, because when Mr. Menzies was in London in 1936 he had a lot of mild, amiable, after-dinner debates about the prospects of a large-scale aeroplane production in Australia.

As they were prepared to do with any Dominioner then, a number of these kindly people in Britain, quite unaware of Australia's potential, were ready to discuss the subject largely for the purpose of appearing courteous, because they could always say, as they said to leading members of the Australian Government, that it was jolly nice and gallant and valiant of Australia to try to do such a thing as make an aeroplane, but of course it was just an impossibility.

True, Australia had not then, nor even at the outbreak of war, manufactured a motor-car engine, let alone an aeroplane engine. And this was ground enough for reasonable people to put the reasonable question: "But, my dear fellow, if you haven't built a twelve or twenty-five horse-power engine, how in heaven's name do you expect to build one of 1,500 horse-power?" Because every schoolboy knows that it is one thing to tap air-frames together, quite another to manufacture an engine.

At the end of the second year of the war, Australia was not merely producing all of her requirements of elementary training craft, engines included, but she was beginning to export them to other Empire countries that need them. Judged from the standpoint of capacity, there is no reason why Australia should not think in terms of producing 200-300 aeroplanes a month.

Capable, thoughtful Mr. John Storey, Air Production Commissioner, said in August, 1941, that Australia in 1942 would be exporting aircraft and spare parts exceeding £A2,000,000 from a total production of £A20,000,000. More than a thousand machines would be built in Australia in 1942.

Establishment of engineering schools on a grand scale, side by side with the decision to put into training thousands of men for the fine precision work of fitting and turning, was carried out successfully. By the middle of 1941 Australia's

total production of aircraft was roughly 35 per cent, that of Britain's own total production in 1939! The Government's courage and foresight aside, responsibility for this amazing achievement rests with magnificent workers working in magnificent workshops.

The explanation of this large-scale training of craftsmen for aeroplane production is found largely in the fact that when Australia wanted machines and placed orders for them in Britain and in America, she had to take her turn on a waiting list. If she were lucky, she might be supplied with machines two years after she had ordered them. America in 1936, for instance, was desperately short of aeroplane engines because of heavy demands made on her by her own needs and by importers; Britain herself was short of aeroplane engines.

Accuracy

Pause to measure what this development means, by looking for a second at the machine-tools position.

A Bren gun, which Australia is producing in quantity, requires 72,000 tools, jigs and gauges and fixtures. Before the war, practically all machine-tools used in Australia were imported from the United Kingdom, and production, at one stage, appeared to be jeopardised by diversion for use within the United Kingdom of essential jigs, tools, gauges and fixtures, which were on order on behalf of the Commonwealth.

This threat to the success of the munitions programme has been met by the virtual creation of a machine-tool and precision-tool industry in Australia. Before the war there were only five manufacturers of machine-tools in Australia, who produced only a limited range. Two years later there were eighty-five firms engaged in producing all classes of jigs and tools up to the highest limits of accuracy.

Preliminary steps towards the creation of an aircraft industry in Australia took the form of an invitation, a few years before the war, to a group of important companies to establish the Commonwealth Aircraft Corporation, to which was allotted a contract for the production of the Wirraway aircraft, adapted from the North American Harvard advanced trainer and service machine. First deliveries were made to the R.A.A.F. only a few months before September, 1939. These machines, complete with locally-manufactured Pratt and Whitney Wasp engines, were, two years later, being sent out at the rate of approximately one a day. Two hundred had already been delivered, and the balance of an order for 812 was confidently expected to be completed by the end of 1941.

The same factory was then already manufacturing a prototype twin-engine reconnaissance bomber, and had commenced production on an order for advanced trainer types. Preliminary trainers were being turned out at the rate of two a day in August, 1941, from a new factory established by the de Havilland Company in New South Wales. These are now being powered with four-cylinder engines of Australian manufacture.

Despite difficulties, largely due to the sudden outbreak of war, production of the Bristol Beaufort Reconnaissance Bomber is well in hand.

At the outbreak of the war it would have been ridiculed as an impossible guess; but by the end of October, 1941, there were 1,000 Australian-made aeroplanes in the air. Senator Leckie, then Minister for Aircraft, was not boasting, but merely telling the world a fact, when he described it as a major industrial triumph for Australia, which in spite of unbelievable difficulties had obtained raw material to replace much that in transit had been sunk by the Germans.

The first batch of Australian-made Bristol Beaufort bombers was delivered in that month, too. The aero-engine factory and the Beaufort assembly shop in New South Wales were being extended for the production of Australia's new fighters in large quantities, and the Commonwealth Aircraft Corporation's factory in Melbourne will probably soon be enlarged. Plans are proceeding for building at least one new factory. Wasp engines for the Beauforts were coming off the production line in 1941, and it was expected that by July, 1942, the output would be more than sufficient to equip the new Beauforts and provide for replacements.

The first experimental Beaufort bomber, assembled at the Aircraft Commission's workshops from components imported from the United Kingdom, took its first flight in April, 1941. Originally designed to contain a Bristol-Taurus engine, the machine was re-designed to incorporate the American Pratt-Whitney twin-row Wasp engine, necessitating alterations in the engine mountings, nacelles and controls, and also modifications of the wings. Assembly was achieved after unavoidable delays due to war conditions. As it had been impossible to obtain some of the material from the United Kingdom, the Commission decided that, after converting British specifications and gauges to their American equivalents, some machines should be assembled from British pre-fabricated parts, and others constructed from materials obtained in the **United States before the first Australian-made Beaufort was produced.**

A new medium bomber, designed by Wing-Commander L. J. Wackett of the Commonwealth Aircraft Corporation,

is claimed to be faster, more powerfully armed, and to have a longer range than the Bristol Beaufort torpedo-bomber, and may be used as a dive-bomber as well as for high-level attacks. It is fitted with imported twin-row Pratt and Whitney Wasp engines, similar to those of the Bristol Beaufort. The factory engaged in building these engines began production before the end of 1941. Production of the twin-row Wasp engine, for which the Beaufort has been re-designed, had commenced at a new factory established by the Commonwealth Aircraft Corporation, in New South Wales, by July.

Australia planned, in 1940, to spend about £A55,000,000 by 1944 on aircraft.

Air-screws for all types of aircraft under construction in Australia are being produced in a New South Wales factory. A wide range of aircraft instruments and equipment is in production or projected for the near future.

Man-Power

In the Great War the peak number engaged in munitions production in Australia was less than 3,000. At the beginning of the present war the figure was about 5,000 engaged in a group of Government factories. By June, 1940, the total number engaged in Government and other factories had increased to over 15,000, and in 1941 it was 150,000, some being engaged in the building of new factories.

The establishment of this industrial army, to be seen in its full significance, must be viewed against the background of the general effort that Australia has made, and its absorption of man-power in other war activities.

For, like the demands on the taxpayers, the demands on man-power are to-day without parallel in Australia's history. Side by side with the swelling of the Army, the Navy and the Air Force, and the staffing of the factories with men and women, have gone the modernising of coastal defences and other fortifications; the construction of hutted camps; plans for the erection of military hospitals in each State—alone involving more than £A3,000,000; extension and strengthening of roads, railway lines, bridges, etc., notably the completion, in fast time, of the Central Australian road which concerned the construction of about 650 miles of highway; the provision of hospital ships; the clothing of the overseas forces and so on.

Man-power is the principal problem in Australia, as it is elsewhere. Apart from the maintenance of Australia's home defence force and the continual reinforcement of the A.I.F. and the R.A.A.F., not to mention the Navy, the call for men and women for factories had not lessened in any way by the

end of the second year of war; rather were events showing definite signs of it being necessary to make the call more imperative.

There were, in September, 1941, altogether at least 600,000 Australians engaged directly in war activity—this from a population of 7,000,000 people. Of this number some 130,000 were with the A.I.F. and its reinforcements, 250,000, including men training for the A.I.F., were serving with the Militia and Home Defence units, and about 18,000 with the Royal Australian Navy. In addition, there were the Royal Australian Air Force enlistments, exceeding 120,000. The strength of the Navy had been increased by three times by the end of 1941, the Army by ten times, and the Air Force by eighteen times. By 1943, five out of every six men between eighteen and forty-five will be serving in the armed services or making munitions.

Financing the War Effort

In considering the financial aspect of Australia's war effort, regard has to be taken of Australia's defence problem—a problem which did not exist in the Great War.

Already in the years preceding the First Total War steps had been taken to strengthen the defences, and defence expenditure for the financial year 1938-39 reached a peace-time record of £13,830,000. With the advent of war, expenditure for 1939-40 rose to £55,114,000. For the financial year 1940-41 war expenditure exceeded £A160,000,000, and for 1941-42 it is estimated that it will total £A222,500,000.

Of the £55,000,000 expended in 1939-40, £45,000,000 was spent in Australia and £10,000,000 oversea. Revenue provided £26,000,000 (including excess receipts from the previous year), while £29,000,000 came from the Loan Fund.

Although the war expenditure for 1939-40 was greatly in excess of the expenditure on defence for the previous year, the Government, having regard to the prevailing economic conditions, decided to limit the increases in taxation to measures to produce £8,000,000 and to rely mainly on borrowing with the aid of the banking system. This was in accordance with the Government's policy of stimulating the Australian economy to full activity before introducing heavy taxation.

The total Governmental borrowing—for all purposes—in 1939-40 was £50,000,000, of which £12,000,000 was provided by a private loan from the banking system. Approximately £10,000,000 was also provided from the sale of War Savings

certificates, gifts and so on. Of the grand total of £60,000,000, approximately £40,000,000 was for war purposes, of which £10,000,000 was for oversea expenditure. This was mainly financed from the proceeds of £6,000,000 sterling loan raised in London in June 1939.

By May, 1940, the rate of war expenditure had risen sharply, and in view of the great improvement in economic conditions, the Government decided to shift the emphasis of its financial policy on to taxation. In that month new taxation proposals were adopted to raise just over £16,000,000 in 1940-41. The rate of war expenditure continued to increase rapidly, and in November, 1940, the Budget provided for new taxation to produce an additional £29.4 million in 1940-41.

Taking the new taxation proposals into account, it was estimated that revenue will provide £65.5 million and the Loan Fund £121,000,000 (including £24.5 million cash balances in hand at July 1st, 1940). This amount of £121,000,000 included provision for borrowings in respect of oversea war expenditure of £43,000,000. This had been met mainly from sterling balances in London and from loans from the United Kingdom Government.

Two public loans, totalling £63,000,000, were floated in Australia in 1940-41. Of this amount £47,000,000 was for war purposes. In addition, certain smaller amounts have been received from the sale of War Savings Certificates, and similar sources. It was estimated in August, 1941, that war expenditure had already reached £A220,000,000 as against £A65,000,000 for the first two years of the Great War (£A270,000,000 for the four years) !

The Labour Government's Budget for 1941-42 provides for a total expenditure of £A325,000,000, of which £A222,000,000 is for war purposes. On the basis of the previous year's taxation rates, it was necessary to find £A160,000,000 by additional taxation and loans, and provision was made for increased taxation to the extent of £A22,400,000 for the present year, the remainder to be borrowed from the public and the banking system. A £A100,000,000 loan, of which £A34,000,000 was new money, was issued in Australia in November, 1941, and fully subscribed. A criticism of the Budget, voiced in Britain and Australia, was that it showed little sign that Mr. Curtin appreciated the financial measures that are necessary before Australia's potential war effort can be achieved, and that it was an electioneering Budget. It was pointed out that while estimates of war expenditure and total expenditure were both slightly higher than Mr. Fadden's Budget estimates, these increases were mainly due to higher service pay and allowances and higher invalid and old-age

pensions, which, however, might be spared the charge of vote-catching on the ground of hardship.

What Australian critics found inexcusable was the Government's refusal to increase direct taxation on incomes up to £A1,500, even though there were a few increases in indirect taxation and postal charges, estimated to return another £A6,800,000 in a full year; and it was pointed out that the Government had, in fact, placed no additional direct tax on about 80 per cent, of the national income, while by declining to lower the exemption limit for income tax below £A200, it allowed more than 300,000 wage-earners to make no direct contribution at all. *The Economist* (November 8th, 1941) observed: "Of the £A160,000,000 extra wanted this year, only £A22,000,000 will be provided by new taxation, and this will mainly come from heavy taxes, amounting to 16s. 8d. in the pound, on incomes over £A2,500 and from severe company taxes. The remainder, £138,000,000, will be borrowed, an increase in borrowing of £A72,000,000 over last year. Mr. Curtin's only attempt to check inflation is by the control of bank advances and the compulsory deposit of the trading banks' excess funds with the Commonwealth Bank. He has not, however, grasped that, under his financial policy, if there is no inflation, his war estimates will almost certainly be underspent, with a consequent detraction from Australia's war effort, while if there is inflation it will fall most heavily on the very people he has spared in his Budget and whose votes he is trying to attract."

Shipbuilding

Millions of pounds are being spent on warships. But apart from these, the Government appointed a Commission to organise merchant shipbuilding, to advise on the capacity of industry to build ships of various types and to control the building, repair and maintenance of dock-yards. The main problem, it was agreed, was the construction of engines.

The first report of the Shipbuilding Commission recommended an immediate beginning on the building of three oversea merchant vessels, while the Minister of Munitions urged the Commission to aim at building at least sixty ships. The Commission, in March, 1941, saw no insuperable obstacle to this plan. That month, too, the Government appointed as members of a Shipbuilding Board, to control merchant shipbuilding in Australia, Mr. F. P. Kneeshaw, M.L.C. (New South Wales), as chairman; Rear-Admiral P. E. McNeil, R.A.N., as deputy chairman; Mr. S. W. Griffith, of Sydney, as finance member, and Mr. A. S. McAlpine, of Sydney. The Cabinet decided that the functions of the board would be

to advise on the capacity of industry to construct merchant ships of various types, including necessary equipment; to control merchant shipbuilding, including repair and maintenance of ships and dock-yards, and other facilities within the limit of funds allotted then standing at £6,000,000; to make arrangements, or enter into agreements, for building merchant ships and all incidental action, such as preparations and facilities required for construction within these limits of finance; and to make arrangements, or enter into agreements, for the supply of engines, boilers, and equipment of all kinds essential for the completion of merchant ships.

Soon after a decision to institute a Government scheme for the war risk insurance of Australian merchant vessels, a decision was taken to compulsorily requisition the major part of the merchant fleet. While Australian coastal vessels had been operating under the direction of the specially constituted Shipping Control Board since January, 1941, there was for about the ensuing six months no detailed control. The vessels were operated by their owners and only subject to the direction of the Board as to priority of cargoes and similar matters. It was announced on July 17th that this system would be replaced by more thorough Government control and that under it the Shipping Control Board would be empowered to requisition ships. In effect this means that the management of each ship is now in the hands of the owners, but that they are in the position of agents for the Board. The most important shipping lines were immediately included in the scheme. The Board can now divert the best-suited vessels for particular purposes : vital cargoes are lifted with a minimum of delay.

There was a memorable moment on August 2nd, 1941, when the keel of the first of the five 9,000-ton merchant ships to be started in 1941 by the Australian Shipbuilding Board was laid down. The Government plan to build more than fifty naval ships of all types and sixty merchant vessels by 1946.

Raw Materials

Mineral resources in Australia have not been thoroughly explored, but the usual minerals have been found in greater and lesser quantities in accessible parts of the country. The total value of all mineral production from the beginning to 1938 was valued at £1,387,000,000. So far as production values are concerned, gold is of the first importance (gold valued at £17,500,000, almost half the wealth obtained from mineral production during the year, was mined in 1940 : the total value of all gold produced from the beginning of mining in Australia to 1938 was £A699,000,000). Black coal (of which

11,680,159 tons valued at £7,187,901—compared with 3,675,450 tons of brown coal, valued at 6351,721—were mined in 1938) is second in importance; lead and silver (valued at approximately ££4,750,000, including silver, during 1938) is third; iron ore (with a value of almost £A2,600,000 in 1938) is fourth—although it has a far greater economic value to the nation than the nominal value indicates.

Zinc, production valued at £^916,905, and copper, valued at £A893,080, are the only other two metals which in 1938 came near being listed as having a value of almost £A1,000,000. Tin and tungsten are also produced in Australia: important nickel and chrome supplies from New Caledonia are shipped principally through Australia. Nickel, chrome, mercury and sulphur are some of the essential strategic minerals of which Australia has insufficient natural supplies. But of the non-metallic minerals, so vital to any nation, she has ample—clays and building materials; cement materials, dolomite, limestone and fluxes and the like. Unless these existed, neither the fuels nor the ores could be treated locally. Mica is another product which is rapidly acquiring great national importance. Colossal quantities of various suitable raw materials are required for the production of explosives, alkalis and mineral fertilisers.

Natural oil exists in Queensland, Victoria, Western Australia and New Guinea: it remains to be seen whether it is there in quantity and can be developed on a commercial basis. If so, it would be of inestimable value. The Australian Government alone had spent more than £A1,000,000 in helping the search for oil in Australia and New Guinea. Hopes are still held that oil may be found in huge gushers in either territory. Production of power alcohol from molasses assists Australia's liquid fuel supplies: to undertake the production of this fuel, three plants have already been installed, but, as will be seen in the chapter dealing with power and problems east of Suez (and in which a summary of Australia's resources appears) this assistance is so far negligible.

At New Norfolk, Tasmania, a paper-mill has been set up to use Australian hardwoods. Initially, production will be at the rate of 27,000 tons annually—which is a quarter of Australia's war-time rationed consumption. For the first time, newspapers were printed on Australian-made newsprint in May, 1941. It is expected that production will eventually reach 108,000 tons, sufficient to meet the nation's present needs. As a result of this development, the annual saving on dollar exchange in 1941 amounted to £500,000, ultimately it will be £2,000,000.

Great Britain bought the **whole of the Australian wool clip**

for the period of the war and for one year after it at 30 per cent, above pre-war price : although at first glance this looks as though the wool-growers are going to find the war profitable, it is not so. Thirty per cent, above the pre-war price approximates the average price paid during the three years preceding the war. Arrangements were also made for the purchase by the British Government of Australia's surpluses of wheat and flour, meat (beef, mutton and lamb), and dairy produce—butter, cheese and eggs.

At the outset of the war the British Ministry of Food, in conjunction with Canada, made contracts with the Empire sugar producers for the purchase of all the available Empire supplies, including those in Queensland. With the goodwill of the Empire producers, the prices of these contracts were based on pre-war levels. Britain also bought the whole exportable surplus of Australian copper, zinc, tungsten, wolfram and scheelite. Purchases of lead have also been made.

Among the towering sandstone bluffs encircling a great isolated valley, 140 miles from Sydney, the Capertee Valley—that part of it now known as Glen Davis—National Oil Pty., Ltd., under agreement with the Commonwealth and New South Wales State Governments, has spent more than £1,000,000 on plant for the large-scale production of petrol from shale. It is the first enterprise of its kind in Australia—and in May, 1941, high-grade tetra-ethyl motor spirit was pumped continuously over a saddle of rock to Newnes Junction, 32 miles away. Australia's first Australian-made petrol was soon in the tanks of motorists. A period of emergency, such as a war, when the difficulty of transporting supplies of overseas petrol might threaten Australian reserves, had been envisaged by the Commonwealth Government, and it had decided to re-establish the production of fuel oil from the Newnes-Capertee shale deposits. First step was the formation in 1937 of National Oil Proprietary, Ltd., to which the Commonwealth Government subscribed £334,000, while £166,000 each was subscribed by the New South Wales Government and by private enterprise.

A Romance in Wool

To a far greater extent than any other Dominion or country, Australia depends for her prosperity on wool, of which each year she grows 1,000,000,000 lb.—45-50 per cent, of her total revenue from exports is derived from wool, which is valued at from £A50,000,000 to £A60,000,000 annually.

A romance, nothing less, is the wool story. When the first

fleet under Captain Phillip left England for Australia in 1788, they carried with them a few sheep for food. The start of the Australian sheep industry dates from the purchase by Captain Waterhouse in 1795 of twenty-six ewes and rams from the merino stud of Colonel Gordon at Capetown. When these sheep reached Australia, Captain John Macarthur purchased three of the rams and five ewes. From these and a few other mixed sheep, the descendants of the animals which came with the first fleet, the foundation of the great Australian pastoral industry was laid. Because of the improvement brought about by breeding, exceptional rams may grow 40 lb. of wool, compared with 3 or 4 lb. grown by the first Spanish merinos imported. To-day not all Australian sheep are merinos, but only 82 per cent., the remaining 18 per cent, being of English breeds of cross-breeds, reared more for their mutton and lamb than for wool. Such crossbred sheep are found in the higher-rainfall areas nearer the coasts.

Unlike Australia and South Africa, New Zealand resembles Britain in climate. But at first merino sheep were principally bred there, as in Australia and South Africa. Four years after New Zealand was founded in 1840, Sir Charles Clifford introduced 400 merinos from Australia into Wellington province of the North Island. In 1846 he founded the first merino flock in the South Island, at Marlborough, and the descendants of this flock are bleating about the rounded hill-sides at this minute.

Wool was the most valuable product of these sheep, and so up to 1880 the great majority of New Zealand sheep were merinos. In 1882, however, came the discovery of how to freeze meat and transport it in cold storage. It was found that New Zealand could send mutton and lamb 12,000 miles to Britain, to arrive in perfect condition. Soon it was seen that the rich pastures of New Zealand were ideally suited to the production of the finest lamb, and a rapid change in the type of sheep took place. The merino, though growing the finest wool, is a poor mutton sheep, and more and more the British breeds were used. In the rich Canterbury Plains, the English Leicester-Merino cross was the foundation of the famous Canterbury lamb. As a result of experiments in the inbreeding of the progeny of the Lincoln-Merino cross, the Corriedale breed, which is a dual-purpose animal, was evolved, producing a useful lamb for fattening, as well as a good wool.

To-day there are 1,500,000 Corriedales, and these sheep are exported from New Zealand all over the world. Of the former dominant Merino, New Zealand to-day has only 3

per cent. Sheep numbers have increased steadily to 25,000,000 in 1924, and to-day to the record of 32,000,000. While they **are** considered first as " mutton " sheep, their wool is of high quality, and the annual value is from £NZ12,000,000 to £NZ20,000,000.

Peril of Fibre Substitutes

When war broke out, it was the occasion for a lot of particular thought by the thousands of wool-growers in both Dominions. They were not worrying about a market during the war : Britain would buy the wool at a fair price all right. More important than the purchase price of the clip, however, is the possible influence of war-time control on the future of the Dominion wool industry. It is faced by two dangers: (1) a restriction of supplies, and consequent reduction in use of wool in neutral or occupied countries, so leading to the development in these countries of production of artificial substitutes; (2) a marked rise in the price of wool, which will make it relatively expensive in relation to other textiles, and particularly artificial substitutes.

Already apprehension in regard to the first of these factors is leading to the second. This is shown by a letter received in London from a representative of a large American woollen mill. He remarked (December, 1939) :

" The most disturbing fact in the situation as we view it is the sharp and serious rise in the price of wool. This of course is due to uncertainty as to the price at which the Southern Hemisphere's clips will be marketed by the British Government when they do prepare to release some of this wool to countries like the United States. The sharp rise in wool prices which would throw all-wool fabrics out of certain important price brackets would lead to the use of substitutes, particularly rayon staple, in such a way that it might be impossible ever to restore wool in these uses. That seems exactly what is about to happen in our markets. For next Spring the current rise in the price of wool has already had the effect of causing the trade to shift its interest to wool rayon blends. Some substitution will, of course, be inevitable, but houses like ourselves look with regret upon the prospect of wider-spread use of such blends over a period of time which might habituate consumers to their use. It is accordingly sincerely to be hoped that the British Government, when it does make prices on the Australian wool clip to this country, will seek to prevent permanent damage to the wool market by not making the price of wool too high."

Safeguards

The fears of neutral countries that they will not be able to obtain their normal wool requirements are based on the belief that British demand will be greatly increased, and that such supplies as are made available by the British Government will be sold at a much higher price.

A leading Australian wool authority told me that the fear of shortage of merino wools should be quite unfounded since, initially at least, consumption of these wools in England for civilian purposes should tend, if anything, to fall below 1939 levels, and disturbance of trade abroad will not favour developments of civilian demand. In addition, there will be available the wool formerly sold to Germany and Czechoslovakia, which, during 1934-39, averaged 177,000,000 lbs. a year, or approximately 590,000 bales. It must be remembered also that the Great War resulted not in a shortage of wool, but in the accumulation of vast surplus, particularly of merino wools. Such an accumulation to-day would lead to far more serious problems, in view of the growth of the staple fibre industry. This, at the end of a long war involving curtailment of wool supplies, would be found in a greatly enlarged form in many neutral countries.

To safeguard the future of our wool industry it is necessary to regard the maintenance of uninterrupted supplies to neutral countries as no less important an objective than the fixation of price and the satisfaction of British requirements; and to see that these supplies are made available by the British Government at a price as nearly as possible equal to that at which the British Government purchases the Australian wool clip. The British Government are doing both; but what is to be feared in relation to substitute fibres is the sudden and violent rise in the price of wool that has already occurred in certain free markets, and the interruption or curtailment of supplies due to one set of circumstances, such as a drop in the amount of shipping available, or another.

Post-War Food Reserves

Restrictions on shipping space have borne hardly upon Australian and New Zealand exports because of the great distance of those Dominions from Britain, and British Ministers are deeply appreciative of the loyal and helpful way in which the Governments of these Dominions have shouldered this extra war burden.

Action, not sympathy, however, rights a problem of this sort. Consequently, a sharp Dominions' eye was kept on a committee of Ministers, of which Mr. Arthur Greenwood is chairman, assisted by an inter-departmental committee **under**

the chairmanship of Sir Frederick Leith-Ross, which had gone into the whole subject of dealing with economic surpluses and creating reserves for future use. What the Dominions wanted were results. They wanted them pretty urgently.

And on June 26th, 1941, a measure of success could be announced. Mr. Greenwood informed the House of Commons of agreements reached between the United Kingdom Government and the Governments of Australia and New Zealand for dealing with the surplus produce of the two Dominions during the war. White Papers outlined the principles on which these co-operative arrangements are being based.

Arrangements under the agreements should ease the economic position of the Dominions and be mutually advantageous both now and in the post-war period. Britain will continue to import all the produce from Australia and New Zealand for which shipping can be found. The exportable surplus of storable foodstuffs that remains, up to quantities to be agreed, will be put into reserve stocks in Australia and New Zealand; and the United Kingdom Government will bear half the cost of acquiring and storing these reserve stocks.

It is contemplated, for instance, that it should be possible to store a full year's output of meat in New Zealand and several months' output in Australia. As meat is taken out of the refrigerators for export, equivalent quantities of fresh meat will be put into store, so that the reserve stock is constantly being turned over.

Meat-canning is being developed with the object of saving shipping space; in Australia's case the expansion of the industry promises to be very substantial. Another interesting development is that the meat industries of Australia and New Zealand are economising shipping space by taking the bones out of meat before it is shipped.

Arrangements have been made for sending to Australia and New Zealand for this purpose a certain quantity of tinsplate from Britain, but by far the greater part of the supplies needed will be obtained from the United States. Tinned meat is specially useful for the Forces in the Middle Eastern theatres of war, and also contributes a useful reserve to be held in case of emergency in Britain.

America Wants to Help

The United States Government are showing the keenest desire to co-operate in solving these economic problems, and Mr. W. Averill Harriman—who was in London in 1941 as the special representative of President Roosevelt in connection with the supply of war materials to Great Britain—had

discussions with various Government Departments on the subject. What form this co-operation may take remains to be seen, but one possible method which is being considered would be for the United States to import produce from Australia and New Zealand and to release equivalent supplies of foodstuffs to Britain from her eastern ports by the shorter Atlantic route.

Such an arrangement would lessen to some extent the demands on British shipping and would be very advantageous both to the Dominions and to Britain. It may also be possible to arrange for the United States to supply milk-drying plant to New Zealand. Dried milk occupies little shipping space, and Britain would welcome increased imports of this commodity. The opportunity of establishing a new industry may also prove attractive to New Zealand.

These arrangements with the southern Dominions fit into the British Government's wider policy—which will extend to other parts of the Empire and to South American countries—of building up reserves from present surpluses of foodstuffs and raw materials for the relief of the occupied territories of Europe as soon as they have been freed from the Nazi yoke.

Power in Primary Products

You wonder what effect a poor market for wheat would have on, say, Canada? Well, in 1919-23 there were sown to wheat in the prairie provinces of Canada 10,000,000 acres; in 1922-27 it averaged 22,000,000 acres, which yielded 390,000,000 bushels as an average crop. Since Canada's own total consumption of wheat, for all purposes, is roughly 100,000,000 bushels, how vitally important is a world wheat market to the thousands of Canadian wheat-farmers is clear.

Figures of world trade in a few items illustrate pretty well the position of Australia and New Zealand in relation to other countries in the years immediately preceding the war. Canada and Australia together normally exported some 45 per cent, of the total amount of wheat entering world trade. Australia, New Zealand and South Africa were jointly responsible for nearly 60 per cent, of the total world export trade in wool. Canada and Australia supplied the world with 38 per cent, of its imports of apples. Australia and South Africa were responsible for 22 per cent, of the raisins entering into international trade.

The three southern Dominions exported 20 per cent, of the world's imported beef and 80 per cent, of its mutton and lamb. Canada, Australia and New Zealand sent to world markets 49 per cent, of the total of cheese, and Australia and New

Zealand together 40 per cent, of the world's imports of butter. From a world standpoint, their exports were insignificant so far as feeding stuffs and textiles other than wool were concerned. These Dominions must inevitably be greatly concerned with the position of their trade in agricultural products after the war.

In short, the agreement is somewhat similar to that one which, at the beginning of the war, the British Government signed for the purchase of the whole surplus of the Australian and New Zealand wool-clips for the duration of the war and for the year following. Commenting on it, *The Times* editorially points out that Sir Frederick Leith-Ross's committee is fully aware that all these matters, including the wheat surplus, which particularly affects Canada, cannot be treated merely as a question of providing for the necessary war supplies or of financing producers through a difficult time. It has to look farther ahead, to ensure, first, that foodstuffs and raw materials shall be on hand in sufficient quantities to meet the needs of the countries which have been overrun and plundered by Germany as soon as relief becomes practicable, and, secondly, to work out principles, methods, and machinery by which the fluctuation of prices which wrecked the economic system after the last war can be avoided after this. *The Times* adds :

" Primary production is the base upon which the whole complete structure of industry, trade, and finance is built. It cannot safely carry the super-structure if prices are allowed to rise to levels at which they discourage consumption and incite to over-production or, still less, if they are allowed to fall to levels which spell bankruptcy for individual producers and for the primary producing countries. The great reserve stocks now being built up give the Governments an opportunity to provide the stability of prices which in the long run is vital for all the elements of our economic system, as it is for the primary producers themselves."

Agricultural Protectionism

Actually the effect of agricultural protectionism upon prices and consumption has been the subject of several studies, one of the finest being a memorandum presented by Sir Frederick Leith-Ross to the Economic Committee of the League of Nations and published by the Economic Committee as an appendix to the Committee's report to the Assembly, 1935. As everyone knows, on the other hand, the World Monetary and Economic Conference, much-trumpeted when it was held in London in 1933, proved a complete and spectacular wash-

out in its attempts to reach agreement on monetary or commercial subjects. All it offered a waiting, expectant world was little more than agreements about the restriction of production.

Earlier, in 1927, it is true, the World Economic Conference urged a lowering of tariff barriers, almost all the national delegations agreeing that that was as sensible a procedure as it was desirable. What happened? Confronted by urgent internal political difficulties, various Governments discovered themselves forced to maintain their barriers, even to increase them by the introduction of the famous quota systems and exchange controls.

Australia and Human Welfare

Constant failure attending attempts to bring about an improvement in economic conditions led the Australian delegation to the Assembly of the League of Nations, 1935, headed by the Australian High Commissioner (Mr. S. M. Bruce), to propose to the Assembly that human welfare should be made the first consideration in the formulation of agricultural and commercial policies. He asked the Assembly to agree that the economic, social and health sections of the League should be instructed to consider the relationship of nutrition to health, to agriculture and to economic policy. A similar step was taken by the Australian and New Zealand delegations to the International Labour Conference of the same year.

Twenty-five governments established national nutrition committees. International meetings of representatives of these committees were held in Geneva and in Buenos Aires. Although the movement encountered a considerable amount of obstruction, substantial progress was made. But by 1935 deterioration in the political situation had gone too far for it to be arrested. Nevertheless, Britain, the Dominions, many European countries, including those of South-East Europe, were becoming interested in the consequences which would flow from correlating economic policy to standards of living, and yet, such is the perversity of human nature, in their defence preparations governments were unprepared to see that modifications of policy along lines suggested by the nutrition campaigners would prove beneficial to food supplies in war-time. Nevertheless the work done on the nutrition question will not be wasted, for experience gained in the 1935-39 period will enable rapid advances to be made after the war.

Striking Analysis

One of the most outstanding analyses, not only of the position of Empire primary products in relation to post-war recon-

struction, but also of the difficulties that are bound to face governments throughout the world in that period, has been prepared by Mr. F. L. McDougall, C.M.G., Economic Adviser to the Australian Commonwealth Government in London. He presented it to the Dominions and Colonies Section of the Royal Society of Arts. He concluded that when we begin to consider the post-war problem we should ask ourselves how far will the experience of the Great War prove a useful guide.

" We shall have the same phenomena of an exhausted Europe, with depleted soil fertility, with reduced flocks and herds, with an under-nourished population and urgent need for food and for the re-equipment of its agriculture. We shall also have surpluses in the overseas countries and, at least on a short-term basis, a strong demand for food and raw materials. We may find that new difficulties have arisen about the means of payment for the necessary imports since industrial production will have made great strides in the Dominions during the war.

" We shall certainly have to have a new position in relation to the U.S.A. That country will have become the only significant creditor nation in the world, and it is of the utmost importance for us to remember that although we rightly regard U.S.A. as great industrially, yet within her boundaries there is an agricultural nation of some 6,000,000 farm families. The agricultural nation within the U.S.A. is more numerous than the entire population of all the Dominions, its production of wheat, maize, meat, pigs and fruit is also far greater than our joint output, and if efforts are made to organise American production on an export basis, the surpluses available for world trade may become an immense factor in post-war economy.

" Although the very short term post-war outlook for Empire primary products may seem cheerful so long as Europe needs to replenish her empty shelves and to re-establish her agriculture, the more distant horizon is beset with manifold difficulties. These difficulties will have to be faced and means found for overcoming them. Success in this endeavour may well depend upon an early discovery of the best path to follow.

" Little difficulty will be found in reaching the conclusion that, for the Dominions, a concentration upon economic nationalism would be futile. We shall undoubtedly emerge from the war far better equipped for industrial production, but with our manufacturing capacities distorted by a concentration upon aeroplanes,

arms and munitions production. The majority of people who have been so employed will desire to continue in manufacturing industry. The whole instinct of the Dominions and their war-time experience will favour large-scale manufacturing units and high output per man employed.

" This must mean that the population of the Dominions will not provide adequate markets for our manufacturing developments, and hence that export markets must be sought."

Empire Trade Arrangements No Solution

Turning to agricultural products, this same authority declares that although there is some need for the increased consumption of milk, vegetables and fruit, the Dominions are, by comparison with most other countries, close to an optimum level of nutrition. Dominion farmers are anxious to adopt the latest teachings of science, and thus to increase their production and to reduce their costs. Reliance upon their own local markets can, therefore, be no sort of solution of problems.

" In 1932, the Empire, faced by the extreme agricultural protectionism of Europe and the Hawley-Smoot tariff of the U.S.A., turned in upon itself and attempted to solve its economic difficulties by inter-Empire trading. Shall we find in the post-war years that this is an avenue of escape from our major problems ?

" The answer to this question cannot be given off-hand, but it was already clear before the war that Empire markets, wide as they are, were too narrow for Canadian wheat, for Australian wool, and were becoming almost too confined for New Zealand and Australian dairy produce or for Empire meat. In the post-war years the development of Dominion manufacturing will make the negotiation of reciprocal preferences a formidable problem. We have also to bear in mind that co-operation between the British Empire and the U.S.A. is, and will continue to be, the one hope of world security.

" Under all these circumstances it seems doubtful whether we can hope to find in Empire trade arrangements the full solution of our economic problems.

" If, for the Dominions, policies based on self-sufficiency are hopeless and if Empire trading can be only a very partial solution of some of our difficulties, is there any other practicable alternative? The individualist free trader may reply that if international trade were freed from the barriers which impede its flow, all countries could enjoy far greater prosperity.

" However true this may be, there is no prospect of a general adoption of free trade. The industrial countries are determined to maintain a prosperous agriculture, the agricultural countries desire the development of their secondary industries, and both will insist upon using the powers of the State to further these ends.

" We must, however, look forward to some decrease in the height and severity of the obstacles to a sane international division of labour, for it is only on such a basis that we can hope to realise the greater *welfare* which science has made possible for all peoples."

When Mr. McDougall gets to this point his research leads him to suggest that in the word " welfare " we may find the right, and possibly the only solution of the post-war economic problems. It takes him back to the standard of living, to nutrition, and to the work accomplished on these subjects between 1935 and 1939.

President Roosevelt in his third inaugural address declared that " we look forward to a world founded on four essential human freedoms", and he cited freedom of speech and expression, religious freedom, freedom from want and freedom from fear. The President went on to say, " That is no vision of a distant millennium. It is a definite basis for a kind of world attainable in our own time and generation."

Freedom from want, of course, means sufficient food, adequate housing and clothing, reasonable leisure and the means for its enjoyment.

Conclusions about Peace Settlement

Now, the Empire primary producer is directly concerned with food and the raw materials of clothing. Let us suppose that as part of the Peace Settlement the nations pledged themselves to adopt policies designed to bring public health to the standard reached in 1939 by New Zealand, Australia and Holland, and for this purpose to regard adequate food, housing and clothing as the foremost desiderata of their economic policies. If this was done, even by the nations of Western civilisation alone, the effects upon world trade in primary products would be great indeed.

The conclusions of Australia's economic adviser are that if, in the Peace Settlement, we can give real meaning to this practicable aspiration, the nations, freed from enormous expenditure on armaments, will be able to devote a larger proportion of their economic resources to social welfare.

It should be difficult to maintain that, in such circumstances, the nations could not find the means for devoting, say, 5 per

cent, of the resources now demanded for the war effort to securing the health and well-being of their own peoples.

He also suggests that the industrial nations—*i.e.*, Great Britain, Western Europe, the industrial States of U.S.A. and Japan—will find that they cannot afford not to find the means of placing a rising standard of living in the forefront of economic policy. His main reason for this is not because it will be demanded by the industrial workers of these countries, although that will probably happen. It is that, in the post-war world, the only way in which the older industrial countries will be able to, find adequate markets for their enterprise and skill will be if there is a world-wide movement to improve housing, clothing, transport and the enjoyment of leisure.

Manufacturing industries are going to be far more widely diffused throughout the world, and the industrial nations must become industrial specialists, producing the newest consumption products, and largely relying upon their technical abilities for the export of capital goods, if they are to retain their position in the forefront of world progress.

"If it is true that the industrial nations will need to see world standards of living rising progressively, to see world demand for the amenities of civilisation steadily increasing, it will be equally true so far as the Empire primary producer is concerned," says Mr. McDougall. He therefore suggests that President Roosevelt's third freedom—the freedom from want, everywhere in the world—is our vital interest. If this vital interest is to be secured, as he sees it, we shall need to see in our own countries, and in all countries, economic policy directed towards optimum nutrition, better housing, adequate clothing and the other factors of social welfare. He recognises that there will be great difficulties to overcome, but suggests that it must be easier to secure a full sufficiency of the common things of life than to produce 2,000 aeroplanes a month, and to arm and equip new armies.

In a sentence he has suggested that the solution of the problem of the Dominion primary producer depends on rising standards of living—everywhere in the world; that this is also the only solution of the impending difficulties of the older industrial nations.

Comparison

The total enlistment in 1914-18 in the armed forces of Australia numbered 416,819 (331,781 members of the A.I.F. went overseas). Australian troops fought at Gallipoli, in France, in Sinai and Palestine, and one battalion took part, with a naval brigade, in the capture of German New Guinea.

At first the Australian naval unit was employed for the escort

of Australian and New Zealand troops. It convoyed the Australian expedition to New Guinea and the New Zealand expedition to Samoa. Most spectacular sea battle was the sinking of the commerce-raider *Emden* by the light cruiser *Sydney*, which occurred while the *Sydney* and *Melbourne* were escorting a fleet of thirty-eight transports with over 30,000 troops for service in Europe. The battleship *Australia* co-operated in the capture of the cruisers *Schamhorst* and *Gneisenau*. The *Australia*, *Sydney* and *Melbourne* then joined units of the Imperial Navy.

The destroyer flotilla, numbering six, took part in the patrolling of the Bay of Bengal and Malay Archipelago, and later in the Mediterranean anti-submarine campaign in 1917-18. One submarine accompanied the Rabaul expedition; the other was the first British ship to make the passage of the Dardanelles.

Australia in 1915 sent a half-flight (four pilots and forty-one other ranks) to Mesopotamia. The Australian Flying Corps of four squadrons was organised in 1916-17. The first served in Egypt, Sinai and Palestine; the others in France. The cost of forty-one planes was raised by public subscription.

Total cost of the war to Australia between 1914-15 and 1919-20 was £376,993,052. Of this, over £193 million was borrowed in Australia. Revenue measures introduced during the war included an increased income tax, increases in succession duties, land taxes and customs, an entertainments tax, and a war-time profits tax: £2,500,000 was raised for relief of distress in war areas; £1,750,000 for comforts to troops; £831,302 for the Y.M.C.A. School children contributed over £800,000. Total patriotic funds raised by public subscription estimated at £12,000,000.

Australia gave priority of purchase to the British Government from the outbreak of war of all exportable supplies of wool, meat and wheat, and in 1917 sold its whole export of butter and cheese to Britain. By the middle of 1918 Australia had supplied £132,000,000 worth of wool, wheat, meat and other foodstuffs. It also supplied its whole production of wolfram, tungsten, scheelite and molybdenite, all its exportable copper, 100,000 tons of zinc, and 17,900 tons of munition steel.

Values of some products supplied for war purposes were: tungsten £372,500; clothing £1,500,000; harness £770,000; cordite £420,000; small arms £1,500,000; woollens £500,000. Australia also supplied over 200,000 pairs of army boots. 6,000 munitions and other skilled workers went oversea.

Australia formed 2,200 branches of the Red Cross Society with 82,000 women and boy workers: 400 persons worked oversea for the Society. Food to the value of £176,000 was

sent to prisoners of war. Five Red Cross depots were established in France. All motor ambulances required in Egypt were supplied by Australia. Total expenditure on Red Cross work ,£3,500,000.

War Governments

A surprising number of people abroad, especially in Britain, are under a misapprehension about the structure of Australian Federal politics. Some believe they are intricately complicated; others that, whatever may be put out to the contrary, there was such a tug-of-war between the Government and Opposition parties that the national war effort during the first two years was seriously imperilled. Neither is true.

The structure is as simple as it is in any democracy, much simpler than it is in Britain or America. The weakness lies in the faction-fighting within the various parties.

At the same time, there has never been any disagreement between the Federal parties about the need for an all-in war effort. There are differences of opinion about the method, not the principle. A chief difference was that the Coalition Government—the United Australia Party-Country Party Government—wanted Labour to join it and form a National Government. The Labour Party opposed an all-party Government, believing that it would "stifle honest, patriotic criticism", without which a successful war effort would be impossible. Its attitude has been consistent.

Soon after the outbreak of war the Federal Government was composed of representatives of the Coalition Government. Mr. Menzies, who became leader of the United Australia Party on the death of Mr. Lyons in April, 1939, retained the leadership after his resignation from the Prime Ministership on August 28th, 1941. There were changes of leadership in the Country Party, but Mr. Fadden was leader at the end of the second year of war.

Although the United Australia Party held office only through its alliance with the Country Party, there were frequent differences between the two partners in the coalition. The relations between the two parties were not bettered by the result of the General Election in 1941, which left the Coalition Government with a majority of one in a House of seventy-four. Mr. Menzies, in deciding to resign, gave as his reason the opinion expressed by some of his colleagues that his own personal unpopularity with large sections of the Press and of the public was a handicap to the efficiency of the Government.

This did not tempt Labour to help form a National Government. So in September, 1941, there was a single, solid Opposition Party, the Australian Labour Party, with one or

two Independent members. Until the end of the first eighteen months of war, there was also in opposition as a separate party, the Australian Labour (Non-Communist) Party, whose leader was Mr. Beasley. This party was confined to Labour representatives from the State of New South Wales and was popularly known as "the Lang Group", Mr. John Gordon Lang being a New South Wales politician, a former Labour Premier of the State. Its odd title was intended to make it clear that however extreme the Party's "Left" views might appear, they were non-communist: it was not intended to imply, as it could to people overseas, that the official Australian Labour Party, with which it merged eventually, was tinged with communism.

Of the several attempts Mr. Menzies made to secure the support of Labour in an all-party Government, his most notable was made on August 24th, 1941, when he offered to serve in a National Government, if necessary under another Prime Minister, if Labour would help form a National Government. He claimed it was the most far-reaching offer ever made in Federal history. Unanimously, Labour rejected the proposal: it went farther, and demanded the resignation of Mr. Menzies' Government, interpreting his offer as an indication of his inability to give Australia a stable government. With Parliament divided into practically equal parties, it was true that the position of the Government was not strong. Labour maintained it was made weaker than need be as a result of dissensions between the Government and certain of its nominal supporters, a weakness which no amount of "reconstruction" on Mr. Menzies' part could cure. (For some time, Mr. Menzies' Government had a majority of only one in the House.) Labour, contending that its political position was stronger, believed it could secure a workable Parliament, and that Parliament could be expected to give it the same co-operation in the prosecution of the war as the Labour Party had unswervingly given Mr. Menzies.

Mirror

A perfect reflection of the rapid developments made by the national life is found in a glance at the gradual increase in the size of the machinery of Government. At the outbreak of war, the composition of the Cabinet was :—

Prime Minister and Treasurer—Rt. Hon. R. G. Menzies, K.C.; Attorney-General and Minister for Industry—Rt. Hon. W. M. Hughes, K.C.; Minister for Supply and Development—Rt. Hon. R. G. Casey; Minister for Defence—Hon. G. A. Street; Minister for External Affairs and Minister for Information—Hon. Sir Henry S. Gullett;

JOURNEY'S
SMILING
END

Australian motor-
cyclists, who
headed the proces-
sional entry of the
Allied Forces into
Beirut, arriving in
the city.



ROYAL
AUSTRALIAN
PILOTS

This Australian
fighter squadron,
flying Tomahawks,
was successful on
the Syrian front,
destroying Vichy
aircraft on the
ground and in the
air.



Minister for Commerce—Senator Hon. G. McLeay; Minister for the Interior—Senator Hon. H. S. Foil; Postmaster-General and Minister for Repatriation—Hon. E. J. Harrison; Minister for Trade and Customs—Hon. J. N. Lawson; Minister for Health and Minister for Social Services—Hon. Sir Frederick H. Stewart; Vice-President of the Executive Council, Minister for Civil Aviation and Minister assisting the Minister for Defence—Hon. J. V. Fairbairn; Minister in charge of External Territories—Hon. J. A. Perkins; Minister assisting the Treasurer—Hon. P. C. Spender, K.C.; Minister assisting the Minister for Commerce—Senator the Hon. P. A. M. McBride; Minister in charge of War Service Homes—Senator the Hon. H. B. Collett; Minister assisting the Minister for Supply and Development—Hon. H. E. Holt.

On November 15th, 1939, it was clear that no Minister for Defence could cope with the whole administrative responsibility. The Defence Department was, therefore, divided, and for the duration of the war separate Ministers for the Forces, the Navy and for Air were appointed, together with a Minister for Supply and Development. The activities of each of these departments were co-ordinated by a Minister for Defence Co-ordination. Mr. Street became Minister for the Army, Sir Frederick Stewart Minister for the Navy, and Mr. Fairbairn Minister for Air. Mr. Menzies himself took the portfolio of Minister for Defence Co-ordination. On January 8th, 1940, Mr. Casey was appointed first Australian Minister to the U.S.A., and Sir Frederick Stewart, on January 26th, was appointed to succeed him as Minister for Supply and Development.

First Major Change

Then came a major change on March 7th, 1940, when Mr. Menzies and Mr. A. G. Cameron, then head of the Country Party, agreed upon a Coalition Government. The personnel of the new Cabinet was :—

Prime Minister, Minister for Defence Co-ordination and Minister for Information—Rt. Hon. R. G. Menzies; Minister for Commerce and Minister for the Navy—Hon. A. G. Cameron; Attorney-General and Minister for Industry—Rt. Hon. W. M. Hughes; Minister for the Army and Minister for Repatriation—Brig. the Hon. G. A. Street; Vice-President of the Executive Council—Hon. Sir Henry Gullett; Minister for Trade and Customs—Senator the Hon. G. McLeay; Postmaster-General and Minister for Health—Hon. H. V. C. Thorby; Treasurer—

Hon. P. G. Spender; Minister for the Interior—Senator the Hon. H. S. Foil; Minister for Supply and Development and Minister for Social Services—Hon. Sir Frederick Stewart; Minister for External Affairs—Hon. J. McEwen; Minister for Air and Civil Aviation—Hon. J. V. Fairbairn; Minister assisting the Minister for Commerce—Senator the Hon. P. A. M. McBride; Minister assisting the Minister for Supply and Development and Minister assisting the Treasurer—Hon. A. W. Fadden; Minister assisting the Minister for Repatriation and Minister in charge of War Service Homes—Senator the Hon. H. B. Collett; and Minister assisting the Prime Minister, Minister in charge of External Territories and Minister assisting the Minister for the Interior—Hon. H. K. Nock.

On August 13th, 1940, Brigadier Street, Mr. Fairbairn and Sir Henry Gullett lost their lives in a distressing flying accident at Canberra, and their places in the Cabinet were temporarily filled by Senator McBride, Mr. Fadden and Senator Collett respectively. Then came the General Elections, held on August 20th, after which the Coalition Cabinet was reconstructed as follows :—

Prime Minister, Minister for Defence Co-ordination, and Minister for Information—Rt. Hon. R. G. Menzies; Treasurer—Hon. A. W. Fadden (who succeeded Mr. Cameron as leader of the Country Party); Attorney-General and Minister for the Navy—Rt. Hon. W. M. Hughes; Minister for the Army—Hon. P. G. Spender; Postmaster-General, Minister for Repatriation, and Vice-President of the Executive Council—Senator the Hon. G. McLeay; Minister for Air, and Minister for Civil Aviation—Hon. J. McEwen; Minister for the Interior—Senator the Hon. H. S. Foil; Minister for Commerce—Rt. Hon. Sir Earle C. G. Page; Minister for External Affairs, Minister for Social Services, and Minister for Health—Hon. Sir Frederick Stewart; Minister for Supply and Development, and Minister for Munitions—Senator the Hon. P. A. M. McBride; Minister for Trade and Customs—Hon. E. J. Harrison; Minister for Labour and National Service, and Minister in charge of Scientific and Industrial Research—Hon. H. E. Holt; Minister assisting the Minister for Repatriation, and Minister in charge of War Service Homes—Senator the Hon. R. B. Collett; Minister assisting the Prime Minister, Minister dealing with External Territories, and Minister assisting the Minister for the Interior—Hon. T. J. Collins; Minister assisting the Minister for Trade and Customs, and

Minister assisting the Minister for Labour and National Service—Senator the Hon. J. W. Leckie; and Minister assisting the Treasurer, and Minister assisting the Minister for Commerce—Hon. H. L. Anthony.

Second Major Change

The next major change came in June, 1941, when it was decided to increase the Cabinet from twelve Ministers with portfolios and four Assistant Ministers to nineteen Ministers each with full charge of a department. Three new departments were created—Munitions, Transport, and Aircraft Production, and the Cabinet on August 27th, 1941, was constituted as follows :

Prime Minister, Minister for Defence Co-ordination—Rt. Hon. R. G. Menzies; Treasurer—Hon. A. W. Fadden; Attorney-General and Minister for Navy—Rt. Hon. W. M. Hughes; Minister for Army—Rt. Hon. P. G. Spender; Postmaster-General, and Vice-President of the Executive Council—Hon. T. J. Collins; Minister for Air and Civil Aviation—Hon. J. McEwen; Minister for Interior and for Information—Senator the Hon. H. S. Foil; Minister for Commerce—Rt. Hon. Sir Earle Page; Minister for External Affairs, Social Services and Health—Hon. Sir Frederick Stewart; Minister for Supply and Development—Senator the Hon. G. McLeay; Minister for Munitions—Senator the Hon. F. A. McBride; Minister for Customs—Hon. E. J. Harrison; Minister for Labour and National Service—Hon. H. E. Holt; Minister for Aircraft Production—Senator the Hon. J. W. Leckie; Minister for Transport—Hon. H. L. Anthony; Minister for War Organisation of Industry—Hon. E. S. Spooner; Minister for Home Security—Hon. J. P. Abbott; Minister for External Territories—Hon. A. McK. McDonald; and Minister for Repatriation—Senator the Hon. H. W. Collett.

Advisory War Council

Following the General Election in September, 1940, in which the Coalition Government was returned with a majority in the House of Representatives and in the Senate, Mr. Menzies offered to form a National Government with the Labour Opposition. The offer was that the Opposition should accept half the seats in a National Government, or, failing that, half the seats in some form of National or War Council with executive functions. Both these offers were rejected, but the Opposition agreed to the formation of an Advisory War Council, over which the Prime Minister would preside, and consisting of four members

of the Cabinet, three members of the official Labour Party, and one member of the Non-Communist (Lang Group) Labour Party.

Legal basis for the operation of the Australian Advisory War Council—to give it its full title—was provided by regulations under the National Security Act. These regulations state that the functions of the Council will be "to consider and advise the Government with respect to such matters relating to the defence of the Commonwealth or the prosecution of the war as are referred to it by the Prime Minister".

The Government representatives appointed were Mr. Menzies, Mr. Hughes, Mr. Fadden and Mr. Spender; the official Labour Party representatives were Mr. John Curtin, Mr. F. M. Forde and Mr. N. J. O. Makin; and the Labour Party (Non-Communist) representative, Mr. John Beasley. Later—on March 19th, 1941—Dr. H. V. Evatt, K.C., was added to the official Labour representation on the Advisory War Council; and the Labour (Non-Communist) Party having been merged in the official Labour Party, the Opposition, therefore, had five representatives as against four for the Government.

Formation of War Cabinet

The formation of an inner War Cabinet was announced on September 15th, 1939. The first War Cabinet consisted of: Mr. Menzies, Prime Minister; Mr. Hughes, Attorney-General; Mr. Casey, Minister for Supply and Development; Brig. Street, Minister for Defence; Sir Henry Gullett, Minister for External Affairs and Information; Senator McLeay, Minister for Commerce.

Later, on November 19th, following the division of the Defence Administration into three separate departments, the War Cabinet was reconstituted. With the exception of Senator McLeay, the original members remained, with the following in addition: Senator Foil, Minister for Interior; Sir Frederick Stewart, Minister for Navy; Mr. Fairbairn, Minister for Air; with Mr. Spender, who had been appointed Acting Treasurer, to be co-opted from time to time on Treasury matters.

At the same time, the formation was announced of an Economic Cabinet to bring about more effective co-ordination of war-time economic activities. The composition of the first Economic Cabinet was: Mr. Menzies, Mr. Casey, Senator McLeay, Mr. Harrison, Postmaster-General; Mr. Lawson, Minister for Trade and Customs; Mr. Spender, Acting Treasurer; and Senator McBride, Assistant Minister for Commerce.

With the formation of the Coalition Government on March

7th, 1940, the War Cabinet was reconstituted as follows: Mr. Menzies, Mr. Cameron, Mr. Hughes, Brig. Street, Sir F. Stewart, Mr. Spender, Mr. McEwen, Senator Foil and Mr. Fairbairn. The Economic Cabinet was also reconstituted, and comprised Mr. Menzies, Mr. Cameron, Sir Frederick Stewart, Mr. Thorby, Mr. Spender, Senator McLeay and Senator McBride.

When Parliament reassembled on November 20th, 1940, after the General Election, the War Cabinet was again reconstituted as follows : Mr. Menzies, Mr. Fadden, Mr. Hughes, Mr. Spender, Mr. McEwen and Senator Foil.

Following the appointment of additional Ministers on June 25th, 1941, the War Cabinet underwent further changes, and before Mr. Menzies' resignation in August was constituted as follows : Mr. Menzies, Mr. Hughes, Mr. Spender, Mr. McEwen, Senator Foil and Senator McBride. The Economic Cabinet, which had fallen in disuse because its membership overlapped that of the War Cabinet, making regular meetings of both bodies impracticable, was revived with a separate personnel. Mr. Fadden became Chairman, and the other members were Sir Earle Page, Sir Frederick Stewart, Senator McLeay, Mr. Harrison, Mr. Holt and Mr. Anthony.

Third and Fourth Major Changes

This was introduced by Mr. Menzies' resignation (August 28th, 1941) and Mr. Fadden's appointment as Prime Minister. Mr. Menzies remained a member of the Cabinet as Minister of Defence.

The fourth major change occurred on October 4th, 1941, when the Fadden Government was defeated as a result of a debate on the Budget. Mr. Curtin, leader of the Opposition, in assailing the Budget, prefaced his attack by saying, amid cheers from both sides of the House, that it was desirable that the whole world, and particularly the enemy, should know that whatever occurred in Parliament in no way affected the unity of the Australian people's determination to carry the war to a victorious conclusion. It was indicated that the Labour Party's main objections were to compulsory loans, the taxation of incomes down to £A150, and what the Labour Party considered to be illiberal treatment of Service men and their dependants. (According to *The Times* (October 2nd, 1941), Mr. Curtin said, "the Government's view of what was a fair thing for the fighting forces was that a woman with two children was entitled to £A3 10s., which was £A1 less than the basic wage, while her husband served oversea. That represented his cardinal objection to the Budget.")

The Labour Party assumed office, and Mr. Curtin became

Prime Minister. He had never previously held a Ministerial office. After the Labour caucus had elected the personnel of the new Commonwealth Cabinet, Mr. Curtin announced (October 6th) its composition as follows :—

Prime Minister and Minister for Defence Co-ordination, Mr. J. Curtin; Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for the Army, Mr. F. M. Forde; Treasurer, Mr. J. B. Chifley; Attorney-General and Minister for External Affairs, Dr. H. V. Evatt; Minister for Supply and Development, Mr. J. A. Beasley; Minister for the Interior, Senator J. S. Collings; Minister for the Navy and Munitions, Mr. N. J. O. Makin; Minister for Social Services and Health, Mr. E. J. Holloway; Minister for Trade and Customs and Vice-President of the Executive Council, Senator R. V. Keane; Minister for Air and Civil Aviation, Mr. A. S. Drakeford; Minister for Commerce, Mr. W. J. Scully; Postmaster-General and Minister for Information, Senator W. P. Ashley; Minister for Labour and National Service, Mr. E. J. Ward; Minister for Repatriation and War Service Homes, Mr. C. W. Frost; Minister for War Organisation of Industry, Mr. J. J. Dedman; Minister for Home Security, Mr. H. P. Lazzarini; Minister for External Territories, Senator J. M. Fraser; Minister for Aircraft Production, Senator D. Cameron; and Minister for Transport, Mr. G. Lawson.

The War Cabinet comprised Mr. Curtin, Mr. Forde, Mr. Chifley, Dr. Evatt, Mr. Beasley, Mr. Makin, and Mr. Drakeford. There was no Economic Cabinet.

Members of the Advisory War Council included Mr. Menzies, who accepted the position out of a sense of public duty because he felt that he had special knowledge which would be useful to the Council.

The Cabinet was representative of all States, New South Wales having seven Ministers, Victoria five, Queensland three, West Australia two and South Australia and Tasmania one each. The tone of the Cabinet was moderate, the right-wing influence dominating. The average age of the Cabinet was 54, which was a good deal higher than that of the Menzies Ministry. It was the first Labour administration to hold office in the Federal Parliament since 1932.

The Government was precariously placed, *relying* as it was on the votes of two Independents to keep it in office. The votes of one Independent and one Independent member of the United Australia Party (Mr. Coles) put the Fadden Ministry out of office.

It was believed, when Mr. Curtin's party took over the

government of the country, that in the event of another crisis, a General Election would be likely. If a General Election were held, however, it could not be too strongly emphasised that broad war issues would not be at stake; each political party is pledged to 100 per cent, war effort. Labour's accession to office introduced not the slightest change of general policy, only a change in method.

Apart from Mr. Curtin, the most arresting character in the Labour Party is, perhaps, Dr. Evatt, a former High Court judge. He won considerable prestige by resigning his seat on the Bench to enter politics. Always a Labour man, he is more radical than his leader, and is looked upon by many as Mr. Curtin's successor. He has had a brilliant career at the Bar and is the author of historical works. Political commentators regard him as the "intellectual giant" of the Party, but among the mass of the people, Mr. Curtin, who is a more familiar figure, has a greater following.

Emphasising the eagerness of all Australians, of whatever shade of political thought, to work whole-heartedly for the success of the Imperial war effort, Mr. Curtin sent this cable to Mr. Churchill:—

"I take the occasion of the commencement of my work as Prime Minister to assure you of the desire of my Government to co-operate fully with your Government, and the Governments of the other Dominions, in all matters associated with the welfare of the Empire. Particularly we will devote our energies to effect the organisation of all our resources, so that we may play our part in bringing victory to the Empire and the Allies."

To this Mr. Churchill replied:—

"I thank you for your telegram on assuming the direction of Commonwealth affairs. I cordially reciprocate the good wishes it contains. You may be sure we shall work with you on a basis of most intimate confidence and comradeship."

"Eclipse of Mr. Menzies"

At a joint meeting of the United Australia Party and the Country Party (October 8th), Mr. Fadden, leader of the Country Party, was unanimously elected leader of the Opposition. Mr. Menzies was not a candidate; earlier he **had** resigned the leadership of the United Australia Party, Mr. Hughes having been elected to the post. Mr. McLeay and Mr. McBride were elected leader **and** deputy-leader **of the United Australia Party** in the Senate.

In a message headed "Eclipse of Mr. Menzies", the Canberra correspondent of *The Times* commented:

"The eclipse of Mr. Menzies, who now sits on the Opposition cross-benches, constitutes one of the most extraordinary chapters in the history of Australian politics. Apparently Mr. Menzies' friends canvassed the prospects of his election as Leader of the Opposition but discovered that there was no hope of success; hence his withdrawal. Moreover, with Mr. Menzies the predominating consideration continues to be the unity of the Opposition. Hostile newspapers, which have continued unrelentingly to pursue Mr. Menzies since his deposition from the office of Prime Minister, have insistently advocated Mr. Fadden's claims to the leadership, accusing Mr. Menzies of dereliction of duty in refusing to go to London and also in omitting to speak for the Government in the Budget debate.

"Another argument was that a united Opposition was impossible under Mr. Menzies, owing to the hostility of certain members of the United Australia Party. It was urged that as Mr. Menzies had resigned the Prime Ministership owing to his unpopularity with a large section of the Press and people, this would be a tremendous asset to the Labour Party in a General Election, in which he was the leader of the forces opposing the Government forces, and that the Opposition would face an election with much brighter prospects under Mr. Fadden's leadership. Undoubtedly, these considerations rallied support for Mr. Fadden."

Mr. Menzies' removal from a prominent place in Australian politics was featured in the British Press and caused a considerable stir. His departure was unexpected, in many quarters undesired. On October 10th, the Canberra correspondent of *The Times* cabled that Mr. Menzies had given him the following comment on his (the correspondent's) dispatch referring to Mr. Menzies' "eclipse", a summary of which had been cabled back to Australia from London by Australian newspaper correspondents :—

"I should be most unhappy if the virulent campaign of misinterpretation conducted against me by a section of the Australian Press caused any misunderstanding in the minds of my friends in Britain. *The Times* is reported here as quoting certain newspapers stating that I failed in my duty by not going to London and not speaking in the Budget debate. I told the Cabinet before resign-

ing the Prime Ministership that in my opinion only a Dominion Prime Minister should sit in the British War Cabinet. Anybody else sent to England would, therefore, merely be duplicating unnecessarily the splendid work of Mr. Bruce (Australia's High Commissioner in London). Was this view wrong? On the contrary, I have the best reason to know that it is shared by the British Cabinet.

"The significance of my not speaking in the Budget debate has been grossly exaggerated. It is not the practice, either in Australia or in Britain, for Ministers generally to speak on the Budget. I had prepared a speech, but the Independent members who voted against the Fadden Government brought the debate to a stage at which no purpose could have been served by its prolongation. The great majority of Ministers, therefore, including myself, did not speak. My abstention would not, in any event, have surprised the Government, for my financial views, particularly on the very extensive use of Central Bank credit, were by no means identical with those of my colleagues. I had, as they well knew, remained in the Government only for the sake of maintaining the greatest possible amount of political unity.

"Throughout the personally distressing events of the last six weeks, I have refrained from saying anything in my own justification, for personal controversies do not help to win the war. My self-deriding ordinance will continue, but it is, I hope, permissible to say that my effort in the war is something of which I do not think I have anything to be ashamed."

This unusual message from a former Dominion Prime Minister attracted a great deal of attention : it also provoked a lot of discussion.

Commenting on it, *The Economist* (October 18th) stated:

"... his disappearance from Australian political life, for the time being at least, appears complete. This disappearance seems strange to people in this country, who learned to admire Mr. Menzies during his visit here and who applauded his forthright statements to the Australian people on his return.

"This very forthrightness, however, seems to have caused his downfall. The unpopularity which it brought him among a section of his own party and in the Press pursued him after he had resigned the premiership; and he was accused of failing in his duty in not returning to London, and also in not speaking on behalf of the Govern-

ment during **the** Budget debate. In a statement to *The Times* correspondent, Mr. Menzies commented on these charges. He told the Cabinet before resigning that in his view only a Dominion Prime Minister should make the London visit, because only he could sit in the British War Cabinet, and anybody else would merely be duplicating the work of the High Commissioner.

"This is a very reasonable point of view, which most people in this country, and—in Mr. Menzies' opinion—the British Cabinet, will endorse. But, from the point of view of his political future and of Australian political unity, Mr. Menzies might have been wiser to have agreed to make the visit after Mr. Fadden succeeded him, and his attitude—"I go as Prime Minister or not at all"—is another example of an inability to climb down. On the Budget issue, Mr. Menzies says that, though it is not the custom for Ministers generally to speak on the Budget, he had in fact prepared a speech, but that the declarations of the two Independent members made it useless to prolong the debate. There must, however, still be some doubt whether he might not have influenced Mr. Coles to vote for the Government, for Mr. Coles, by resigning from the United Australia Party when Mr. Menzies resigned the premiership, appeared to have linked his fortunes to his old Prime Minister's.

"Mr. Menzies also says that, in any case, his financial views, particularly on the very extensive use of bank credit, were not identical with those of his colleagues. Taken in conjunction with his plans for a full economic mobilisation which he announced last June, this statement can imply only that Mr. Menzies stood for stiffer taxation all round. In fact, the whole impression left by his decline and fall is that he wished to drive the Australian people more furiously than the majority of them wanted. During this war, when the dearth of strong men in the Empire is so apparent, such an attitude is a political virtue, not a crime, and it is earnestly to be hoped **that** Mr. Menzies will shortly reappear as a protagonist in the Empire's war effort."

The last sentence epitomised **the** feelings of a great many Britons.

Labour Party

Help to the hilt in the Commonwealth's war effort was, at the outset, pledged by the leader of the Labour Party. In making this pledge, the leader of the Party, school-teacher-

looking Mr. Curtin, said: " The Australian Labour Party accepts to the full the complete obligation to ensure the maximum capacity of its people and country to resist invasion, raid or attack."

One of the most popular Labour men thrown up in Australia, Mr. Curtin is an enemy of complacency. " For God's sake ", he called to the people early in 1940, a few weeks before France fell, " don't let us say that what has happened in other countries can't happen here ! " One of the first to worry about the production of equipment, he urged the workers to do their utmost—if they were given a fair deal. At the same time, he warned employers : " If the workers aren't to take advantage of the present crisis, you mustn't! "

Mr. Curtin saw—and never tired of saying that he saw it—that the struggle was not one of vested interests; that it was not a struggle to maintain dividends for large manufacturing companies, or for the maintenance of the private banking system. He declared :

" It is a struggle for personal liberty, in which we are seeking to make the vested interests of Australia the hand-maiden of the future happiness and welfare of all the people of Australia."

True that at the end of two years of war a National Government, a coalition on the lines of the British Government, appeared as far off as ever. Yet it would be futile to pretend that Labour had withheld valuable co-operation on any vital issue, and the degree of support it granted the Acting Prime Minister, Mr. Fadden, during Mr. Menzies' absence was remarkable. The inter-State Labour Conference decided against a National Government despite all the entreaties of the Press and of the Government, but it was never at any time against an all-out war effort. True, too, that while there was this unanimity between leaders, when the National Security Act was passed in June, 1939, there was characteristic dissension and obstruction amongst some Labour Members, but this in no way affected the fact that it was as one people that Australia faced the war.

Of course, as in Britain, there were labour troubles, disputes, industrial unrest, many cases of inefficiency, slackness, bad judgment and mistakes among the immense number of details necessary to the war effort, a great deal of bickering at times, discontent expressing itself hotly in several strikes; but viewed in their correct perspective, these were but small frothings on a laudable, titanic achievement wrought by the rank-and-file workers of the nation.

Causes for unrest, really, were no more difficult to find than they were in Britain. They arose chiefly from the precipitate switch-over of industry from peace-time to war-time conditions. The pace required in the armaments race was so quick that it led to friction between employees and employers, both of whom were trying to understand the true nature of the task and to adjust themselves and their demands to the new conditions. Higher wages, hours, overtime, holiday leave, preference, guarantee of rights—all played a part. Each question could have its importance underlined by the workers using the strike weapon.

Rightly, the workers demanded a fair deal in return for putting their backs unsparingly into the task. On the whole they got it. Concession followed concession; substantial wage increases were allowed; the entire arbitration machinery was overhauled; special tribunals were established to deal with grievances.

Elder Statesman

As Australia's one and only elder statesman, William Morris Hughes is regarded by most Australians, and by a great many people abroad, as an institution. They call him "The Little Digger" and "Little Old Billy", and if you know Australians and their pride in their soldiers, and if you remember that Mr. Hughes is not a native, but a Welshman, you will have a sound yardstick with which to measure the deep affection in which the nation holds this dogged, brilliant, remarkable little nut of a man.

"Speak to him in Welsh, David!" was the caption Low, the celebrated New Zealander, gave to his famous cartoon during the Great War which showed William Hughes and David Lloyd George—the one Prime Minister of Britain, the other of Australia—dancing wildly on top of the Cabinet table, shouting madly at each other. Low gave him a whole book of cartoons to himself; called it the "Billy Book".

Again and again the people have turned to this seventy-seven-year-old Minister to crystallise their thoughts for them, to express crisply in his rasping, fearless voice, known in a good many capitals of the world, what they think about things in the international field. He never fails them. He is always salty, robust, luminous. Ever since the Great War he has been on the job of guarding Australia's interests, or seeing that they were guarded.

As active as Mr. Lloyd George, his compatriot, he is not a whit less forceful, penetrative or downright. Like so mild-mannered a man as the late Lord Balfour, he is not perpetually given to speaking of mere "terminological inexactitudes";

and he would heartily agree with Professor R. W. Seton-Watson that while we have a Victorian dislike for the practice of calling a spade a bloody shovel, it is not necessary to go to the opposite extreme of calling it an agricultural implement. He has never worn glasses in his life. His brown eyes sparkle and give an impression of vigour. There is always about this restless character an impression of easy supremacy : you feel he could cope with anyone, by all means including Hitler.

No other house in Australia has as many testimonials, illuminated addresses, official photographs as his. Pride of place is given to a print of the painting depicting the signing of the Treaty of Versailles, with him, as Australia's leader, in the middle. Decorating his walls, too, is the first wireless message sent between Britain and Australia. He sent it.

He will tell you that his silver canteen is the largest in Australia : it is, and it ought to be. Citizens of Sheffield, where they make them, gave it to him when they made him a freeman of the city. He is also a freeman of London, Glasgow and a dozen other cities in the United Kingdom. Educated at Llandudno Grammar School, Wales, and St. Stephen's Church of England Grammar School, Westminster, he went to Australia when he was twenty. He has been a Member of the House of Representatives since 1901 : for more than thirty years he has been an outstanding personality, frequently displaying statesmanship of a high order. It was he who at Versailles secured the Mandated Territories for Australia. Seasoned English and American commentators said he was a match for fiery Clemenceau, Lloyd George and Woodrow Wilson.

A grand, picturesque, alert figure, the only original member remaining in the Commonwealth Parliament, he is perhaps the best-loved man in the public life of the nation.

Emissaries

Adroit, skilful, poised, a diplomat to the tips of his slim fingers, Stanley Melbourne Bruce, Australia's High Commissioner in London, who for seven years was Prime Minister, is one of the, best-known diplomats in Britain. He has been sitting in a richly sombre *salon* in the Strand since 1932 : his second term will run out in 1944. Arm-chair critics and political enemies at home used to say a Cambridge education and a long association with officials in Whitehall had Anglicised him. They were talking the sheerest poppycock, as they would admit if they could chat privately with officials in Whitehall, or, talking with politicians in the Lobbies of the Commons, hear how critical "that man Bruce" can be of British

officialdom if it fails instantly to give as much concentration and attention as he thinks necessary in his country's interests to this or that phase of any subject directly affecting Australia, perhaps, in its larger aspects, the Empire.

A polished product of travel, wide experience and the Australian political arena, there is about Bruce a silken elegance which no other Australian Government official possesses.

True, he made his political errors, like the best of politicians everywhere; but his name shines. When some of the inner, most secret, history of the First Total War is bared in the memoirs of Churchill, Eden or Halifax or Beaverbrook, Whitehall wiseacres believe "S.M.B." will appear as a constructive, purposeful observer. Australians in London say he is irreplaceable : others, too, are sure of it.

A friend of Bruce, Richard G. Casey, whom the lighter London papers say can pass in London as a Guardsman, a film star or Mr. Anthony Eden's brother, and who also has an effective political record, was the first Australian Minister appointed to Washington. Generally, it is tipped that he will succeed Mr. Bruce in London. In telling you that it is to his credit already that he has put Australia on the map so far as Americans are concerned, his friends point to the fact that more columns about Australia have appeared in the American Press, and in American weeklies, since Mr. Casey arrived in Washington in 1940 than appeared in the previous five years.

Up to that time he had been, beginning in 1931, Member of Parliament, Assistant Treasurer, Minister in Charge of Development, and Minister of Supply and Munitions. A soldier, like Mr. Bruce, he served with the A.I.F. in Gallipoli, France : decorated.

Officially he rubbed shoulders with Whitehall first after 1924 when he was appointed to Australia House, as Liaison Officer to the British Government. Later he was attached to the Foreign Office and to the Imperial Defence Committee.

Enviably tailored though Mr. Casey always is, and on official occasions full of poise, he knows how to relax. This quickly won him the esteem of the hard-bitten, common-sense corps of American newspaper men. Like Lord Lothian, who now and again lolled back in his chair in his shirt-sleeves at Press conferences, stroking a black cat perched on his shoulder, Mr. Casey can be unconventional. He met his Prime Minister at New York aerodrome in May, 1941, hatless, wearing an open jacket, tie blowing over his shoulder, a newspaper jammed in one hand. He is an engineer by profession and has a somewhat precise mind: his ability to

analyse a subject is rated high. "A man with a considerable future," they say.

Spare, tall, somewhat angular, Sir John Latham, caustic politician, fine university lecturer in logic, philosophy and law, and respected, sound Chief Justice of the High Court, Australia's first Minister to Tokyo, arrived in Japan in 1940. He had been there before. As head of an Australian Government Eastern "goodwill" mission he toured China and Japan in 1934. Some people refer to him as the Simon of the Pacific: but this can only be because he is a great lawyer, a politician, and has something of the same rather dry, ascetic look. Otherwise the two Sir Johns are poles apart in more important senses than the purely geographical.

Sir John Simon, graded as the greatest lawyer in modern England, is dismal politically. He was one of the most unpopular Foreign Ministers Britain ever had. "About no other man in English public life, except MacDonald, is there such a miscellany of cruel legends," says John Gunther.

About few people in Australia are so many popular and sincerely flattering things said as there are about Latham. Sir John Simon's crowning disaster as a Government Minister was considered to be his handling of the Japanese case at Geneva when China was pleading during the Manchurian crisis. Matsuoka will never be able to say to friends about Latham what he said about Simon: that in a quarter of an hour Sir John Simon had said what he had been trying to express for weeks!

When Australia's first Minister to China, the Hon. Sir Frederick William Eggleston, was appointed, at the age of 66, in July, 1941, the Minister of External Affairs commented: "This is a significant development in our foreign policy."

In temperament, philosophy and erudition he is admirably suited as Australia's representative. A lawyer, a soldier who became a member of the Australian delegation at the Paris Peace Conference in 1919, he is, besides, rich in Parliamentary experience. Probably he knows as much about Pacific affairs as anyone in the Empire, certainly vastly more than most. He was chairman of the Australian delegation to the Institute of Pacific Relations Conference at Honolulu, 1927, at Kyoto, 1929, and at Yosemite, 1936, and is an authoritative writer on Pacific Affairs.

A charming indication of his gentle nature is found in the ways in which he seeks recreation: gardening and bowls. The philosophic Chinese must smile reflectively in happy understanding.

Man With Secrets

Secretary of the Department of Defence Co-ordination, Mr.

Frederick G. Shedden, has been called by Australian columnists "the Hankey of Australia" because he knows more intimate details about the Commonwealth's defence than any other civilian. He was born at Kyneton, 50 miles from Melbourne, in 1893, and was educated at the Kyneton Grammar School, and the universities of Melbourne and London.

He was sixteen when he entered the Commonwealth Public Service as a clerk in the Defence Department; by 1914 he had risen to the position of Military Accountant. At the outbreak of the 1914-18 war, when he was studying law subjects as a part-time interest, he volunteered for service with the A.I.F. At the end of the war he held a commission.

Back in the Defence Department, he attracted the attention of Sir William Glasgow, then Minister for Defence and now Australian High Commissioner to Canada. In 1927 he was selected for attendance and for research at the London School of Economics and the Imperial Defence College. At the end of a brilliant course at the Imperial Defence College, he was retained by the Commandant as a lecturer. In the following year he was attached to the War Office and the British Treasury.

Returning to Australia, he was appointed secretary of the newly established Defence Committee. In 1932 he was adviser to the Australian Delegation to the Disarmament Conference; for two years he was attached to the British Cabinet Office and the Committee of Imperial Defence. In 1933 he attended the World Economic Conference, and the Imperial Defence Conference, at Wellington in the same year. He became Secretary for Defence in 1937 and attended his first Imperial Conference as adviser. When the War Cabinet was formed in 1939, it was Shedden who became its secretary; he also became Secretary for Defence Co-ordination when the Service Departments were divided. Now he is a civil member of the Defence Committee.

Although he plays tennis and golf, his work is his hobby.

Miscellany

Australia is practically equivalent in size to the United States of America; twenty-five times greater than Britain and Ireland, and three-quarters the size of all Europe, Australia covers an area of 2,974,581 square miles.

The standard of living in Australia is high, the cost of living comparatively low.

Sport is Hereditary.

In the Far North of Australia (the Northern Territory has an area of 523,629 square miles) there are camel trains, wild buffalo, crocodiles, swamps and desert. To a great extent

DARTS IN THE
DESERT

"Let's show you how
it's done first," said
these troops to a
group of Arabs who
wanted to try their
hand at the game.





MR. PETER ERASER, AS PRIME MINISTER OF NEW ZEALAND

He went to Britain (June to August 1941) to get first-hand information about the War effort in the heart of the Empire. An English officer, at the South-Eastern Command, is explaining to him the working of an anti-tank gun.

the North is undeveloped; the population (white) small, about 6,000; the Administrator of the North resides at Darwin.

Primary education in national schools throughout the country is free, secular and compulsory up to the age of 14.

The cost of a house varies from, say, £800 to £1600 for the average person. Many are dearer.

In most industries basic wages are fixed by Federal and State tribunals.

Australian industries are protected by a Customs tariff which imposes *ad valorem* and fixed rate duties.

Hardwoods are remarkable. Jarrah, a eucalypt of Western Australia, is one of the few white-ant-resisting timbers in the world. But ironbark and grey box timbers offer an even greater resistance. A dismantled ship, which had sailed the seas for thirty years, was found to be planked with Western Australian karri. So strong was it still that it was sawn into blocks and used for street paving.

Australia produces more than 150,000,000 lb. of dried fruits a year. She has considerably more than 100,000 acres of vineyards, yielding approximately 17,000,000 gallons of wine annually.

Tobacco has been cultivated commercially in a number of places.

Understood to be one of the largest cattle-stations in the world, an exceptional lease in North Australia occupies nearly 11,000 square miles.

Canberra—Australia's Washington—is built on the stock runs of a few years ago.

Great Barrier Reef, off the coast of Queensland, stretching for 1,000 miles, is accepted by scientists as one of the marine wonders of the world.

Australia is the world's oldest continent.

Full-blooded aborigines number approximately 60,000. Thousands are nomadic, living in remote areas. Some still live in the primitive style of the Stone Age, using the fire-stick, stone-knife and tomahawk.

As a nation, Australia was cradled in the colony of New South Wales when, in 1788, Governor Captain Arthur Phillip sailed into Botany Bay with eleven ships and a personnel of 1,000 odd.

Chapter X

New Zealand Goes To It

" The sun doth gild our armour; up, my lords ! "

—King Henry V.

" There is nothing too much for us to do, and if there is anything more we can do within our resources then it will be done."

—Peter Fraser, 1941.

POLITICALLY, New Zealand distinguished herself by being the only country in the Empire to face the ordeal of the greatest war in history with a Labour Government. She also has the most unique War Cabinet. Students of government and sociology will find nothing strange in this, because New Zealand, like Australia, has always been one of the most interesting fields for observation, just as she has been in her approach to economics. But as if to make the test sterner still, it was only the second time in New Zealand's history that the people had experimented with Labour in control, the first occasion being the Parliamentary term immediately preceding it. For the General Election of 1935 resulted, for the first time, in the return of Labour.

Spotlight on Experiment

Crisp, shrewd, far-sighted Michael Joseph Savage, beaming and ruffling his grey hair in excitement that night when all the city and town squares blazed with light, had the happiest day of his life. It was a great feat: the Press, as on the second occasion, was practically unanimously against Labour. To vote for the experiment of a Labour Government was to vote against the advice of tried Ministers and against a sound Press, deservedly high in reputation, in which the public had great trust. None the less the public decided to experiment.

Largely, the Election turned on the management of the Dominion's affairs during the depression of 1930-34. The severity of unemployment, also the plight of farmers through ruinous and uncertain prices for their products, put the Labour Opposition in a strong critical position. Their promise of guaranteed prices on farm produce made a particularly strong appeal in rural areas, but the electorate, as

a whole, might be said to have voted against the depression. Labour won fifty-three seats out of a total of eighty in the House of Representatives: when two Maori Independents joined the Government side they gave a substantial majority of fifty-five against an Opposition and Independent total of twenty-five.

Confounding the critics, the regular triennial election, held in 1938, confirmed Labour in office for a second term. In this contest their record of three years' progressive administration, combined with prosperity, stood them in good stead. So far as one issue was singled out, it was the Government's Social Security Plan promising comprehensive pension and medical provision for the whole population. Not only did the Government retain their overwhelming majority in membership of the House of Representatives; their percentage of the popular vote rose from forty-six to fifty-six. When in April, 1940, Mr. Savage died, he was succeeded by Mr. Peter Fraser, his deputy.

Unique War Cabinet

The Opposition comprises the remnants of the Liberal Party and the Conservative (latterly known as Reform) Party, the former having mainly urban support, inclining to high tariff protection, while the latter was a rural low-tariff party. In 1931 they joined in a Coalition Government, suffering defeat in 1935. After that they more or less permanently merged into the Nationalist Party. For a time Mr. Adam Hamilton was leader of the Opposition. In 1940 he and the Right Honourable J. G. Coates, a former Prime Minister, joined three Members of the Labour Government—Messrs. Fraser, Nash and Jones—in a War Cabinet.

This body has responsibility in matters relating to New Zealand's war effort and, odd as it sounds, functions quite satisfactorily alongside the regular Cabinet. Apart from the war effort the War Cabinet has, however, no responsibility in the affairs of the country. In the sphere of finance, for example, it was soon enough made clear that the War Cabinet had responsibility in the spending but not in the raising of money.

A certain lack of unity within the larger Government Party, illustrated by the expulsion of Mr. J. A. Lee (founder of the Democratic Labour Party), was at least balanced by dissent in the Nationalist Party. Mr. Adam Hamilton was deposed from the leadership and Mr. S. G. Holland took his place. Mr. Hamilton and Mr. Coates remain members of the War Cabinet.

The Opposition criticise the War Cabinet, on the ground—

which indeed seems valid—that it is not an adequate Coalition vested with responsibility and power. They press for a Coalition Cabinet in the complete sense. Mr. Holland, criticising it, promised that if his party were returned to power in the General Election, due at the end of 1941, he would proceed to form a Coalition Government with full representation of the Labour Opposition—a move of some political astuteness. It meant that the undoubted sentiment in favour of a Coalition Cabinet would be exploited to the advantage of the Nationalist Opposition. In effect, Mr. Holland was saying in the middle of 1941, in preparation for the Election: "Vote for Holland—and National Government. Vote for Holland—and get rid of party politics." It was a piece of advice a great many people were inclined to accept as sound.

Nevertheless, within a few weeks of the return to Wellington of Mr. Fraser, negotiations were proceeding between the political parties in order to find a way out of the apparent *impasse*. On October 15th it was announced that to avoid disturbance of national unity in the war effort, a General Election would not be held in 1941 and that the life of Parliament had been extended to November 1st, 1942. It was a decision which had been reached after a consultation between the Prime Minister and the Leader of the Opposition.

Indeed, in moving the second reading of the Bill to extend the life of Parliament—which was passed without a division—Mr. Fraser was able to say that a great majority of people did not desire an election, which would arouse antagonism and cause dissension between those who were working wholeheartedly and unitedly in the war effort. Mr. Holland supported the Bill, but he submitted that it would have been desirable also to form a non-party Government for the period of the war. Because of this he was glad to accept the Prime Minister's assurance that he would use his influence to reduce party legislation to a minimum.

The solution was, in fact, one upon which Mr. Fraser was congratulated, for he had persistently sought a way out of a difficulty which was not eased by the Labour caucus's unwillingness to form a National Government.

The Ministry is as follows (October, 1941):—

Rt. Hon. Peter Fraser :	Prime Minister.
Hon. Walter Nash :	Minister of Finance and Customs.
Hon. D. G. Sullivan :	Minister of Munitions and Supply,
Hon. Robert Semple :	Minister of Railways, Marine and National Service.

Hon. W. E. Parry :	Minister of Internal Affairs.
Hon. P. C. Webb :	Minister of Labour and Mines and Postmaster General.
Hon. H. T. Armstrong :	Minister of Public Works.
Hon. H. G. R. Mason :	Minister of Education and Justice, and Attorney General.
Hon. F. Jones :	Minister of Defence.
Hon. F. Langstone :	Minister of Lands and External Affairs.
Hon. J. G. Barclay :	Minister of Marketing and Agri- culture.
Hon. A. H. Nordmeyer :	Minister of Health.
Hon. D. Wilson :	Minister in charge of Broadcasting.
Hon. P. K. Paieka :	Minister for Native Affairs.

If Hitler Could Have Known

In the dark, shadowy loveliness of the New Zealand winter of 1940 the people encouraged their Labour Government to pass in May the Emergency Regulations Bill, which gave the State power to control the services and property of every person. Only twelve days after the outbreak of war the whole man-power and resources of New Zealand were organised for the protection of the country and for the defence of Britain. In an effort that revolutionised their entire mode of life, they still had time for thought for others : in May, 1941, weighed down with taxes as they were, the people, for instance, found £10,000 for the relief of distress among Poles in England, which was presented on behalf of the New Zealand National Patriotic Fund Board by their popular High Commissioner in London, shrewd, hearty Mr. W. J. Jordan. In fact, they had set themselves the task of collecting £1,000,000 for patriotic purposes—for providing for the welfare and comfort of New Zealand forces at home and abroad, for helping rehabilitation of the men after the war; for contributions to deserving cases in Britain and elsewhere arising out of the war. By the end of the second year almost the total had been collected !

A thousand pities the Nazis, sneering at the British handling of coloured races, had not marked well the possibility of this significant spectacle : the war was only two days old when from his seat in Parliament up rose proud Mr. E. T. Tirikatene, a full-blooded Maori, a true representative of the old, brave fighting Maori race, to declare that many Maori returned soldiers, who fought in the Great War, and many of the younger Maoris were anxious to see the re-establishment of the Maori Pioneer Battalion which served in 1914-18,

The establishment of such a battalion, he cried, would be an inspiration to the Maoris, in whose blood ran the fighting traditions of their ancestors.

New Zealand is separated from Australia by 1,200 miles of what is sometimes described as the most savage, turbulent stretch of sea in the world. But when one looks at the map, it appears as an off-shoot of Australia. Nevertheless, the two countries are entirely dissimilar. Australia is a land of burning sunshine and arid distances; New Zealand is cool, fertile and well-watered. Australia is a land of wide plains; the islands of New Zealand are rugged and intersected by great mountain ranges. Even the trees and grasses of New Zealand have no similarity to those of the neighbouring continent; the birds and animals are no less different.

New Zealand, for example, alone of any considerable land mass throughout the world, has no indigenous land animals (mammals), with the exception of two species of bats. Nor has it any snakes, while the most striking of its birds, though winged, is unable to fly. Again, whereas the aboriginal population of Australia is extremely primitive, New Zealand is the home of an attractive native people, the Maoris, who long before the coming of the white man showed a considerable degree of social development, and who to-day provide representatives in the learned professions and in the Government of the country.

Progress

The history of New Zealand is more recent even than that of Australia, and a bare hundred years ago the country was completely uninhabited by European people save for some thousand whalers, timber-getters and missionaries. Settlement of the country was begun in 1840, when, with the consent of the Maori chiefs, and indeed at their request, British sovereignty was proclaimed over the whole country. At the same time the first shipments of colonists arrived from England and Scotland and farming settlements were established in both the north and south islands. For the next twenty years the population grew slowly, but, following the discovery of gold in 1860, there was a rapid influx, and within twenty years the population had increased fivefold.

For the next fifty years to 1930 New Zealand's population, both from natural increase and immigration, grew as rapidly as any in the world. To-day New Zealand is the home of a flourishing white population of over a million and a half, and except in the rugged mountain region it is covered by the thousands of fertile farms and grazing lands which have transformed it into one of the most productive agricultural

areas in the world. Once again, in the distribution of its population, New Zealand shows marked contrast to Australia, since whereas in the latter country over half the population is found in great cities and industrial areas, in New Zealand there are no large cities, and the population and the whole economy of the islands remain predominantly agricultural in character.

Economic Position

Although the war has disturbed New Zealand's economic position, the paramount importance of keeping up production to meet the demands of the Mother Country—New Zealanders, unlike Australians, invariably refer to Britain as "the Mother Country"—has been realised by the whole community; and while 70,000 men (out of a total population of just over 1½ millions) have been withdrawn from industry for the Expeditionary Force, Navy and Air Force, production has been increased. The capacity of land being farmed in 1941 is at peak point in New Zealand's history, the total area under cultivation being a record. Mechanised farm power has been more than doubled over the past ten years, the number of tractors in use being over 11,000, representing 203,000 horse-power.

Outstanding feature of New Zealand's economy is the predominating importance of the pastoral industries. For pastoral pursuits New Zealand has the ideal climate, and is thus eminently suited to supplying the needs of an industrialised and urbanised Great Britain, with her demand for raw materials and foodstuffs. New Zealand is the country with the greatest oversea trade per head in the world: in addition to being the world's greatest exporter of frozen mutton and lamb, she is an important wool producer, and the largest exporter of dairy produce.

New Zealand as a whole has never been better equipped to produce record quantities of foodstuffs, and the determination of the people to send to the United Kingdom in her hour of need every pound of foodstuff able to be shipped is reflected in the trend of trade figures, exports in 1940 reaching a new high record.

Exports £(N.Z.).			Imports £(N.Z.).		
1936	.	56,752,000	1936	.	44,259,000
1937	.	66,713,000	1937	.	56,161,000
1938	.	58,376,000	1938	.	55,422,000
1939	.	58,009,000	1939	.	49,387,000
1940	.	73,741,000	1940	.	48,998,000

Britain is buying all the exportable surpluses of New Zealand wolfram. The whole of the wool-clip has been

bought for the period of the war and one year after at approximately the average of the three pre-war years' price-level ($12\frac{1}{4}d$). Britain has arranged also to buy butter, cheese, wool, lamb and mutton and other frozen meat. With fewer refrigerated ships available, of course, the trouble, from the start, was how to get most of it to Britain's ports.

Dairy Production in 1942

The growth of the dairying industry over the past twenty years is the most important single feature in the economic development of the Dominion. In the season ending July, 1941, dairy production for export to the United Kingdom reached approximately 130,000 tons of butter, 118,000 tons of cheese. New Zealand dairy factories, almost entirely co-operative in organisation, unsurpassed in efficiency by any in the world, recently showed their ability to adapt themselves to new conditions in the change-over from butter-making to cheese-making to meet the new war-time demands of the United Kingdom. The goal to be reached in the 1941-42 production season is 160,000 tons of cheese for Britain.

New Zealand, with its export economy, is affected more than most countries by world price movements. An aim of the Labour Government is to organise a production and marketing system which, while allowing production to expand so long as any important human want remains unsatisfied, will ensure that expansion of production does not ruin the producer by catastrophic price falls. To this end a system of guaranteed prices to dairy-farmers and others was introduced. It has operated since 1936 with outstanding success.

The spirit of enterprising co-operation characterising New Zealand farmers under war conditions is, perhaps, as well shown in the introduction of a new item of production to meet an urgent request from the United Kingdom Government as in anything else. Linen-flax growing was started in 1940, and at the end of this first experimental season high praise was expressed for the satisfactory quality of the New Zealand product. The sowing of 25,000 tons of linen flax for British war purposes, compared with 14,000 tons in 1940, was decided for the 1941-42 season. Crops have been sold to the United Kingdom Government for the war period and one year thereafter.

Government's Powers of Control

A substantial development of manufacturing industries has taken place since the war, and many new factories have been erected in the last year. Factories making war material are working at maximum capacity. To illustrate: The

Government exercises a far greater control over the economic and social welfare of the community than exists in Great Britain. It recognises its responsibility for the co-ordination and direction of economic activity, and exercises control in the fields of finance, marketing, wages, transport and communications, medical and health services, education, pensions, etc.

There is, of course, a strong tradition of State activity in New Zealand, each successive government tending to take a larger share in the control of industrial life and everyday matters; indeed, it has been said that democracy in New Zealand has come to look upon the State as a vast public utility whose function it is to provide for the welfare of the people rather than to show a profit.

In his address to the New Zealand Labour Conference on April 15, 1941, Mr. Fraser said that the three cardinal points of the Government's economic policy were to meet war needs in men, materials and financial resources. The Government had to keep the every-day economic life of the community going so that the burden of the war could be borne, and to recognise always the need for meeting these demands, which will inevitably involve sacrifices from all if the standard of living is to be maintained at a reasonable minimum.

In its efforts to avoid inflation, the Government has been successful, and the cost of living on the all prices index for the month of April, 1941, shows an increase of only 6.2 per cent, as compared with the last pre-war month, August, 1939 (28 per cent, in Great Britain). This affords an excellent illustration of the effectiveness of Government control.

Labour's Record

Labour, claiming a fine record of achievement since its election in November, 1935, will tell you that it has handsomely fulfilled election promises and give you this brief summary of its achievements :—

Agriculture: Organisation of a system of marketing of farm produce which operates to the best interests of the whole community, and the institution of the guaranteed price system to abolish the speculative nature of the farmer's income. The establishment of a minimum wage for farm workers and improvements in working conditions on farms to ensure a steady supply of farm labour. Re-constitution of the State Advances Corporation—State credit for loans to farmers and others.

Industry: Establishment of a minimum wage for adult workers of £3 16s. a week and restoration of the

powers of the Arbitration Court. Collective bargaining between employers and workers' organisations on compulsory basis restored. Wages awarded by the Court to industrial and other workers have been far in excess of this minimum wage, and New Zealand industry has shown ability to pay these increased wages.

Education: Re-organisation of the education system to provide maximum possibilities for advancement to children of the Dominion.

Health and Pensions: A system of health insurance and universal superannuation established by the Social Security Act, which aims at providing as generously as possible for all persons who have been deprived of the power to obtain a reasonable livelihood through age, illness, unemployment, widowhood or other misfortune, and at the same time to provide medical, hospital, maternity and pharmaceutical benefits to all Dominion residents on an insurance basis, deductions from weekly wages during working life being made for the purpose.

Finance: The first Act of the Labour Government was to assume control of the central credit system of the Dominion—the Reserve Bank of New Zealand—and thus to ensure the maximum utilisation and distribution of the resources of the Dominion.

Production and Unemployment: Faced with abnormally large unemployment figures after the depression of 1930-35, the Government set itself the task of reorganising productive development through Public Works assistance to local authorities, and the fostering of secondary industries to give the Dominion a more balanced economy.

International Affairs: Up to the outbreak of war the cardinal points of New Zealand international policy were the support of the Covenant of the League of Nations for avoidance of war and maintenance of peace, and the fostering of closer relationships between New Zealand and the countries of the British Commonwealth. The New Zealand High Commissioner in the United Kingdom, Mr. W. J. Jordan, who has acted as New Zealand's representative at the League of Nations, has not hesitated to condemn aggression in Spain, China and Abyssinia and to urge support for countries suffering violations of territory. The "appeasement" policy never found favour with the New Zealand Government or with the New Zealand people.

Education and Health

The general level of education in New Zealand is comparatively high, owing to the fine system of free and compulsory State education brought in by the Education Act, 1877. However, a too rigid economy practised by the previous Government during the depression years 1930-35 left what Labour calls "a legacy of trouble". School buildings were out of date and many of them unhygienic, and equipment hopelessly inadequate for modern needs. There was a serious shortage of teachers, arising out of the closing during the depression years of two out of the four teachers' training colleges in the Dominion; schools had been closed to the five-year-olds during the depression; grants to the Free Kindergarten Association reduced; and grants to the Workers' Educational Association and to the university students abolished.

The Labour Government's first actions in the field of education were to re-open the schools to the five-year-olds, re-open the teachers' training colleges, and increase grants to students while in training, restore the university bursaries on the higher leaving certificate qualification; to restore and increase the grants to the Free Kindergarten Association and to the Workers' Educational Association; launch an extensive rebuilding programme; make grants to provide equipment following best modern lines—school libraries, radios, film projectors and films, supplies of free textbooks for children whose parents were unable to provide them, and so on—and to try to secure for the country child an education equal to that of the city child by consolidating small rural schools into larger units with better staffing and facilities.

Has anything influenced health and hospital administration more than the Social Security Act, 1938? Labour says nothing has. Not everyone agrees. A unique feature of the national health insurance scheme embodied in the Act is that the benefits under the Act—pharmaceutical, maternity, hospital and supplementary—are available to all persons ordinarily resident in New Zealand, without regard to the economic status, race or nationality, or to period of residence in the Dominion.

Inauguration of such a comprehensive scheme of State health services involved the negotiation of arrangements with hospitals, doctors, chemists, nurses and others; except in the case of the institution of the general practitioner service, where very strong opposition from the New Zealand Branch of the British Medical Association to the "universal" character of the scheme was encountered, all these arrangements have been concluded.

Vital statistics for 1940 reflected a satisfactory condition

of affairs : for the fifth year in succession the birth rate shows an increase over the previous years. Figures for 1940 show an increase of 2·47 per 1,000—births (per thousand of population) in 1939 being 1873, as compared with 21·20 in 1940, the highest since 1925. A new low record infant mortality rate of 30·38 per 1,000 live births was attained in 1940, which in itself is an earnest of the success of the maternity services scheme under the Social Security Act.

Critics

The Opposition has always claimed that it has been fairly generous to some of the legislation of the Government. Not that the Government has escaped criticism by the Nationalists for its experiments in economic policy. Frequently it has been charged with being obsessed with the necessity for economic planning under autocratic Ministerial control. When, a bare five weeks after the declaration of war, Parliament was considering the Reserve Bank of New Zealand Amendment Act, the leader of the Opposition (Mr. Hamilton)—a trifle too dramatically perhaps, but it barbed his point—told the Government what he thought it had forgotten, that New Zealanders would not submit to autocratic dictatorship, the very thing Britain was fighting at the present time! To drive home the point, he added that there were no other countries except Germany and Russia that had the kind of control over their Reserve Banks that the Government was taking.

Many people took the same line, using this move on the Government's part to try to reveal it to the public as a Government which had been having an hilarious time during the preceding four years, living on the savings and reserves that it had inherited, and which was then being faced with the day of reckoning. Doom was seen to be heralding itself ominously with the crash of some of the props supporting the internal structure. Real wealth, it was said by the critics, was obviously not available in the desired quantity, so the Government intended to create money, and, in doing so, imagined that it was creating wealth. In short, it was charged with a readiness to adopt a back-door method of trying to get "easy money" which was simply a method of duping the people, with unjust, cruel and dangerous consequences.

To all of which the Government retorted that it had not the slightest intention of doing anything of the sort mentioned by the critics, who were doing far more to shake the confidence of the people than the Government's measure could possibly do. Mr. Fraser tried to turn the attack by agreeing that

there were difficulties in regard to overseas funds, but internally he knew of no difficulty or of any enterprises needing financing that were not financed. True, he said, there were dangers attaching to the powers for controlling the credit resources of the country (which were given in the Bill), but there were dangers attaching to the operation of any powers, and he could not see that power over finance was fundamentally any more dangerous than the power over life and liberty of the citizens of the country. The Government got its way, but not with everyone's blessing.

In assessing the value of the Labour Government, and in preparation for the General Election, due to take place at the end of 1941, critics, including the newspapers, believed that Labour had been in office too long and that, after a brilliant start, it was then only muddling along with no clear idea of what it wanted to do, except socialise much of the country in the quickest possible time. Local-body elections held throughout the Dominion in May showed that there was a definite swing away from Labour. It was accepted that those results probably marked the end of that sudden leftward swing of the political pendulum which began with the General Election of 1935. At least, it was taken as an indication of a slackening in the people's enthusiasm for Labour. An alternative to a General Election was the formation of a National Government, a really full union with the Opposition, which Labour had refused to grant, a fact which earned the Government some bitter criticism on the ground that it was "clinging to office on the narrow raft of sectionalism", as the *New Zealand Herald* declared.

On one occasion a Government spokesman was unwise enough to remark that few people realised the issues at stake in the war. The critics retorted that if this was so, the Government was wholly to blame for not discouraging the belief that the war could be fought without a really all-in effort, that peace-time policies and expenditure need not be wholly shelved, that peace-time living standards could be maintained, that the war was not so grave that Social Security medical benefits could not be forced upon a hard-working medical profession, that there was no need to work more than forty hours a week, that an all-in effort did not call for an all-in Government, and that there was not the slightest reason for disturbing ordinary public holidays. [Britain observed August Bank Holiday : 50,000 people attended the Derby at Newmarket, 1941.]

Here and there, it was agreed by everyone, the Government had done brilliantly, as with the establishment of the linen-flax industry; but at the end of the second year of war it

was being said by practically every metropolitan newspaper in the Dominion that the quality of government had deteriorated, and the gap between intentions and results had become alarmingly wide.

Pungently, *The Press*, Christchurch, concluded :

" . . . since the passing of the Political Disabilities Removal Act of 1936 and the introduction of compulsory unionism, the power and the wealth of the Labour machine have increased enormously. No one can obtain work in any industry without becoming a unionist, and no one (a few 'white-collar' occupations excepted) can become a unionist without contributing financially to the support of the Labour Party. After five years in power, nowever, the Labour Party is beginning to show symptoms of internal decay.

" The very efficiency of the Party's machinery for controlling the electorate has begun to destroy its soul; a system of electing officers and selecting candidates which is only nominally democratic has delivered it over to the control of a small oligarchy; and many of the rank and file have become restive under the enforcement of narrow standards of political orthodoxy.

" But this is only part of the story. The Labour Party has chosen to link local politics with Party politics, notwithstanding that policies appropriate to national politics have no real relevance to the problems and issues of local government. . . .

" The Labour Government of 1941 is not the Labour Government of 1936. A bold, energetic Cabinet, certain (and at times disastrously certain) of the course it was steering, has become a not very homogeneous group of ageing politicians, increasingly incapable of making decisions, garrulously evasive on most policy issues, and increasingly deferential to the small group of trade union leaders which controls the Labour Party and the Federation of Labour."

Broadly, this sort of criticism was pretty universal among the Conservatives. They maintained that the Labour Party was not losing ground where it appeared to be losing it, because the electorate could be expected to tend to become more conservative in war-time [in Britain and Australia, Labour actually gained in influence]. They said it was losing because it was more concerned with the technique of perpetuating its own political power than with the urgent problems which confront democracy in war-time. No one pretended that **there** was any serious disagreement, outside the make-believe

of party politics, over the measures which are necessary to deal with the war situation.

Surprise

How does New Zealand's war effort compare with Australia's? Well-known Australian political journalists, like R. B. Leonard, of *The Herald*, Melbourne, investigating New Zealand's effort, reached interesting conclusions. Leonard found that "that attitude of comfortable complacency which, unfortunately, is still evident among some sections of the Australian community, has been banished from the New Zealand scene. To-day, every citizen is playing some part in the Dominion's war effort."

He found that decisions which the Labour Party in Australia would oppose violently had been implemented by a Labour Government in New Zealand. Outstanding among these is the law conscripting man-power for service either with the expeditionary force overseas or the Territorial force at home.

Conscription is one of the most unpopular political issues in Australia, but in New Zealand it is a military system which produces little more than a ripple of hostility. Labour opposed conscription at the last election, but a Labour Government now sponsors the ballot system by which men are called up for military service. In May only single men were affected, but ballots for married men were being prepared before the end of 1941.

In New Zealand there is no recruiting as Australia knows it. The rallies in Martin Place, Sydney, and the daily band performances outside Melbourne Town Hall are Commonwealth methods of stimulating army-consciousness—a gusty, pleasant American touch about them. Such devices are unnecessary in New Zealand, where every fit man within specific age groups is liable for service, says Leonard, surprised.

Army

Major-General Sir John Duigan, Chief of the General Staff, New Zealand Military Forces, retired in May, 1941, on account of ill-health. His successor was Major-General E. Puttick. During 1941, the United Kingdom Government lent the services of Lieutenant-General Sir Guy Williams to advise New Zealand on re-organisation of the Dominion's Military Forces. The New Zealand Army includes the Permanent Force, the Territorial Force, the National Military Reserve, the Home Guard and the Expeditionary Force, which was formed for service abroad. Compulsory military training was introduced in June, 1940. Men are called up by ballot in separate categories for service at home and abroad

Maoris formed their own unit, manned and officered by men of their own race. Up to July, 1940, when voluntary recruiting ceased, over 40 per cent, of the Maoris of eligible age had enlisted. At the end of the first two years, about 50,000 men of the New Zealand Expeditionary Force were overseas. About 135,000 others were available for Home Defence, including the Home Guard, a system similar to Britain's.

The first and only Dominion unit to be raised in the United Kingdom was an anti-tank battery, formed shortly after the outbreak of war, of New Zealanders volunteering there. The battery was trained in England, then placed at the British Government's disposal, with the condition that the battery would later be released to join the New Zealand forces. Units of the Expeditionary Force sent from New Zealand served for a time in Britain. The first contingent, which included a Maori battalion, arrived in June, 1940. Troops later left, arriving in the Middle East early in 1941. Contingents of the New Zealand Expeditionary Force first arrived in the Middle East in February, 1940.

Navy

On September 10th, 1941, it was announced in the New Zealand Parliament that the King had approved of the New Zealand naval forces being given the distinction of the name "Royal New Zealand Navy", and of the ships being designated "His Majesty's New Zealand Ships". Hitherto the naval forces had been known as the "New Zealand Squadron of the Royal Navy", which was the designation preferred by the Dominion authorities when the squadron was constituted on its present basis in 1920.

New Zealand then undertook to maintain and man the ships and to train the personnel. When there was a shortage of New Zealand officers and men, the number necessary was made up by a loan from the Royal Navy. Thus, practically, the New Zealand Service's status has been almost identical with that of the Royal Australian and Royal Canadian Navies.

Although New Zealand has no sea-going fleet of her own, she has, since 1925, been lent two cruisers of the Royal Navy which she mans and maintains at her own expense: at the outbreak of the war they were the twin 7,000-ton 6-inch gun cruisers *Achilles* and *Leander*, built in 1933-34. New Zealand also provided early in the war armed merchant ships, and other small naval craft, including a number of trawlers, were commissioned as minesweepers. But what she lacks in quantity she more than contributes in toughness, courage,

daring, inventiveness and tenacity. Chief of the Naval Staff is Commodore W. E. Parry, C.B.

Between the Royal New Zealand Navy and the Royal Australian Navy, naturally, there is close co-operation. New lines of co-operation between the Dominions and Britain were determined early in 1939, when the then Chief of the Australian Naval Staff (Admiral Sir Ragnar Colvin) attended a conference at Singapore between officers of the British and French Naval Commands in the Pacific, and subsequently conferred with the Admiralty, returning to Melbourne on the outbreak of war. A special conference, happily enough, was also held in New Zealand about the same time to find the best plan, in the event of war, for satisfactorily patrolling the seas for the protection of merchant shipping and of trade routes, which, as in the Great War, is the prime task of both Dominion navies. About 2,000 New Zealand ratings were serving at the end of 1941.

Industry

As in Australia, millions are being sunk in industry. Factories are extending, new branches of industry being introduced. Fairly early the Government assumed powers to take over control of any industry and any supplies, and to requisition premises and plant, and the manufacture of certain war equipment within the utmost capacity of manufacturing facilities was begun immediately.

A wide range of munitions and equipment, including Bren-gun carriers, patrol boats, hand grenades, bombs and many types of ammunition, footwear and clothing, were being made at the end of 1941, when some factories were working 24 hours a day. Construction of minesweepers is being undertaken: Dunedin firms have contracts from the Government, the vessels to be built to British Admiralty plans. Special workshops, gantries and slip-ways were being erected speedily to enable rapid construction. Noteworthy is the fact that initial success was secured under the Government's scheme for training men in the engineering industry. Meanwhile, those ineligible for military service, if accepted, must undertake to remain in the industry as long as required by the State. While training they are paid a weekly wage of £413s. 4d.

Technicians from the United Kingdom recently carried out an examination of New Zealand's industrial capacity, with the object of linking it up with Britain's war effort. United Kingdom and New Zealand manufacturers exchange work-plans and time schedules. Latest inventions are available to all firms engaged on war production.

A stride forward has been made in the manufacture of

aircraft in New Zealand. Although this new industry **was** started only in 1940 at Wellington by the De Havilland Aircraft Company, the output of Tiger Moth machines—representing the standard biplane trainer adopted by the Empire **air** forces—has steadily grown, until to-day over 300 workers manufacture the great majority of the numerous parts. Engines, tyres and instruments are imported from Britain; **the** rest is made in a modern factory, which could, if the need arose, substantially increase its production.

Characteristic of the long-sightedness of New Zealand Governments, a fact which could well be marked by the British Government, is that plans are well advanced for the establishment of several large industries as part of the Government Scheme for the rehabilitation of soldiers, sailors and airmen on their return after the war. They include the manufacture of paper from New Zealand wood-pulp, together with extensive re-forestation, production of linen flax, increased production of tobacco and the establishment of a sugar-beet industry. A contract was in the middle of 1941 given to the Love Construction Company for the erection of shipbuilding yards, to be permanent, capable of accommodating much larger vessels than minesweepers. Keels of minesweepers were laid in September, and it is expected to launch the vessels in January, 1942.

Cost

Striking example of the financial burden carried by New Zealanders: in November, 1940, the war expenditure per head of population stood at £5 5s. 3d., against 12s. 11d. in 1935. This figure was about doubled in the next twelve months. New Zealand's war cost for 1940-41 financial year will be about £40,000,000, representing an expenditure five times greater than for the corresponding period of the war of 1914-18. New Zealand is financing her war effort by increased taxation, by internal loans, some of which are compulsory and interest-free, and by loans voluntarily made without interest.

A War Council of fourteen to supervise and direct the Dominion's war effort includes the Prime Minister, Ministers of Finance, Defence, Supply and National Service, and representatives of employers, workers, farmers, Maoris and returned soldiers.

Defence has actively engaged public attention for several years past, as New Zealanders are very conscious of their isolated position. A flash of the importance of the Pacific Defence Conference, in which representatives of Australia, **New Zealand and Great Britain** took part, and which **was held**

at Wellington in April, 1939, is revealed by the fact that the defence expenditure for the year 1938-39 amounted to £5,400,000, compared with £1,100,000 in 1934.

Population

Casualties in the First Total War will bear more heavily in their effects on New Zealand than on Australia. Deaths among young New Zealand soldiers overseas will increase the number of old people to a far greater extent, even if, proportionately, the deaths are fewer.

The explanation is found in New Zealand's low birth-rate. It is its own commentary on the fear the average young married couple have of continued unsettled international conditions that in one of the loveliest, most progressive group of islands in the world the falling off in the birth-rate has been so alarming that the Official Year Book of 1938 warned the Dominion that it must face the possibility of a stationary, even of a declining white population. New Zealand's population (1,600,000 at the 1936 census) is increasing steadily, but very slowly.

Between 1926 and 1936, the annual rate of increase was only 1.05 per cent. It was the lowest in the Dominion's history. One of the reasons, according to critics, is that too much caution has been shown in the treatment of immigration questions. New Zealand has not been as bold as Australia.

In the period 1926-36, *it is true*, the population increased by 147,015 : but the number of children under five years of age dropped by 17,693. Children under ten formed 16.45 per cent, of the population in 1936 : but ten years earlier they formed 19.92 per cent.; in 1921, 21.44 per cent.; in 1874, 31.85 per cent. People over sixty in 1936 composed 10.44 per cent, of the population; in 1926, 7.84 per cent.; in 1921, 7.49 per cent., and in 1874, 2.33 per cent.

Fortunately, the death rate is the lowest in the world.

Maoris are increasing in numbers; a remarkable fact, considering how fifty years ago historians saw in the Maoris "a vanishing race". The census of 1936 showed that there were 82,326 Maoris, which was double the number in New Zealand in 1896 : and the number of full-blooded Maoris in 1936 was 55,915. Indeed, while the white population was increasing at the rate of 1 per cent, annually, the Maori population was increasing at the rate of 2.6 per cent.

The Young Maori Party has played a great part in the regeneration of the race. The Maoris have produced brilliant intellectual leaders; any race in the world would be proud to claim them. Sir Apirana Ngata, who organised a **great movement** for improving the position of the Maoris, Dr.

Peter Buck, one of the world's leading ethnologists, and Sir Maui Pomare are notable men.

Comparison

In the Great War, New Zealand supplied a total of 124,211 men for oversea and Empire service from an eligible male population of under 250,000. Maoris and Pacific Islanders provided a further 3,000. These served at Gallipoli, in France, Sinai and Palestine, the Senussi campaign and Samoa. The grand total of men engaged in expeditionary and home defence forces was 188,397.

New Zealand's one ship, H.M.S. *Philomel*, which was commissioned in July, 1914, assisted in convoying expeditionary forces first to Samoa and then to Europe. Later she patrolled the Red Sea and Mediterranean and Persian Gulf. After 1917 naval ratings from the *Philomel* assisted in mine-sweeping operations carried out by two New Zealand trawlers and a whaler, accounting for forty-seven mines out of a total of sixty laid by the minelayer *Wolf* in New Zealand waters.

The number of New Zealanders who joined the Royal Flying Corps was 192.

Cost of the war up to March, 1920, was £77,000,000; of this £54,000,000 was raised within the Dominion. War taxation included increases in land tax and income tax, customs and beer duties, stamp duties, a betting tax and an amusement tax. Total subscribed for relief funds of different kinds, £2,500,000.

Contributions to New Zealand Red Cross totalled nearly £1,500,000.

The United Kingdom Government bought the whole frozen meat supply from New Zealand from March, 1915, the whole wool clip from 1916-17, and from 1915 all exportable supplies of scheelite, molybdenum and kauri gum.

In the 1914-18 war the New Zealand Government, with the evident approval of the community, pledged the Dominion to fight to "the last man and the last shilling". The same pledge has been repeated in this war. Indeed, with the experience of the Great War and with more adequate organisation of the Dominion's resources, the New Zealand Government can claim that they are on this occasion contributing still more effective aid to the common cause.

Miscellany

G. B. Shaw, viewing and sniffing Rotorua (no spa in the world is richer in hot mineral waters and curative springs with so wide a range of therapeutic possibilities), said:

"An uncommonly pleasant place, although it smells of brimstone like Hades."

In the sub-tropical region of the north are the magnificent kauri forests of Waipoua and Tounson Park.

Mr. F. W. Reed, of Whangarei, has assembled the world's greatest private collection of the manuscripts and works of Alexandre Dumas.

Golden River, Tongariro, is described by H. E. Towner Coston, in *Speckled Nomads*, as "the river of dreams, the river which men talked of, sighed for, and nodded over when memory bid the pleasant days of the past come forth and parade in happy companionship". In the 1929 season, more than 5000 trout were taken from the river, each averaging nearly 6 lb. 10 oz. Little wonder New Zealand is called "Fisherman's Paradise".

The finest collection of Milton's works, outside the British Museum, is in the Alexander Turnbull Library, Wellington, which also has more than 32,000 volumes on the Pacific—another distinction.

Lord Rutherford, now resting in Westminster Abbey, made his first scientific experiments in a small room at Canterbury University College, Christchurch.

On Green's Point, Akaroa, scene of the French expedition in colonisation which figured prominently in early New Zealand history, is an obelisk on the spot where Captain Owen Stanley, brother of the notable Dean of Westminster, hoisted the British flag.

Raki-ura—Isle of the Glowing Sky—is a small island at the toe of the South Island. Nowadays, it is called Stewart Island, and produces the best oysters in the world; but the Maoris called it Isle of the Glowing Sky because of sunsets that crowned it.

What is claimed to be the largest gold-dredge in the southern hemisphere is found at Kanieri, near Hokitika: it churns as much ground as 10,000 men could in the same time. Forty men operate it. It weighs 3,443 tons.

There are no snakes in New Zealand. The only land-mammals are two kinds of bats. Still found are the sea-lion, the sea-elephant, the sea-leopard, the fur-seal. Birds which cannot fly, having given up using their wings centuries ago, no doubt because there was no danger from which they should fly, are the kiwi, the weka, the takahe, and the kakapo parrot. Best-loved birds are the silvery-voiced bell-bird, the white-tufted tui, and the huia. Moa, an extinct giant of a bird, used to stand as high as twelve feet. There were twenty-one species. Besides fifteen species of lizard, there is **the** tuatara, which is found nowhere else in the world.

South Island has an area of 58,000 square miles; North Island 44,000. The highest mountain, Mount Cook, is 12,349 ft., and is in the South Island, which has a backbone consisting of the snow-capped range known as the Southern Alps.

Captain Cook discovered New Zealand on October 17th, 1769: rather, a lad on Cook's ship *Endeavour* sighted New Zealand on that day: and because his name was Nicholas Young, the crew waggishly called the point he sighted Young Nick's Head.

Maori culture, it is believed, is a branch of Polynesian culture and was brought originally from Asia. A final answer has not yet been given to the question " What was the origin of the Maori race which dominated New Zealand before the arrival of the white man? " War was in the nature of a national sport. Great warriors rose and fell. Maoris love music. Their voices are low and sweet.

Chapter XI

Wings Over the Empire

" Never again will Dominion troops fight a war for England."

—Goering, 1939.

" The bombing of English cities will never succeed so long as **there** is **an** Australian left to stand alongside the people of Britain."

—R. G. Menzies, 1941.

" New Zealanders would prefer to be dead than to be under Hitler."

—Peter Fraser, 1941.

NOT long after the German air armada began to rend the skies with its throbbing on its mass-murder raids, one thing was thundered to the world above all others : to be masters of the skies is as vital, perhaps more vital if you have certain initial advantages and bold plans, than to be mistress of the seas. Unless recalcitrant British authorities engraved that fact on their hearts, along with the other cold fact that the First Total War was a revolutionary, mechanised war, it was obvious from the outset that the Germans would succeed in carving it on their tombstones.

A recasting of the whole conception of the use of British Imperial defence units is inevitable in this war. Even by the end of the first year it was faintly outlined : at the end of the second there was a little shape and substance to it, as well. Easily visualised, apart from the complete mechanisation of every section of the armies of the various members of the Commonwealth, which is being carried out, is a picture of Australia and New Zealand, like Britain and Canada, becoming vast hangars. Australia and New Zealand could become aeronautical experimental fields, besides being reservoirs of ground-crews and pilots, because there, as in America, is to be found a complete range of climatic conditions for testing and experimental work—from burning desert to perpetually snow-capped alps. A shadow of this was cast over the globe in December, 1939, when Sir Kingsley Wood, blinking mildly behind his small spectacles, announced in the Commons the inauguration of the Empire Air Training Scheme.

School

Hearts leapt in the youth of Australia and New Zealand—homes of some of the world's finest airmen. For geographical and financial reasons, Canada is the hub of this colossal plan which covers the training of pilots, air-gunners, wireless operators, navigators and observers. Of the board established in Canada to supervise financial administration and progress, the chairman is a Canadian Minister : representatives of the United Kingdom, Australia and New Zealand are included.

Canada is bearing most of the initial cost, and will be reimbursed by Great Britain, Australia and New Zealand on the basis of the number of airmen trained. The standard of training is comparable with that in Britain to-day. The United Kingdom, Australia and New Zealand sent staff and instructors to Canada to be incorporated in the Canadian organisation. The majority of them come from the United Kingdom. New Zealand gives elementary training to her men, and sends most of them to Canada for advanced training. Australia provides both elementary and advanced training for her men at home, but, in addition, men are sent to Canada for advanced training.

Sixty-seven training-schools are to be established, including : sixteen elementary and service flying schools; ten observer schools; ten bombing and gunnery schools; four wireless schools; three large schools for initial training; and two air navigation schools. In addition to these it will be necessary to establish the following schools for the training of the staffs : one air armament school; one school for aeronautical engineering; one school of administration; one equipment and accountant school; one flying instructor school; two recruit depots; two technical training schools; three repair depots; three equipment depots; and one record office.

Pilots by the Thousand

But as time brings experience and new ideas, the plans will be altered, just as early in the war they were slightly reorganised so that the scheme could be operated by four commands at Toronto, Winnipeg, Montreal and Regina. The school staffs require 40,000 men, of whom 2,700 must be commissioned officers, 6,000 civilians and 30,000 enlisted men for servicing aircraft and other duties. At least eighty aerodromes will be used, including sixty new ones, while twenty existing aerodromes will be enlarged. Night aeroplane clubs will be used for a certain amount of elementary training. It is estimated that ultimately 4,000 aeroplanes will be in constant use. The aircraft used in connection with the air training scheme are standardised on six types of machines—the Fleet Trainers, the

de Haviland Tiger Moths, the Avro Ansons, the North American Harvard, the Fairey Battle, and the Noorduyn Norsemen.

Canada's aircraft industry is now being organised for the maintenance and overhaul of training aircraft. It is expected that between 3,000 and 4,000 aero engines will have to be overhauled every twelve months when the training project is at its peak. A central air supplies depot, at which 1,500 persons will be employed, is being established near Montreal for the Royal Canadian Air Force and the Empire Air Training Scheme. When in full operation the schools in Canada, Australia and New Zealand under the Empire training scheme will produce no less than 20,000 pilots and 30,000 air crews every year.

By 1943 it is figured that some 607 million Canadian dollars will be spent.

U.K.'s contribution (in aircraft)	.	.	185	million Can. dollars.
Canada's contribution	.	.	353	" " "
Australia's contribution	.	.	44	" " "
New Zealand's contribution	.	.	28	" " "

Australia and New Zealand's Share

Australia's War Cabinet decided that the total of recruits to March, 1943, would be 57,473, comprising 14,300 pilots, 16,173 air-crews and 27,500 ground personnel. The training programme required that the strength should be built up thus : 28,500 by June, 1941; 18,012 more by June, 1942, and another 10,961 by March, 1943. Thousands of applications to join the Empire Air Force have been received. About thirty-six training schools will be opened at regular intervals up to April, 1942, when the scheme will be fully operative. To train fitters the Government are establishing an engineering school with a capacity for 2,000 men. Of the 1,760 aircraft required, the United Kingdom will provide 1,080 and the Commonwealth 580. Pilots undergo eight weeks' training at an elementary school, followed by sixteen weeks at a service flying school. Observers attend an observers' school for twelve weeks and later are sent to gunnery and navigation schools for six and four weeks. Wireless and gunnery courses extend over twenty weeks. The Royal Australian Air Force provide most of the facilities, but civil organisations supplying their own machines and instructors have also contracted to instruct pupils.

A striking point, little emphasised, if generally known abroad, is that the scheme showed, in the original estimates, that about 27,500 ground staff, of whom by far the greatest proportion must **be** skilled artisans, would **be required**—a large number in relation to the industrial capacity of **the**

nation and the urgent demand for technicians **for munitions** and aircraft factories.

The result, however, showed that this undertaking was **not** beyond Australia's capacity. By August 12th, 1941, 200,000 volunteers for service had been accepted for enlistment in the R.A.A.F.; and 120,000 had been actually brought into the service, of whom 20,000 were air-crew personnel and 100,000 ground staff. The remainder were held in reserve to be called up when training facilities become available.

Besides obtaining the services of officers and men of the R.A.F., the Government have enlisted scores of experienced civil pilots with upwards of 100 hours' flying experience. Officers and airmen from the R.A.F. soon arrived in Australia from England to assist in the training of air-crews under the scheme. They are specialists in various branches of service aviation, including armament, photography and engineering. The total expenditure on Australia's three years' air armament scheme is at present estimated at £80,000,000.

Thousands of New Zealand young men registered for training as air pilots. Training facilities are being rapidly expanded, and it is possible to-day to provide full training in New Zealand for hundreds of pilots annually, and initial training for hundreds more pilots, observers and air-gunners who will complete their training in Canada. Over three years the cost is estimated at £12,700,000.

The First Contingents

On September 5th, 1940, the first trainees left Australia to finish training in Canada, and on November 14th, 1940, further trainees embarked in Australia for training in Rhodesia. The first contingent to go direct from Australia arrived in England on February 8th, 1941 : the first to go direct to the Middle East left Sydney on July 15th, 1940, and took a prominent part in operations in Libya, Greece and Syria.

The first Australian personnel under the scheme to finish training in Canada arrived in London on Christmas Day, 1940. Others began arriving in increasing numbers almost weekly. From these trainees, and from those who arrived direct from Australia, the Australian fighter squadron for the defence of Britain was created. As they finish training, still others have been posted to units of the R.A.F., and about the middle of 1941 Australia decided to form a bomber squadron in Britain.

The Minister for Air (Mr. McEwen) announced on June 6th, 1941, the formation of an R.A.A.F. Cadet Corps, consisting of seventy-eight squadrons, which would provide for the training of 20,000 boys of between sixteen and eighteen years of age for the R.A.A.F. in 1941. Mr. W. A. Robertson, Deputy **Chair-**

man of the Victoria Water Supply Commission, a flight commander in the Great War, was appointed Director.

Empire Superiority the Aim

Australia's Air Force in 1914-18 comprised four squadrons, 410 pilots, 153 observers and forty other officers. Australia's air effort in the First Total War is fully in line with the important part the air arm has assumed in modern warfare.

A decision taken in May to form new R.A.A.F. squadrons for oversea, meant that these were additional to Australia's original commitments under the Empire Air Training Scheme. Air threats in the Middle East through Syria to Iraq were again drawing attention to the almost decisive importance of the air arm, and made Australia more determined by every conceivable effort to help the Empire to attain the needed superiority in the air. Australia, even in the middle of 1941, was entirely abreast of her main additional commitments under the Empire scheme, and Mr. McEwen, speaking with a knowledge of the secret facts, declared confidently then that the United Kingdom's shortage of personnel would soon be overcome by an inflow of Empire trainees.

Royal Australian Air Force

Fighting in the blue fields of the sub-stratosphere, six miles up, even higher, above the wide green fields of England, Scotland, Northern Ireland and Wales, above the sprawling mass of London, over the grey North Atlantic wastes, over simmering Egypt, the Red Sea, the deep Pacific, over France, Belgium, Holland, on, on, on to Berlin and miles beyond, to "impregnable" Prussia, to the Baltic, Australian and New Zealand airmen have carried the battle. On brilliant summery days, on wondrously starlit nights, through snow, ice, fog, hail and hurricanes, they fight to check the Germans slashing Britain's life-lines, to stop them pulverising sections of great cities and dockland, to prevent them from shutting the North Atlantic shipping lanes which form the lung that must not collapse if Britain is to survive.

A simple compelling truth : the Empire Air Training Scheme has done more than anything else to obscure from the world the real power and initiative of the far-sighted men who for years have been in control of the Royal Australian Air Force. These men are the real moulders of the great striking power of the R.A.A.F. They forged a fighting weapon capable of rapid, broad, sound development which had only one peer in the Empire—the Royal Air Force. Their brains, experience

in battle, their judgment born of intensified, long-term experiment, put Australia years ahead of, say, Canada in the development of a flexible fighting air arm by the outbreak of the First Total War. Apart from Britain, Australia knew more about service flying than any other country in the Empire.

A striking fact about the Air Training Scheme so far as it affects Australia is this : The degree to which Australia need rely upon it for the complete training of her air personnel, officers, and air crews and ground crews, is so slight as to be at once startlingly and flatteringly small. Reason : Australia, thanks to the longheaded policy of her leading airmen, especially those survivors of the old, original Australian Flying Corps of 1914-18, the co-operation of R.A.F. experts, and the readiness of successive governments to listen to the advocacy of both, had a foundation for the quick expansion within her own frontiers of a training ground that could give her a most powerful air armada.

Light under Bushel

No; let it be recorded that it did not require the Air Training Scheme to make Australia conscious of the value of air power in war. Common-sense applied to her strategic position, coupled with dynamic drive of the select few of long-term planners, made that plain enough. Graphically underlying this is the fact that seven out of every nine men recruited under the scheme are completely trained in Australia ! What the advent of the Air Training Scheme did was : (1) to eclipse for people abroad the brilliant work so fully and firmly established by the R.A.A.F. because of the world-wide publicity given the scheme; (2) suddenly to provide a vast framework in which the R.A.A.F. could develop to a size undreamed of as practical—and which, within the financial limits necessarily imposed by the Government, was impractical—even at the very declaration of war.

In discussing Australia's air power it is necessary to deal with the twin parts of her air effort. First, there are the R.A.A.F. regular squadrons of the Home Defence Force, more than a score, five of which are serving in the R.A.F. Command in the United Kingdom, the Middle East and the Far East. Second, there are the R.A.A.F. squadrons to be formed under the Empire Air Training Scheme—and the programme provides for the formation of eighteen of them.

The total output of pilots and other air crews from Canadian schools from October, 1940, to June, 1941, was 5,254, of whom 600 were Australians and 500 New Zealanders, between them roughly 20 per cent, of the total. On June 30th, 1941, the

total number of air-crew personnel who had completed their training entirely in Australia was 1,334, and air-crew personnel who had finished their training in Rhodesia totalled 100.

All Australian ground crews for the Empire Air Training Scheme are completely trained in Australia. By July, 1941, six crews had gone abroad to Empire Air Training Scheme squadrons : at 180 men to a squadron this represented in personnel about 1,080.

By June, 1941, there were eleven elementary flying training schools open in Australia, and it was expected that by 1942 there would be fourteen. Pilots from only two of the eleven went to Canada to finish training; thus only one-fifth, soon only one-seventh, of Australian pilots will complete their training in Canada.

To give a graphic idea of the strength of the Royal Australian Air Force one can say that in August, 1941, it equalled three army divisions; and it was officially stated that Australia's share of the cost of the Empire Air Training Scheme was likely to be £A60,000,000 by March, 1942. Originally Australia undertook to provide 16,000 airmen by March, 1942, and 10,000 annually after that—but these figures are increasing beyond recognition.

Natural Flyers

Flying is natural to the Australian, as natural as sailing and flying are to the Briton. In an historic English south-west coast port, a warmish wind rippling the sea, a couple of giant Sunderland flying-boats rocking gently at their moorings, the red buoys bobbing like exaggerated tops, I had tea with officers of the famous No. 10 General Reconnaissance Squadron, R.A.A.F., equipped with Sunderland flying-boats, soon after war was declared. It was the first Dominion squadron to spread its huge wings protectively over the English coast, over what the Nazi High Command call the Wall of Water—the formidable, narrow English Channel—over the North Atlantic. It swept into the skies like a flock of falcons.

Unique circumstances in which this famous No. 10 Squadron was formed were these : Sunderland flying-boats, being built in Britain for the R.A.A.F., were so nearly finished when war broke out that the crews to fly them to Australia had arrived in England in July, 1939. With Australia's declaration of war, she agreed to the request of the British Government to form No. 10 Squadron to full strength in the United Kingdom. The complete personnel for the squadron arrived in London on Boxing Day in the same year. The squadron was handed over to the operational control of Coastal Command, R.A.F., with which, ever since, it has been in the thick of the fighting.

Four of its members had won the D.F.C. by the end of 1941, First commanding officer of the squadron was Wing-Commander L. V. Lachal, on whose return to Melbourne in the early days of the struggle Wing-Commander C. W. Pearce took control until early in 1941, when he, returning also to Melbourne, made way for Wing-Commander Knox Knight.

National Pride

Five main streams of airmen flow from Australia to-day. Air crews, complete in every respect, are moving steadily to Britain, to the Middle East, and to the Far East. A fourth flow of young men, selected for air-crew training, is to Southern Rhodesia, where they complete the whole of the air training. To Canada goes a small subsidiary flow of men to complete their service flying training.

Australia, under the scheme, places her air crews at the disposal of the British Government, subject to agreement on Britain's part to organise the personnel so as to preserve their identity as the Royal Australian Air Force. It has been arranged that members of the R.A.A.F. should wear their own distinctive uniforms. (The R.A.A.F. alone among the Dominion Air Forces has a distinctive dark blue uniform, the rest wearing R.A.F. uniforms or, as in the case of South Africa, khaki like the Army.) Air crews and general maintenance personnel are also being organised into R.A.A.F. squadrons. Responding to this agreement, Australia decided to meet all obligations in the formation of these squadrons. She is creating complete ground-crew personnel for each squadron. Wherever an R.A.A.F. squadron is operating with the R.A.F. to-day it not only has its identity preserved in its striking uniform and in the use of its own title, but it is supported by its own "back-room boys": those men who can be said to come within the scope of Lord Beaverbrook's telling wartime phrase—the men who do the work out of the limelight, on the ground, in their own quiet, unassuming, but often enough, as is the case when the bombs are falling, heroic way.

Directly assisting in the Middle Eastern theatres of war is an Army Co-operation Squadron, R.A.A.F., which was engaged during the whole of the Egyptian, Libyan and Syrian campaigns, partly helping to protect the A.I.F. Watching in the Far East are General Reconnaissance Squadrons, R.A.A.F., and a Far East General Purpose Squadron, R.A.A.F., operating under the Air Officer Commanding, R.A.F., just as another is operating under the Air Officer Commanding, R.A.F., Middle East. Australia has an R.A.A.F. station headquarters in the Far East.

Under the Air Training Scheme, four squadrons were already fully operating by the end of the second year of the conflict. Two were in the Middle East—No. 450 Fighter Squadron, R.A.A.F., No. 451 Army Co-operation Squadron, R.A.A.F.—with which are ground crews; No. 452 Fighter Squadron, R.A.A.F., with ground crew, in Britain, and No. 453 Fighter Squadron, R.A.A.F., in the Far East. And the balance of the squadrons already planned are being formed according to the programme. Indeed, they are in advance of it! All squadrons—the whole eighteen—will, like the present four, be under the operational control of the R.A.F. But it is not intended that eighteen squadrons should be the limit: there is such a steady, even, progressive development that, inevitably, the number will be raised.

Destiny rides the skies with the R.A.A.F. Every pilot believes his nation is cast by the Three Blind Fates to play a great rôle in the Pacific; that the sharp, shining spearhead of defence and attack, beaten out on the anvil of war in European battles during 1935-39, tempered to a hard point in the fires burning across the globe in the First Total War, is the aeroplane.

A shrewd advantage is taken by the Australian air authorities of the maintenance abroad of squadrons from the Permanent Home Defence Service. Employing a system of postings of officers to squadrons overseas, they are able to perpetuate a moving circle of men—men who move out to a station in the Far East, the Middle East, or the United Kingdom, serve for a time, and return. It is a chain belt of knowledge. Every now and again officers go back from the battle zones, from routine work at, say, Singapore, to give to others the lessons they have learned.

Strain

All this, not surprisingly, is putting a great strain on the authorities. Look at the facts: a very heavy call is being made on the officer resources of the nation because of the large number of air flying schools and other training establishments with a mushroom growth after the inauguration of the Air Training Scheme. A not unexpected result was manifest after two years of war. It was quite impossible, at the end of 1941, to supply R.A.A.F. officers, or to fill posts as squadron commanders and flight commanders for squadrons in the Air Training Scheme and, simultaneously, to build up the R.A.A.F. Home Defence Service and provide all replacements in the R.A.A.F. squadrons overseas. Nevertheless, Australia is correcting this position quickly; a big improvement, if not a complete righting of it, will be made by the middle of 1942.

Aid which the R.A.F. has given the Australian air authorities is **never** forgotten. A scheme in operation for a little more than a year at the end of September, 1941, was one under which R.A.A.F. officers serve on exchange in the R.A.F. for about a twelve-month. Three R.A.A.F. men were wing commanders, commanding R.A.F. operational squadrons in 1941, for example—highest tribute the R.A.F. can pay the everyday heroes of the R.A.A.F. !

Wing-Commander R. A. Holmwood, at the age of twenty-nine, was the first R.A.A.F. officer to command a British squadron since the outbreak of war, and was killed as a result of air operations against the enemy. Wing-Commander Holmwood was the first of a number of R.A.A.F. officers to be sent to Britain on exchange with R.A.F. officers posted to Australia. He assumed command of one of the most famous Royal Air Force Spitfire squadrons—Winston Churchill is the squadron's honorary commodore—earlier in the year. When he was posted to the Spitfire squadron, its members had already compiled a distinguished active-service record and, according to the R.A.F., this had been more than maintained under the leadership of the young Australian.

Cavalry of the Skies

A picturesque Australian description of the general reconnaissance squadrons, responsible for maintaining the vast network of air patrols around the nation's 12,000-mile coastline, is "Cavalry of the Skies". Four factors have expanded the scope of their work : the appearance of enemy raiders and mine-layers in the Pacific; the despatch oversea of the A.I.F.; R.A.A.F. units and Empire air trainees; and the addition of several more long-range aircraft. Limits to these squadrons' activities are not imposed by territorial waters, for they are already using bases in British Malaya, and not infrequently fly to the China Seas.

Combing an area of 75,000,000 square miles, pilots of general reconnaissance squadrons had flown 4,000,000 statute miles at the end of two years of war. Reconnoitring and patrolling 500,000 square miles of sea was done to protect the first contingent of the A.I.F. to leave Australia. Land-planes and flying-boats are included in the squadrons. Strategically placed, they form part of the Area Commands of the R.A.A.F.

Salute

Tall, fair, rather shy-seeming in his modest way, Wing-Commander Pearce said to me one sunny afternoon in the

officers' mess at his station on the south-west coast: " The R.A.F. are grand. They're unbeatable." Away along the coast three Spitfires were drilling their way through the blue. An air-raid alarm was on.

" You know we're confident enough: but so great is the confidence of these R.A.F. pilots that no odds daunt them. They'll take on ten times the number of Jerries—and still shoot their way out to the top." This was the officer who made history in the R.A.A.F. in the First Total War : he was the first to secure the D.F.C. All previous awards had been won by members of the Australian Flying Corps, back in the shell-torn days of 1914-18.

Wing-Commander W. H. Garing, nuggety, wiry, with a jolly, gentle way, standing with us, said: " What I've noticed about the British is that their pilots' courage is matched by the civilians'. The Nazis can't scare 'em."

You could hear the banter of some of the crews of the great flying-boats as they passed, walking down the narrow, stony path to the launch at the water's edge, laughing, in overalls, probably going to tune-up one of the ships for a patrol to Iceland, to Gibraltar.

Oddity

An odd fact concerns the careers of Australians serving in R.A.F. squadrons whose identity is not preserved by their membership to an R.A.A.F. squadron. An Australian, like a New Zealander, may do an act of gallantry which may remain unknown to his Australian brothers, and entirely unknown to the Australian authorities, unless it happens to be officially recognised by the British authorities. For instance, in March, 1941, the Australian Department of Air proudly announced that Flight-Lieutenant Cullen, formerly of Newcastle, N.S.W., and now serving with the Royal Air Force, had been awarded the Distinguished Flying Cross for his " great resource and courage ". It added : " According to advices from the British Air Ministry, Flight-Lieutenant Cullen has now destroyed eleven enemy aircraft. Displaying remarkable skill, he shot down five of this total one day in February when he was with a formation of British aircraft which attacked a large force of enemy bombers escorted by at least thirty fighters.' "

But the Department explained that Flight-Lieutenant Cullen must have joined the Royal Air Force in the United Kingdom, for, like many other young Australians, his name did not appear in the records of Royal Australian Air Force personnel.

On the other hand, when the forty-first Australian had been

awarded the D.F.C., an analysis showed that all but eight had received their training in Australia, but that only seven were then actually listed as members of the R.A.A.F., the rest serving in R.A.F. squadrons.

Anzac V.C.s

Within three weeks of Corporal Edmondson's winning the first Anzac V.C. in Libya, the Victoria Cross was awarded to an Australian and a New Zealand airman. The Australian, Wing-Commander Hughie Idwal Edwards, No. 105 Squadron, a West Australian, led an important attack on Bremen, one of the most heavily defended towns in Germany. It had to be made in daylight, and there were no clouds to afford concealment. German ships reported the approach of his formation. On reaching Bremen he was met with a hail of fire, all his aircraft being hit, four destroyed. Nevertheless, he made a most successful attack, flying fifty miles overland to the target at a height of little more than fifty feet, passing under high-tension cables, carrying away telegraph wires, and finally passing through a formidable balloon barrage. Coolly, he withdrew the surviving aircraft without further loss.

Sergeant James Allen Ward, Royal New Zealand Air Force, No. 75 (N.Z.) Squadron, won his V.C. for putting out a fire in a Wellington bomber when flying on a raid and when his machine was over the Zuider Zee. He was second pilot in the bomber; they were returning from an attack on Munster. A Messerschmitt no attacked from below at 13,000 feet, hitting the Wellington with incendiary bullets. The rear gunner was wounded in the foot, but delivered a burst of fire which sent the enemy fighter down, apparently out of control.

Flames licked the starboard engine, and fed by petrol from a split pipe, quickly gained an alarming hold and threatened to consume the whole wing. Fire-extinguishers, even coffee from vacuum flasks, were used in vain. As a last resort, Sergeant Ward volunteered to make an attempt to smother the blaze with an engine-cover which happened to be in use then as a cushion. To reduce the terrific wind resistance they all knew he would encounter on the wing, he wanted to discard his parachute, but they persuaded him to take it. A rope from the dinghy was tied to him, though this was of little help and might have become a danger had he been blown off. With the navigator's help, he climbed through the narrow astro-hatch.

Smashing the fabric to make hand- and foot-holds where necessary, and also taking advantage of existing holes in the fabric, **Sergeant Ward succeeded in descending three feet to**

the wing and proceeding another three feet to a position behind the engine, in spite of the slipstream from the airscrew, which nearly blew him off the wing. Lying in this precarious position, he smothered the fire in the wing fabric. " It was just a matter of getting something to hang on to," he said afterwards. " It was like being in a terrific gale, only much worse than any gale I've ever known."

Genesis

Celebrating in March, 1942, its twenty-first birthday, the Royal Australian Air Force will also toast the traditions it inherits from the Australian Flying Corps, the parent air unit in the nation, which was established in 1915. In 1920, the Commonwealth Government decided the air service was to become an autonomous force administered by officers of flying experience. Special provision for it, apart from that laid down for other Services, was first made in the Estimates for 1920-21, when £500,000 was allocated for the Air Force, £100,000 for the development of civil aviation—but little over a quarter of this amount was spent. The Australian Flying Corps was demobilised in 1919, on the return of the squadrons to Australia. Practically nothing happened until 1920, when an Australian Air Corps was organised to man the flying school at Point Cook. This Corps was administered by Lieutenant-Colonel (now Air Marshal) R. Williams, who was made responsible to the Chief of the General Staff.

In turn, on March 31st, 1921, the Australian Air Corps was disbanded. The R.A.A.F. came into existence. It was formed under the Defence Act, 1903-18, pending the passing of an Air Defence Act. The Service was administered in the first instance under the Commonwealth Military Regulations and Financial Regulations, except as where modified to meet the special requirements of the Air Force. The strength of the Service after its re-constitution was 151, comprising twenty-one officers and 130 other ranks. The R.A.A.F. was administered by an Air Board and an Air Council, on which the Navy and Army were represented. Function of the Air Council: to decide high policy and to co-ordinate matters affecting the three Services. It was later replaced by the Defence Committee.

First Air Council

An interesting document on the files of the R.A.A.F. which was drawn up to present a case against drastic restriction in development following the Washington Disarmament Conference, points out that the Air Council and the Air Board were constituted on September 11th, 1930, by Statutory Rules Nos. 222 and 223.

Written on January 1st, 1922, this document quotes the composition of the Air Council as: President, Minister for Defence; Naval member, Rear-Admiral Sir Allan Everett; Army member, Major-General Sir C. B. B. White; Members of the Air Board (one nominated by the Navy and the other by the Army), Wing-Commander R. Williams and Squadron-Leader W. H. Anderson; Controller of Civil Aviation, Lieutenant-Colonel H. C. Brinsmead. The Air Board consisted of the Director of Intelligence and Organisation (Wing-Commander R. Williams); Director of Personnel and Training (Squadron-Leader W. H. Anderson); Director of Equipment (Squadron-Leader P. A. McBain) and Finance Member (Mr. A. C. Joyce).

On its formation in 1921, the R.A.A.F. consisted of headquarters in Melbourne, a liaison office in London, and No. 1 Flying Training School and No. 1 Aircraft Depot at Point Cook. Equipment consisted of twenty Avro 504 K's and ten Sopwith Pups, purchased during the war. To these were added six Fairey sea-planes purchased in 1921, and, later, six Avro 504 K's made in Australia. The main equipment was 128 planes (DH9's, DH9A's and SE5A's), valued at £1,000,000, given by the Imperial Government at the end of the war. The gift equipment also included some mechanical transport, armament and spare parts.

By March 31st, 1923, the strength of the R.A.A.F. was fifty-nine officers, including eleven pupils, and 286 airmen. Pupils were made up of one naval officer, five army officers and five cadets nominated by the controller of civil aviation. The employment of a citizen air force was under consideration, the establishment contemplated being thirty officers and 155 airmen. No new units were formed until 1925, but during the intervening period the existing units were gradually built up to their normal establishment. Funds allotted and spent by the R.A.A.F. during its early years were :

Financial Year.	Appropriation.	Expenditure.
	£	£
1920-21	500,033	135,195
1921-22	338,280	245,755
1922-23	250,000	189,517
1923-24	257,850	207,423

In 1924-25, the expenditure rose to £402,910, and on July 1st, 1925, No. 1 and No. 3 Squadrons were formed at Point Cook. They were citizen air force units and were named after squadrons of the A.F.C.

The **R.A.A.F.** entered upon even leaner years, during which little expansion was permitted and actual reductions effected during the financial depression. Expenditure over the period dropped from £448,715 in 1925-26 to £323,774 in 1932-33-

Marshal of the **R.A.F.** Sir John Salmond visited Australia during 1928 at the invitation of the Federal Government and submitted a report on the air defence of Australia. Owing to the financial stringency over the years 1929-33, developments recommended were postponed until a start was made in 1934 to replenish supplies of equipment and reserves which had been heavily drawn upon. In his explanatory speech of 1934-35, the Minister for Defence (Sir Archdale Parkhill) said that Sir John Salmond's report was the basis of the Government's air-force policy. He announced that the Government was undertaking an expansion programme which aimed at the completion of the first portion of the recommendations within three years. It was these measures which introduced Australia's air re-armament plans. Expansion was rapid after the crisis in 1938, again after the outbreak of war when the vast objectives of the Empire Air Training Scheme were incorporated. Expenditure for the year 1940-41: £37,000,000.

Royal New Zealand Air Force

Like Britons, New Zealanders have an explosive mind, which detonates better under extreme pressure. Evidence : In 1938 the New Zealand Air Force was organised as a separate service. Two operational stations, a repair base and stores depdt and a flying training school for pilots were established. Thirty aircraft were brought from England for the operational squadrons, as well as five training aeroplanes. A scheme was adopted for a civil reserve of pilots, 100 to be trained annually. In the early summer of 1939 an Air Mission visited New Zealand, and recommended the creation of manufacturing capacity for the production of aircraft and the expansion of training facilities in the Dominion. These would enable 220 pilots a year to be trained in peace-time. The New Zealand Government decided to implement these recommendations immediately.

Barely two years of fighting had been weathered when the Force had increased tenfold ! More than 3,000 New Zealanders were then serving in the **R.A.F.** and in the Fleet Air **Arm**, fighting, training, convoying, scouting, ferrying **American**-made aeroplanes across the Atlantic, **and** the decision to train more than 4,000 Air Force personnel annually was being justified. By then, too, 100 decorations **had** been awarded, **including** three George Medals; three **D.F.C.s** **and** a bar; **sixty-three**

D.F.C.s; six D.F.M.s; twelve Air Force Crosses and one Croix de Guerre.

A mobile flight, consisting of officers and airmen of the Royal New Zealand Air Force, was forming in Britain at the outbreak of war, to take over bombers which the New Zealand Government had ordered. This flight and the bombers were placed at the disposal of the British Government. By the end of October, 1941, the first squadron in Malaya to be manned entirely by New Zealanders was operating from Singapore. Commanded by an officer who won the D.F.C. in the Battle of Britain, the squadron was equipped with Brewster Buffaloes, American-built fighters, which form the main fighter force for the defence of Malaya.

Air Chief Marshal Sir Cyril Newall, from his swearing-in as Governor-General, has not wasted a moment in making himself conversant with New Zealand's peculiar strengths and needs. "I assure you my experience in Britain under war conditions will be available to you at all times," he told the people. Coming straight from the hierarchy of the R.A.F. in London, Sir Cyril was warmly welcomed: New Zealand loves a fighting man at her head. No Governor-General in recent times was more popular than Lord Jellicoe.

Chapter XII

Power and Problems East of Suez

"A new stage in the British Commonwealth's industrial effort seems to have been reached."

—*The Economist*, June, 1941.

As Mr. Churchill observes, the story of the human race is war. Except, he adds, for brief and precarious interludes, there has never been peace in the world; and before history began murderous strife was universal and unending. This being a fact, it is more than merely platitudinous to say that all wars are revolutionary. It is true. After the Great War, the impetus of the revolutionary forces generated during four years of inhuman destructive slaughter and constructive struggle drove the Dominions ahead at a tremendous pace. Their whole life was advanced farther in those four years than ordinarily would have been the case in twenty. When the last dying kick brings the First Total War to a close the same result will emerge—only the advance may be greater.

What was required of them industrially and economically by the First Total War, however, was not any more clear to all the Dominion politicians, even the leaders, than it was to the majority of Britain's more experienced politicians and leaders. Australia and New Zealand, like Canada and South Africa, tried to run a war economy and a civil economy on the same level and at the same speed. But then, substantially, so did Britain: and it was not until France fell that all awoke thoroughly to the reality of enormous danger. It was not until the French disaster that the Budgets of the Dominions showed a keen concern to meet by taxation the vastly increased war expenditure. Rationing, for example, was virtually unknown until well into the second year of war in spheres in which it could have been applied.

Turning-Point

The greatest turning-point in the war in Dominion industrial development was marked by Mr. Menzies in June, 1941, when he put before the Australian people a programme calling **for** almost unlimited hard work and self-sacrifice.

His programme—he called it "a prospectus of Australia's total war effort"—was welcomed with unreserved approval in Australia and throughout Britain and America, and studied as a model by the Governments of New Zealand, Canada and South Africa. In essence what his declaration amounted to was that civil industry must henceforth be limited to what could be afforded after totally organising the Commonwealth for war; that Australians must forthwith toss overboard all personal interests and selfishness. Rights, he said, no longer mattered, and must be put into pawn from that day until victory was won. As he saw it, the individual's contribution to the war effort must no longer be what he thought he could afford, but all that he could provide after the most frugal provisions for his wants.

True, the National Register of wealth and man-power had already been taken before the war started; and the National Security Act enabled the Government to mobilise industry. But it required a year and a half's experience before the Act could be brought into its own—for under it the Government had power to carry out most of the measures Mr. Menzies introduced in June for the fulfilment of his unlimited war effort. It was an effort directed at nothing less than the mobilisation of all Australia's resources in man-power, capital equipment and raw materials.

Britain's Recognition

Australia's vital part as an industrial unit in the Empire's vast war production scheme, besides as a source of man-power, was never so emphasised in Britain until after Mr. Menzies' introduction of the comprehensive series of new measures for extending and consolidating the war effort. Coming after a lot of Australian criticism of the battle for Crete, the declaration came at the right time.

It was not that the criticism was not welcomed; it was. But a number of British critics believed that a few Australian critics were on the wrong track in their arguments about what part a chronic lack of equipment should be allowed to play in its effect upon the whole strategic plan in the Middle East. Indeed, there was a good deal of impatience with some of it.

It was easy to hear references to Australia's production and caustic remarks about how much better and more profitable it would be if, instead of crying about a lack of aeroplane protection for troops, for example, from Great Britain there were more evidence of a real effort in Australia to help create the very shields Australian, and English, critics wanted to see. This was intended purely as a helpful expression of opinion.

Even a journal of the wide experience of *The Economist*, commenting on the Nazi sneer that Britain was willing to fight to the last Australian, observed pertinently:

" Germany should not be given the chance of saying that Australia is only willing to fight to the last British tank—and pilot. Is, for instance, the Empire Air Training Scheme producing, in each Dominion, the maximum target of trained pilots aimed at? And would a critical survey of the standard of living in the Dominions show that they are sacrificing butter for guns, as they must if the Empire's potential superiority is to be translated into fact? An Imperial Conference, which Mr. Churchill said he was hoping to arrange, would be of great value if it led to frank discussion and co-operation on matters such as these."

Why Mr. Menzies did not do earlier what he did in June is a matter for guessing. Some say it is most likely that he could not have imagined, until he had seen it for himself, the enormity of Britain's problem of production. *The Times* remarked concisely :

" Now that he is back among his own people he has the great advantage of having seen both what has been well done here and what has been ill done. He has read the lesson both of our success and, perhaps still more important, of our mistakes."

Britain's Industrialists

Actually, Mr. Menzies' decision helped to remove the one great uneasiness upon which the nation needed to be reassured. It was that everything which the people were ready to put at the Government's disposal should be employed by the Government for the winning of the war.

English, Australian and New Zealand military experts explained Mr. Menzies' measures in part by saying that early in 1942, if not sooner, Australia would probably find herself confronted with the unprecedented task of replacing military equipment used by Australian soldiers fighting in the Middle East. Unless she made a greater effort than any then attempted, it was not seen how she could do this, if she were called upon, and at the same time play as great a part as would be necessary in supplying the fighting forces in Rhodesia, Kenya, India, New Zealand and make her mechanical contribution to the defence of the Far East.

Industrialists, of course, concurred. They know the problems. They also are perfectly aware that, inevitably, an

expansion of Australian industry for war purposes will entail tremendous changes in the whole of Australian life.

Yet it is worth noting, as some keen critics in London were quick to do, that some British industrialists who are among the loudest shouting for a more concentrated effort on the part of Australian industry are the first to shy away from discussion of the problem of Australia's future—when the war is over and, with a tremendous increase in her industrial power achieved during the war, she is likely to become a more important figure in certain industrial markets. The longer the war lasts, the greater will be the increase in that power.

These industrialists—and there are, apparently, not a few of them—while all for a greater industrialisation within the Commonwealth during the war for war purposes, do not want it to be allowed to create uncomfortable problems for themselves later. They want to guard their own vested interests. What they fear is competition with those interests. It is to the credit of some of the national newspapers in Britain that they are trying to jolt these unimaginative representatives into an appreciation of realities. But if they are not aroused to it in this way, rest assured that they will be by the full smack of the impact which consideration of a division of markets must have upon sections of British industry in **the** post-war reconstruction period.

Partly, of course, the trouble is that too few people outside of Parliament, which now and again watches a Parliamentarian make a month's tour of a Dominion, bother to investigate the Dominion scene for themselves. The majority have the most limited idea of what is going on in industry in a great country like Australia. If they did it is possible, certainly it is to be hoped, that the mental rigidity which frequently characterises them when they are asked to think in terms of co-operative effort with the Dominions, would fly out of their office windows. In most cases the trouble is that the British industrialist, say, still thinks in terms of the Dominions as markets for his goods, not as places where he can turn for co-operation in the sharing of markets. It is high time he began to reorientate himself.

Fortunately, there are observant English travellers ready to help them to appreciate the great strides made during the war by Australian industry and to encourage them to an early reorientation. Among the few is Sir EveLyn Wrench. Writing in *The Spectator* (October 10th, 1941) he declared that on a visit to Australia, where he was only a month before his article appeared, he had discovered **that apart from Australia becoming " America-conscious ":**

"Two important results of the war are that Australia has become 'Asia-conscious' and has realised afresh - the supreme importance of the establishment of secondary industries on a large scale. Twenty-eight years ago, on the eve of the Great War, when I last visited the Commonwealth, Australia seemed satisfied to remain a primary producer and to send her wool and mutton to the British market and, in return, to receive our manufactures. In the post-war era Australia began to develop her secondary industries, a policy which she has consistently followed ever since. In the present war, thanks to this development, Australia is playing a major part in the British Commonwealth's industrial war-effort; and if the A.I.F. is to-day to a great extent independent of British munitions, it is because she has put into practice the lessons of 1914-18. . . .

"Nothing has been more impressive since the war started than the way in which Australia, without previous experience, has laid the foundations for an industry which may one day equal in output the Clyde and the Tyne.

"Thanks to the foresight of its Government, South Australia has played an active part in the establishment of war-time secondary industries. The rapid growth of the town of Whyalla in the waterless and arid zone opposite Port Pirie, on Spencer's Gulf, is a symbol of the new Australia. Physical disabilities have been brushed aside, and the fact that no water was available did not deter the sponsors of the scheme from fixing on Whyalla as a suitable centre for ship-building. A town of 6,000 people is already in existence, and an efficient water-supply will be provided before long by means of pipe-lines from the Murray River, over 300 miles away. Large vessels have already been launched from the slips of Whyalla by Australian workers with no previous experience in shipbuilding; a handful of technicians has been brought from Scotland to fill key positions, but **the** achievement affords a remarkable tribute to the adaptability of the Australian worker.

"The present war has merely quickened the pace of Australian industrialisation. It was inevitable that a nation owning a continent would not be satisfied merely to play the rôle of primary producer for Great Britain. The experience gained in the slump years expedited matters. They brought home to Australians the danger **of** having all one's eggs in one basket. In those **unhappy** days when no one wanted Australian beef, mutton and

wool, the local market was not large enough to purchase the output of Australian farms. The establishment of secondary industries is therefore not only a vital defence-measure, which aims at making Australia largely self-contained and independent of sea-borne imports, but it is also important as providing increased home-markets for local farm-workers.

"Australians regretfully admit that after the war the development of Australian industries may present Great Britain with a difficult problem, but they hope that perhaps one solution may be a mass-migration from the old country."

Wanted—Understanding

Every kind of understanding will be needed, after the war, in every part of the British Empire, in particular on Great Britain's part, to co-ordinate the tremendous power, especially the industrial power, which has gushed to the surface under the pressure of war. This understanding will never flow in full measure unless it is appreciated by every responsible section of the people of Great Britain that the Dominions are no longer still in some backwoods condition. They are not. It is going to be vital to post-war harmony that this should be thoroughly acknowledged—acknowledged as clearly as the fact that the First Total War is not to be regarded as a war of the 45,000,000 British peoples in the island fortress, green dots in the North Atlantic, but a war involving approximately 70,000,000 white British people spread over the countries of the Empire, backed by millions of coloured peoples who still believe in the rule of people of British stock, a war in which all these millions, white and coloured, are backed by the vast unchallengeable industrial resources of the 140,000,000 of the United States of America.

Is it appreciated everywhere in Great Britain, for instance, that if a widening Empire mind and outlook is necessary, there are millions in the Dominions who believe it is needed most in some quarters in Great Britain itself? If this widened outlook becomes universal throughout the Empire, will it not then appear sound common-sense that if Britain wants to establish an engine factory she can as well start one in Melbourne as in Bristol?

Is a German Blind Spot Ours, too ?

No more hurting suggestion could be made than that the Dominions are in this war with Britain because of a feeling of generosity towards Britain. Because of the vastly more telling reason that the causes for which the war is being fought

are also *their* causes are they in the war, steeled to fight to the finish. Put with a rare enough ruggedly picturesque quality by Mr. Menzies, the position, as the Australian and the New Zealander sees it, is this : It is far better to come out of this war with every resource strained to exhaustion, with every individual fortune dissipated to the wind, than it is to come out of it either as a compromiser with evil or as the slave of a system nobody would barter for one moment in exchange for the right of honest and independent poverty.

Anzacs feel they are doing nothing more remarkable in fighting than Scotsmen or Welshmen. All are of the one family. Listening to a variety of people in a variety of places, a Dominioner may sometimes wonder whether this fact is any better understood by foreigners, in its fullest sense, than is the significance of the development in each part of the Empire of the " new Dominion status " understood by Hitler and his (in this respect) myopic gang. For instead of being a sign of the beginning of the crack-up of the Empire, as some interpreters predicted with all the noisy assurance of the unknowing, the paradox is that the new independence has immensely strengthened the whole structure of the Empire.

With all her flashing gleams of intelligence, Germany has never quite understood that when the drum sounds, the peoples of the British Empire, who in peace-time wrangle about trade and other subjects, become one people. But could not these different Empire peoples themselves reveal in a flash in peace-time, too, that they *know* they are one people ? There was need for it in some instances after the Armistice: there will be a greater need for it after this struggle of Titans.

Almost at any time in the 1918-37 period, if a Dominion man with a solid background, especially if he had a Parliamentary one, came to London and dropped into comfortable conversation with a happily well-to-do British manufacturer, he heard a variation of this : " Ah, yes. Manufacturing, you say, is being thought about? So I've heard. Well, now, you're a very pleasant sort of fellow, and I'm sure you'll appreciate the vast amount of tradition and skill that're needed before you can think of doing that sort of thing successfully, and, being a sensible fellow, you'll see to it that you'll do what you can to keep your good country on its present sound lines—growing butter and wool and wheat—and leave that manufacturing problem to us. We're fitted for it, you know."

Just Imagine . . .

Would Britain have been better off to-day, if advice of that sort had been taken? Instead of being self-reliant,

Australia (and through her, because of her great industrial strength, New Zealand) would have been in a number of respects a **100** per cent, liability. No one, of course, can say now, in the present grievous circumstances, that it was a bad thing that Australia disobeyed such economic theories and ventured to drown the bleat of her 114,000,000 sheep in the roar of blast furnaces, the hum of millions of factory machine wheels, the clang of hammers on steel plates, the slap and clack of numberless production belts.

Imagine Australia and New Zealand, platters held out, *Oliver Twist* style, saying each month since the war began, first to the British Government, then to the American manufacturer : " Please let us have ammunition, Bren guns, tanks, Vickers' machine-guns, anti-aircraft guns, trench mortars, aeroplanes, a sloop or two if you can't manage a destroyer or a cruiser—and if you can't do that, can you give us all the tools necessary to make what we want before we can be of any use to Britain, or to ourselves, in a war in which we want to be able to give every ounce of our support? "

Obviously, neither would have got a single cartridge, relatively: one only had to look with half an eye at the production and supply problems of the Anglo-American Governments to be appraised of that hard fact. " Give us the tools ! " called Churchill to America after eighteen months of war. Instead of striding about the earth in uniforms, jostling the foe whenever they get the chance, there both Dominions would have been sitting, more or less kicking their heels in the Pacific, hoping their weakness would not be an added encouragement to the neighbouring Japanese military hotheads to intimidate them while Britain was in no sort of shape to go to their aid.

" Don't Worry, Little Brother ! "

Is it possible that after the war a few selfish fellows, seeing part of their Australian market being scotched by Australian manufacturers, will, like an elephant to a gnat, say: " Ah, little brother, how glad I was to see you roll up your sleeves in the war and show those Americans that you could **make** your own mechanical requirements while we were busy **and** they were busy ! Now, of course, we've time to turn around **and** shake you by the hand and tell you that there's no need **to** go on sinking your money in factories and worrying your heads about markets. . . . Now can't we get back to where we were not so many years ago ? . . . You sell us the cheese **and** we'll sell you the chisels? "

Yes; it is possible. But it will **not work out that way, because Australia has what it takes to be a fairly important**

industrial nation and she has already tasted what **it is like**—and she likes the taste. What are the requirements? Thrust: an earnest, indomitable desire to move forward, a readiness to make sacrifices, confidence enough to spend huge sums of money for the greatest possible expansion of industry. Production technique: an increasingly high degree of skill and a wish for an ever-quickenening rate of industrial development. Pride: a feeling of great satisfaction in what is produced, a determination to learn soundly, to build grandly.

Australia has all these. What she is not sure of is opportunity—opportunity to market what she manufactures. Empire planning, at least, is therefore inevitable after the war. Inevitable because the alternative to Empire planning, either as a separate action or as part of a bigger international scheme, will be muddle: worse, dissatisfaction.

Like other Dominioners, Australia's leaders are well aware of this. When, during his February-May visit to Britain in 1941, Mr. Menzies said Australia's war effort would be trebled, it was understood that he was implying that he knew Australia was destined to become a growing factor of great importance for the supply of machinery and munitions necessary to the defence of the Far East and the Antipodes. Whether, with the British authorities, he raised the question of planning Empire production after the war in order to eliminate un-economic competition is not known. Certainly, there are a number of wide-visioned men in the City of London, and a great many national newspapers ready to support a suggestion that this should be done because planning is a vastly different thing from attempting to stifle a young nation's legitimate development for reasons of private commercial advantage. It might also encourage Australian enterprises, the encouraging critics say. "Let Australia's mobilisation of all resources, in man-power, capital, equipment and raw materials, be planned carefully," is their advice. "Organising for victory means also organising for long-term post-war reconstruction."

Young Giant

Only a young industrial giant, for instance, could **make the** seven-league stride which Australian industry took between the outbreak of the hostilities in 1914 and those of 1939. In 1914 she was importing about 40 per cent, of **her** requirements in manufactured goods; in 1939 about 15 **per** cent., despite the fact that in the meantime population **had** increased by approximately two million. Throughout **the** whole gamut of commercial life—shipping, banking, distribution, retailing, building—the effect of **the upward surge of industry is felt.**

Sir Alexander Roger, who headed the British delegation to the Eastern Group Supply Conference held at Delhi, later paid a visit to 87 munition and machine-tool factories in Australia. He and the other members of his delegation were so surprised with what they found that in September, 1941, they reported to the British Government that the possibilities of the production of armaments and war supplies in Australia far exceed those of any other country in the Eastern Group. They discovered that the speed with which the manufacturing programmes had been brought to fruition was astonishing.

Interesting fact: the mission reported that the Australian public, even the munition workers themselves, appear not to appreciate the extent and importance of their work.

One of the mission's conclusions was that Australia can deliver the goods she takes orders for, and it urged the United Kingdom Government not to hesitate to sanction expenditure through doubt of this. Another was that Australia was approaching its maximum possible output of munitions in view of its supplies of labour, machinery and raw materials : it suggested that before new forms of production were undertaken the authorities should consider whether these could be grafted on to the industrial structure successfully, or whether it could be done only by interrupting production which was moving forward so sweetly.

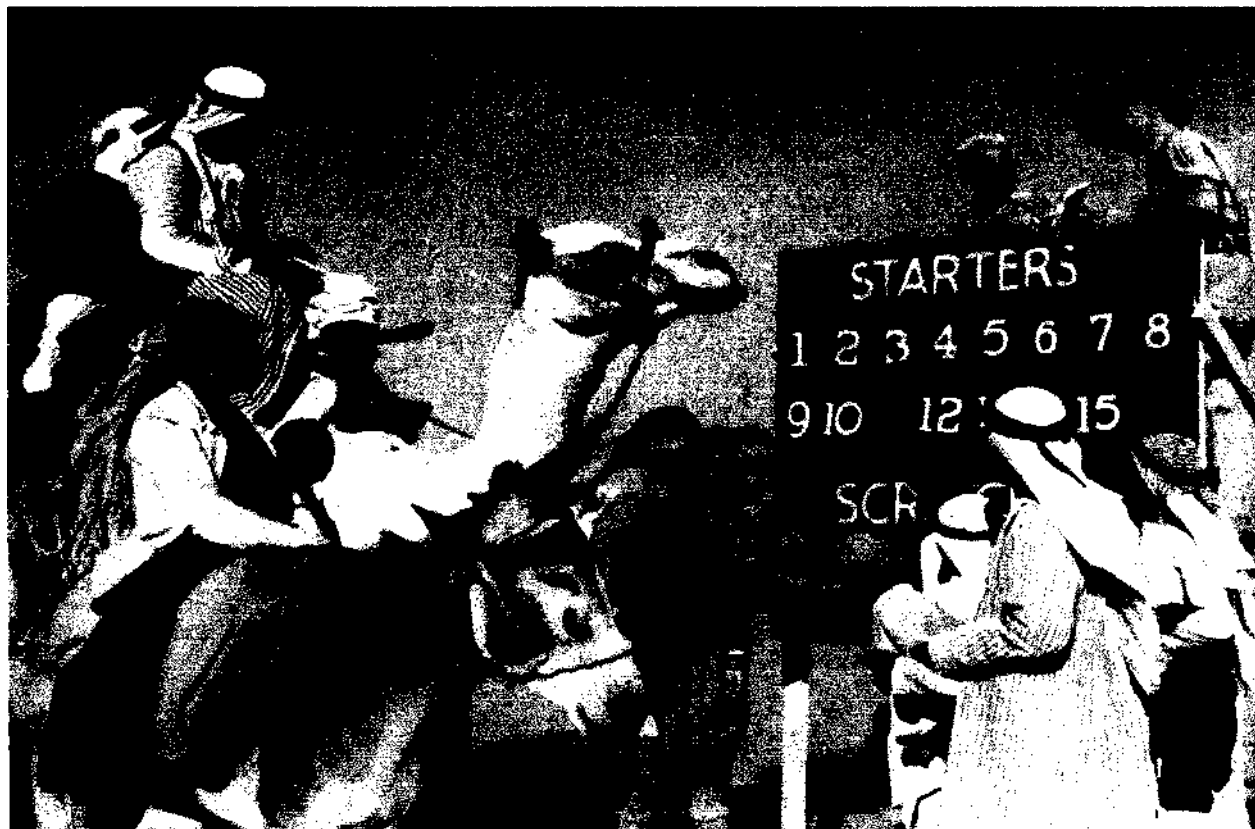
Sir Alexander, in a separate report, praised the initiative of the resourceful Australian manufacturer, urged a closer relationship between design (which is the Services' responsibility) and production (which is in the hands of engineers), and pointed out that men were still engaged on work which women were doing in factories in Britain.

Simultaneously with the Mission's report, it was revealed by the Australian Government that a twenty-five-pound howitzer was being fully produced in the Commonwealth—a noteworthy feat because production involved the manufacture of many special-purpose machine tools. As a result of co-operation between the Government and private manufacturers, production of the howitzer had taken only a year, compared with from fifteen to eighteen months by civil industry in Britain.

As a gun it pleased the Army: Lieutenant-General Sir Iven Mackay, commenting on it, said that had the similai guns which were lost in Greece been available in quantity in Crete the island would never have been taken.

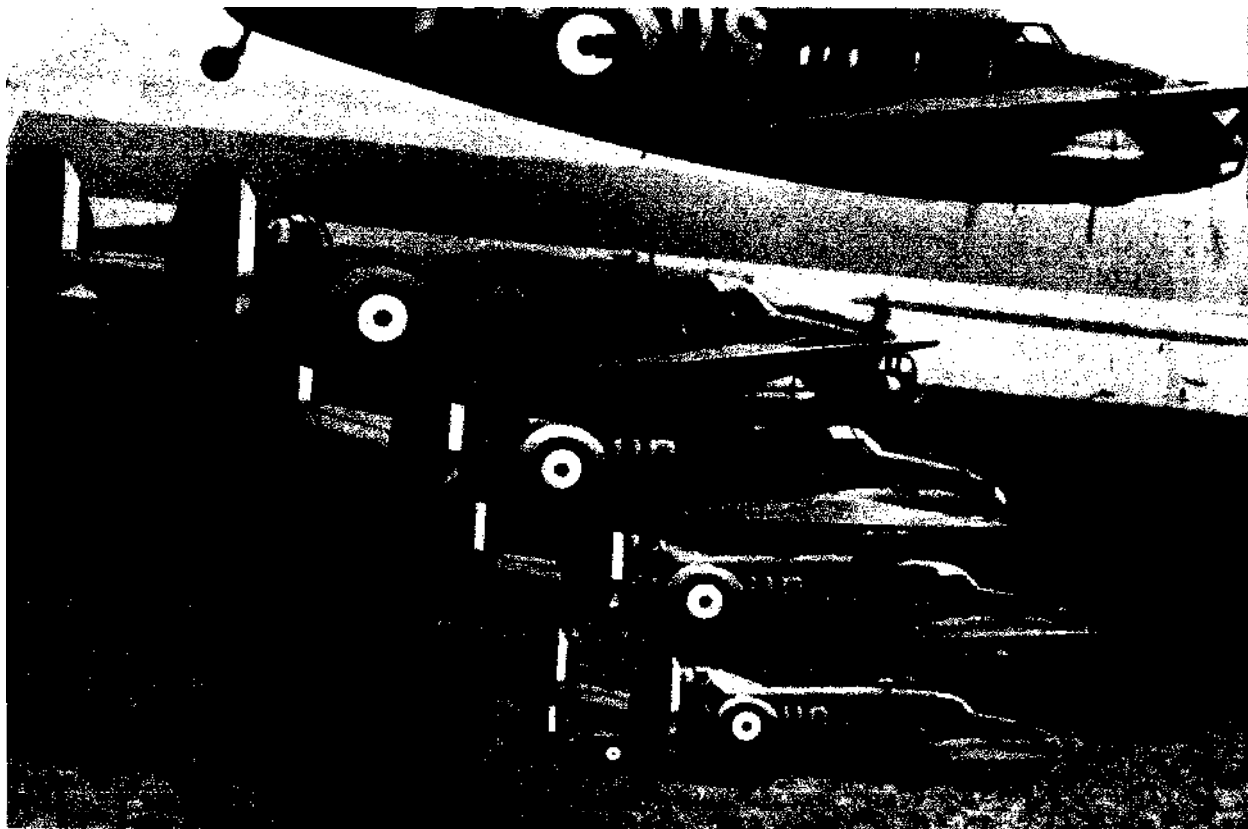
Watch the rapid growth in a flash in figures, taking June of 1915 and of 1938 as points on which to hang the comparison. Factories increased in that time from 15,092 to 26,395; workers directly employed in 1915 totalled 321,071, in 1938 559,160; the annual pay envelope increased three and

PREPARING
FOR THE
"DESERT
DERBY"
Breaking the
monotony of
camp routine.
Australians in
Palestine arrang-
ed a race meet-
ing in the desert.
Camels were mov-
ing grandstands
for the Arabs.



ALERT IN
THE FAR
EAST

Important in the aerial defence of Malaya are pilots of the Royal Australian Air Force, flying American Lockheed Hudson machines, and Australian-built Wirraways. Lockheeds up.



a half times; it was in 1915 £28,981,600, and it reached £102,078,550 in 1938; materials entering factories to undergo manufacturing processes were valued at £102,766,082; in 1938, £287,243,412. The value added to those raw materials on their way through the plants jumped from £66,310,618 to £196,448,024; while the value of the products at the factory door, ready for distribution to still other factory plants and to the homes of the people, were worth £329,692,441 more in June, 1948, than in June, 1915, for they rose in value from £169,086,700 to £498,779,141. All figures are rising steadily.

In short, a new era of huge industrial expansion has dawned in Australia and New Zealand. Of first-class importance as a technical advance to new industrial frontiers, of course, is aeroplane production. It is a striking pointer to the vastness of the industrial development that probably lies ahead of the Commonwealth. Probably is used advisedly, because a great deal is going to hang upon the post-war attitude of America and Britain.

What appears inescapable is a realignment in the economic structure of the Empire : what is interesting to speculate upon is to what degree it will be permitted by external interests. But apart from the reservoir of knowledge from the brilliant work of the Council of Scientific and Industrial Research and of the skill and experience of thousands of highly trained workers, Australia since 1940 has been whetting her appetite on exports of manufactured products to new markets overseas. Largely this opportunity sprang from the fact that certain markets, cut off from old sources, lodged orders in Australia. A flood of calls for manufactured goods set in after September, 1939, from China, the Netherlands East Indies, Palestine, Greece before it fell under the German hammer-blow, India, Iran, Iraq, Egypt, South Africa. Whether these new customers will return after the war to the old suppliers obviously is unpredictable, and will depend on several factors : it seems unreasonable to suppose that some considerable gains will not remain with Australian industry.

Future ?

Every thinking Australian, however, recognised, on reviewing the first two years of the war, that two tasks of the first magnitude confronted Australia as a nation, both martial and civil. The immediate and urgent necessity was to devote every ounce of energy to the winning of the war. The second waits upon the first, as *The Herald*, Melbourne, frequently and wisely points out. When the war is at last won, Australia will undoubtedly be called upon to play a major part in the reconstruction of the British Empire. Mr. Menzies

revealed appreciation of this fact in some of his statements in London. For example, in discussing Australia's manufacture of war materials, he emphasised the possibilities of Australia as a manufacturing centre and suggested that all the skill acquired as a result of expansion of industry should serve as a driving force in later years.

Similar considerations are taking shape in the minds of other Australian leaders. Mr. Fadden, who was acting Prime Minister in the early part of 1941, dipping into the future, visualised great industrial expansion and a large increase of population in various States, and many other leaders are thinking along the same lines. It is clear that the shape of things to come is apparent to many thoughtful Australians, particularly in respect of secondary industries.

Population

What is Australia to do in preparation for the great influx of population predicted as a post-war possibility?

An abnormal concentration of the nation's population of 7,000,000 is found in the capital cities of the various States. Nothing stresses this odd fact more than a comparison with the capitals of the more important countries of the world :—

State or Country.	Metropolis.	Year.	Metropolitan Population.
New South Wales	Sydney	1938	1,288,720
Victoria	Melbourne	»	1,035,600
Queensland	Brisbane	»	325,890
South Australia	Adelaide	»	321,410
Western Australia	Perth	»	220,330
Tasmania	Hobart	»	63,250
England	London (a)	»	8,700,000
Scotland	Edinburgh	»	469,700
Northern Ireland	Belfast	»	443,500
Eire	Dublin	»	477,000
South Africa	Capetown (b)	1936	173,412
New Zealand	Wellington	1938	154,400
Belgium	Brussels	1937	910,154
Czechoslovakia	Prague	1934	911,290
Denmark	Copenhagen	1935	843,168
France	Paris	1936	2,829,746
Germany	Berlin	1937	4,299,000
Greece	Athens	»	494,080
Hungary	Budapest	1938	1,067,124
Italy	Rome	»	1,279,748

(Table continued overleaf.)

(a) Greater London, (b) European population.

Note.—The population of Canberra in 1938 was 9,740.

State or Country.	Metropolis.	Year.	Metropolitan Population.
Japan	Tokyo (c)	1938	6,457,600
Netherlands	Amsterdam	1937	788,373
Norway-	Oslo	"	275,033
Portugal	Lisbon	"	670,004
Russia (Soviet Union)	Moscow	1936	3,641,500
Spain	Madrid	1935	991,436
Sweden	Stockholm	1937	556,954
United States	New York (d)	1938	7,491,781

(c) Greater Tokyo, (d) Principal City.

Two factors contribute to the growth of a population : "natural increase" (excess of births over deaths) and "net migration" (excess of arrivals over departures). Australia has gained most in recent years by migration. Decline in the rate of natural increase in all States in the Commonwealth has been considerable. The rate in 1938 was less than half that computed for the peak year, 1914, namely 17-44.

In the first five years of this century the average increase in population in this way was approximately 57,000 persons annually. The maximum of 82,000 was recorded in 1921-25 ; after that it fell to 52,650 in the quinquennium 1931-35. During the three years to 1938 it was 53,580. Nevertheless, despite its low birth-rate Australia has a higher rate of natural increase than most European countries because of its low death-rate.

Approximate rates of increase of the population of Australia and New Zealand, in comparison with those of other countries, are shown in the table on page 420.

Variations of the rates of increase in population in Australia are shown in the following table, arranged into certain groups of years according to the occurrence of influences seriously affecting the growth of population :—

Period from 31st December.	Interval.	Increase during Period.	Average Annual Increase.	Average Annual Rate of Increase.		
				Natural Increase.	Net Migration.	Total.
	Years.	Millions.	Thousands.	%	%	%
1900-1913	13	0.13	87		0.53	2.04
1913-1923	10	0.86	86	1.59	0.15	1.64
1923-1929	6	0.68	113	1.50	0.64	1.88
1939-1938	9	0.46	51	1.27	— 0.01	0.82

Note.—Minus sign (—) denotes decrease.

Until 1913 the rate of natural increase rose. This, and the

impetus given to immigration in the years immediately before the Great War, was responsible for the comparatively high annual rate of 2.04 per cent, during the pre-Great War years. Obviously, the dominating influence in the decade 1913-23 was the Great War; its effects are seen in the reduction of the rate from 2.04 to 1.64 per cent.

Country.	Annual Rate of Increase of Population during period—						
	1901- 1906.	1906- 1911.	1911- 1916.	1916- 1921.	1921- 1926.	1926- 1931.	1931- 1936.
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
AUSTRALASIA—							
Australia	1.38	2.04	1.87	2.07	2.11	1.50	0.76
New South Wales (a)	1.99	2.05	2.61	2.19	2.20	1.74	0.87
Victoria	0.17	1.70	1.38	1.68	2.00	1.18	0.53
Queensland	1.35	2.77	2.18	2.17	2.38	1.53	1.14
South Australia (b)	0.27	2.48	1.47	2.33	2.17	0.81	0.41
Western Australia	6.22	2.42	1.77	1.31	2.66	2.56	0.81
Tasmania	1.33	0.63	0.43	1.90	0.04	1.01	0.55
New Zealand	2.81	2.43	1.56	2.13	2.06	1.36	0.79
EUROPE—							
England and Wales	1.04	1.02	-0.84	1.81	0.64	0.44	0.42
Scotland	0.55	0.56	0.31	0.24	0.09	-0.21	0.50
Ireland	-0.22	-0.06	-0.21	0.58	-0.60	-0.12	0.28
Belgium	1.26	0.69	0.53	-0.55	1.03	0.71	0.42
Denmark	1.12	1.26	1.20	2.13	1.01	0.67	0.84
France	0.15	0.06	-0.72	0.55	0.76	0.53	0.02
Germany	1.46	1.33	0.71	-1.60	0.37	0.55	0.58
Italy	0.52	0.80	1.16	0.22	0.91	0.31	0.63
Netherlands	1.53	1.22	1.72	1.16	1.53	1.06	1.26
Norway	0.51	0.73	1.01	1.14	0.65	0.42	0.46
Spain	0.52	0.87	0.66	0.82	0.65	0.89	1.46
Sweden	0.61	0.84	0.70	0.64	0.40	0.39	0.34
Switzerland	1.28	1.17	0.81	0.01	0.38	0.62	0.44
ASIA—							
Ceylon	1.62	1.20	1.71	1.28	2.30	1.18	1.34
Japan	1.29	1.08	1.42	0.57	1.42	1.48	0.77
AMERICA—							
Canada	2.99	2.99	2.20	1.81	1.33	1.97	1.23
United States	2.00	1.82	1.67	1.21	1.67	1.27	0.69

(a) Including Australian Capital Territory. (b) Including Northern Territory.
Note.—Minus sign (—) denotes decrease.

A more settled and prosperous era was experienced from 1923 to 1929. Large-scale migration was resumed, and although there was a further decline in the rate of natural increase owing to the persistent fall in the birth-rate since the Great War, the annual rate of growth rose to 1.88 per cent. Then came the depression. Immigration ceased. Australia lost 3,579 people through an excess of departures over arrivals from 1929 to 1938, although in the last three years small gains were recorded. Unemployment in the early part of this period accounted for the fall in the rate of natural increases.

If the population increased at the average rate of the present century—namely, 1.63 per cent.—it would double itself in forty-two years. It has been estimated, however, on the assumptions that the present birth-rate and death-

rate remain unchanged and that no increase to the population results from migration, that the annual rates of natural increase would be for the period 1933-43, 0.64 per cent.; 1933-53, 0.55 per cent.; 1933-63, 0.45 per cent.; and 1933-73, 0.33 per cent. Australia's experience in this respect would be similar to that of many other countries as a result of the low birth-rate.

Child Endowment Scheme

A major social measure, involving £A13,000,000, passed by the Commonwealth Parliament during the first two years of the war, was the Child Endowment Scheme. It constituted a major national advance in social betterment: "a rational investment in persons as compared with things".

The endowment provided is at the rate of 5s. a week for all children under the age of sixteen years in excess of one child in each family. Payments are made in respect of all eligible children irrespective of means, occupation or social condition of parents. They are made direct to the mother, except in special circumstances, prescribed by legislation.

Children otherwise endowed, such as the children of war pensioners, come within the scope of the scheme, as also do children residing in private charitable institutions and children boarded out by the State, but not in institutions wholly or substantially supported by State funds. Aboriginal children are treated the same as white children in comparable circumstances. British subjects arriving from overseas may claim endowment after a year's residence.

In 1941 the number of children under sixteen years in Australia was about 1,830,000; and of this number it was estimated that 1,000,000 would be eligible for child endowment payments. The scheme, in fact, assists 500,000 Australian families. The first child of a family does not come within the scope of the scheme for two reasons. Firstly, on the Commonwealth Arbitration Court's finding the basic wage, as fixed from time to time, is considered adequate for a family unit of three—man, wife and child. A child in a basic-wage family is at no disadvantage in the matter of nutrition. Nutrition and clothing become matters of concern only as the numbers increase. Secondly, the inclusion of first children in the benefit would have increased the cost of endowment in Australia by over 80 per cent. That is, it would have added £A1 1,000,000 to the large sum of £A13,000,000 which the accepted scheme is estimated to cost. No Government could contemplate such a great increase in the charge on revenue on top of that made inevitable by war requirements.

An endowment of 5*s.* for each child after the first is in advance of anything attempted in Australia or elsewhere. Unde? the New South Wales scheme—the only State scheme which was superseded by the Commonwealth legislation—the payment was 5*s.* a week for each child in excess of one, but it was restricted to certain low-wage families, whereas the Commonwealth scheme covers all families. In New Zealand, the Labour Government's scheme (in 1941) provides 4*s.* a week for each child in excess of two. European schemes existing prior to the First Total War either did not endow the first child or paid at a lower rate.

Finance for the scheme is provided by a tax on all pay-rolls at the rate of 1*½* per cent, on amounts above £20 weekly. This tax is paid by the employer and is expected to yield £A.7,000,000 a year. A further sum of £A2,000,000 is obtained by the abolition of the income-tax deductions for children in excess of one. The balance is made up from general revenue.

Migration

Assisted migration into Australia was introduced in 1920, when, under an agreement between the Commonwealth and State Governments, the Commonwealth became responsible for the recruiting and medical inspection of migrants and for their transport to Australia. The Commonwealth Government was advised from time to time by the State Governments as to the numbers and classes of migrants they wanted. They became responsible for the subsequent settlement of the migrants. But besides this, personal and group nominations were also accepted by the States, the nominators undertaking responsibility for their settlement.

The pinch of the financial and industrial depression was so hard that in 1930 it was decided to confine the grant of assisted passages to the wives and dependent children of men who arrived in Australia before January 1st, 1930. In co-operation with the United Kingdom, the Australian Government in March, 1938, decided to resume assisted migration. Provision was made for the grant of assisted passages from the United Kingdom in favour of persons (relatives or friends) resident in the British Isles nominated by individuals or approved organisations; migrants specially requisitioned for by any State; and persons of British stock resident in the United Kingdom who would be in possession of £300 in the case of a married man (on arrival in Australia) or, alternatively, a pension or other income of not less than £100 yearly; or, in the case of a single man, not less than £50.

With the outbreak of war, the British and Australian

Governments decided to discontinue the grant of assisted passages during the war excepting in cases of close family reunion involving wives, dependent children and other special cases having exceptional features for which approval is required.

Conceivably, the influx of population after the war, with thousands tired of a blood-reeking Europe, will be comparable with that of the first five years of the era of the great Gold Rushes, when nearly half a million people poured into Victoria alone. Conditions now are very different from those of the early days, but the impact on the national life may be no less drastic.

Some prominent Australian newspapers believed even at the end of eighteen months' fighting that it had already become obvious that Australia should give thought to possibilities that may involve practically a recasting of the life of the nation. They urged that Australians must, in the first place, look closely into the question of stabilising secondary industries, and because the welfare of the country demands that they should not all be located in cities, it is necessary to foster well-balanced schemes of irrigation and water conservation. They insisted that Australia must have sound housing schemes, sound health schemes, and all other conditions that will avoid errors of old.

In the broader view, a marked increase in export of manufactured articles is expected, and in general Australians will probably discover a new outlook in external affairs. It is clear that, above all, Australia must realise her own direct responsibilities in the matter of defence. She has always given Britain valuable aid, but in the last analysis the British Navy has been her bulwark, and of this Britain has carried the far greater burden. A vital factor in the reconstruction scheme in Australia must be a strong measure of self-reliance in defence. A concentration on the Air Force and on the Navy is accepted.

Problems ahead of the Commonwealth are great. They stir the imagination because of their magnitude and importance. They loom, in all their phases, as a challenge to Australia's scientists, engineers, manufacturers, Labour leaders, members of Parliament, and all other guides of national thought and enterprise.

White Australia Policy

Take another facet: race. Here is a continent twenty-five times as large as the British Isles and yet carrying only 7,000,000 white people and 51,000 full-blood aboriginal natives of Australia. Partly, the reason is that, as a result of the "White Australia" policy, the general practice is not to permit Asiatics or other coloured immigrants to enter

Australia for the purpose of settling permanently. There are special arrangements with India, Japan and China under which facilities are afforded for subjects of those countries who are *bona fide* merchants, students, or tourists to enter and remain in the country under exemption while they retain their status.

The preponderance of migrants to and from Australia is of British nationality. Only a small proportion is of non-European race. During 1926-30, a considerable number of Italian, Greek and Yugoslav settlers arrived, so that although there was at the same time a considerable amount of concurrent emigration of these nationals, they provided a large permanent addition to the nation's population. During the next five-year period there was a greatly reduced increase to the Italian section of the population by migration. Simultaneously, there was actually an excess of departures of most other nationals. But in 1938 the increase in the number of Southern Europeans was greater than in any other year during the past quinquennium, the net addition of those peoples to Australia's population being 4,309 persons, compared with 1,740 in 1936 and 3,782 in 1937. Generally speaking, in recent years there has been an excess of departures of non-European people as a whole, though it is not true of all non-European nationals, but in 1937 and 1938 the movements of non-Europeans resulted in an excess of arrivals. The net gain or loss, according to nationality or race, for the identical periods and the percentage of each nationality on the total gain or loss for the year are given in the following table :—

Nationality or Race.	Net Gain or Loss.			Proportion.		
	1926-30.	1931-35.	1938.	1926-30.	1931-35.	1938.
British	105,220	-10,390	739	%	%	%
French	102	87	27	81.12	-95.44	8.09
German	1,211	152	1,743	0.08	0.80	0.30
Greek	1,802	-194	842	0.93	1.40	19.08
Italian	10,353	1,523	2,526	1.39	-1.78	9.22
Yugoslav	2,146	-39	335	8.14	13.99	27.65
United States	815	-54	268	1.65	-0.36	5.85
Other European	8,354	-431	1,912	0.63	-0.50	2.93
Total European	130,203	-9,346	8,592	100.38	-85.85	94.04
Chinese	-1,864	-1,263	303	-1.44	+11.61	3.32
Japanese	-242	-425	11	-0.19	-3.90	0.12
Indian and Cingalese	695	232	81	0.54	2.13	0.88
Other Non-European	913	-84	150	0.71	-0.77	1.64
Total Non-European	-496	-1,340	545	-0.38	+14.13	5.96
Total	129,707	-10,886	9,137	100.00	-100.00	100.00

Because of the depressed conditions in Australia, the gain by migration decreased rapidly during the years 1928 and 1929, and there were actual losses of population during the next three years. Little variation in the figures for arrivals and departures was noticed from 1933 to 1936; in 1937 arrivals exceeded departures by 5,203, and in 1938 the increase was 9,137, the greatest gain to the population by migration since 1928. Italians were most numerous in 1938, then Germans, then Greeks. More than 81 per cent, of the net migration in 1926-30 consisted of persons of British nationality, the remaining 19 per cent, being other Europeans. During 1931-35 there was a loss by migration of persons of British nationality and a gain of those of Italian. Non-Europeans, with the exception of Indians and Cingalese, also showed an excess of departures.

Problem—and An Example

Such a huge area as Australia, it will be urged more and more after the war, cannot be allowed to remain so sparsely populated. It must become, to a far greater extent than previously, a centre of Empire activity. How? Many people are already giving thought to this question. What some of them fail to appreciate fully—and it is a point that is not understood to any degree abroad—is that a very large portion of Australia is arid or semi-arid. This fact constitutes Australia's greatest internal problem, in a long-range aspect. Dr. J. J. C. Bradfield, the engineer who designed the Sydney Harbour Bridge, is planning a vast irrigation scheme to make Central Australia fit for settlement. The project, as an ambition, is supported by the Minister for the Interior, who says, fairly enough, that while the Commonwealth Government will not rush into rash post-war settlement schemes, it will be glad to consider closely any soundly based proposal for irrigating the interior.

Presumably Dr. Bradfield's scheme will be an extension of one which he put forward a few years ago for the damming of north-eastern rivers and irrigating the wide plains of western Queensland. If he can succeed, he will be a world benefactor. Mr. W. M. Hughes once said, on returning from a visit to the Centre, that if that area was a "Dead Heart" he should have been in his grave long ago! However, scientific opinion agrees that large areas of the Australian interior are purely desert and other vast areas will never be fit for any considerable measure of settlement without an assured water supply.

'It is the existence of these dry areas—Canadians and Americans call them "dust-bowls"—that causes even informed opinion to vary in its estimate of the country's absorp-

tive capacity, although conservative authorities **appear to** agree that Australia could support a population of 20,000,000. The desire that British stock should continue to dominate being overwhelmingly strong, it is hoped by most Australians that Britain will provide the majority of the new settlers. Others believe that a serious effort should be made to get newcomers from Scandinavia, Holland, Switzerland, Greece and other European countries. Even if the Commonwealth were to-day, however, to plan an organised immigration of 50,000 settlers a year, there would have to be a costly expansion in land settlement and in industry.

After the war, Japan, for one, is going to oppose continuation of the White Australia policy: for her it must always be a stick with which to drum in her argument for *lebensraum*. Yet, as Professor W. A. Osborne has said, on one topic all Australian parties are agreed, and that is the preservation of the purity of race. The reasons may vary, but there is striking uniformity in the objective. "The workers dread the wage competition of races low in the scale of civilisation; the employers fear the consequences of miscegenation", is a telling point he makes. He adds :

"Some critics suggest that Northern Australia should be thrown open to coloured settlement, forgetting that it is not the northern part which would be invaded voluntarily, but the rich portions where the white population is concentrated. Had the northern coasts and hinterlands been attractive they would have been settled long ago by the virile Malay, but they physically resemble southern Java, which is sparsely peopled despite the swarming population in other parts of the island."

Australians also know that Madison Grant wrote of America in his book *The Passing of the Great Race*:

"Nature had granted to the Americans of a century ago the greatest opportunity in recorded history to produce in the isolation of a continent a powerful and racially homogeneous people, and had provided for the experiment a pure race of one of the most gifted and vigorous stocks on earth, a stock free from diseases, physical and moral, which have again and again sapped the vigour of older lands. Our grandfathers threw away this opportunity in blissful ignorance of national childhood and inexperience."

The lesson for Australia is plain and twofold: were **the** dregs of Europe allowed to collect in Australia, the **danger**

would be as great in its way as it would be if the **gatit** were flung wide open to coloured races.

" America, I Love You ! "

Lord Halifax, the British Ambassador in Washington, Mr. Duff Cooper and representatives of the Canadian, Australian and New Zealand Governments met Mr. Cordell Hull, the United States Secretary of State, in Washington to mark the welding of another strong link between America and the three Dominions on the day before Mr. Churchill and Mr. Roosevelt, at sea, issued on August 14th, 1941, the famous eight-point declaration. The occasion was arranged for the exchange of ratifications of new conciliation treaties between the United States and the Empire countries. Three separate treaties were arranged—between America on the one side and Canada, Australia and New Zealand on the other. They are substitutes for the general treaty which has existed between the Empire and the United States.

A lot of people besides Americans love America. Australians and New Zealanders are fond of Americans. Americans are strongly attached to both. Always keen, the interest of Australia and New Zealand in America is destined to become increasingly closer.

An odd fact is that both Dominions know more about Americans than Americans know about them. Proximity, the visits of thousands of Australians and New Zealanders to the United States, hundreds of thousands of films (Australia and New Zealand have some of the finest cinemas in the world), American literature by the shipload, visits of units of the American Navy, the great and constant vogue for American fashions among women, gadgets, sky-paths travelled regularly by Pan-American Airways, and American radio programmes play a great part in forging and maintaining this situation.

Radio stations in Australia and New Zealand put on specially selected American programmes. American revues and musical shows are preferred to British music-hall recordings, which, generally speaking, have little appeal. Several front-rank music-hall stars in London would not fill a suburban concert hall in Sydney, Melbourne or Auckland. This, of course, is due to the fact that a good deal of their attraction for Britons is traditional in its appeal, whereas American revue, generally speaking, is as universal in its appeal as American films. British-made films, with a few exceptions, have made little impression, and, despite the advantages possessed by British film studios, have not been **better**, in

some cases, than Australian-made films, and **not** infrequently worse.

America's Influence

The greatest attempt yet made to familiarise Americans more with Australia and New Zealand was launched early in 1941 by the Australian Federal Government. It set up in Fifth Avenue, New York, under David W. Bailey, an organisation known as the Australian News and Information Bureau. Impressed, the New Zealand Government began to plan opening a similar bureau. Included in the bureau's functions are liaison work with America's Press and people, the free dissemination of news articles and photographs throughout America, the encouragement of the wider establishment of newspaper correspondents in both countries, broadcasts, cheaper Press cable rates—in fact anything likely to help the two peoples to understand better the reality of the bond that unites all English-speaking peoples. (The Postmaster-General and Minister for Information (Senator Ashley) announced in October, 1941, that it had been decided to reduce the Press cable rate to the United States to one penny a word. This was made possible by an increase of the Federal Government subsidy from 5¼d. to 6½d. per word. The object was to increase the trickle of Australian cable news to America to something like a river.)

Advocates of the Australian-American Co-operation Movement, whose first public rally in the Sydney Town Hall in 1941 was attended by representatives of the State Government, believe this movement is "a constructive war effort extending beyond victory to the assurance of permanent peace". They are satisfied that Australia's welfare after the war depends on the extent of her co-operation with the United States.

Men like Dr. I. Clunies Ross, formerly chief of the International Wool Secretariat, London, at present Dean of the Faculty of Veterinary Science, Sydney, one of the cleverest among Australia's younger, wide-visioned men, and whom many in London and Australia believed should have been Australia's first Minister to Tokyo, is a typical thruster for closer Australian-American co-operation. Sure that the future progress of many of Australia's industries rests largely on the generosity and vision of the United States, he has been telling his countrymen since his return in 1940: "We have yet to develop a **burning national** consciousness of the importance of each **country** to the other. It's not enough to think of relations **with the** United States only in connection with the war. The real problems on which our future will depend will come **after**

the war; and it will be only by close co-operation that we can solve them."

Anglo-American Co-operation

Australian officials ask Americans : " I f we attain a workable measure of co-operation in this war—as we believe it is to our mutual interest to do—are we going to be able to maintain it in peace? "

They say it is going to be very much more difficult for the American and British people to work together in peace than it is in war—and yet they believe that it will be just as essential, although for quite different reasons. These informed Australians recognise that after the war we will be fighting the horrors of unemployment, and some hesitate to say which of the t w o - Nazi Germany or unemployment—is, in the long run, the greater enemy of democracy.

This is how they view it: Consider for a moment the situation in the post-war period. We will all be in various degrees of exhaustion—physical, material, financial and economic. We will have problems to tackle that will appear individually to lack the vital urgency of to-day's problems of war—and they will be complicated by tariffs, the vagaries of international exchanges, the bitter struggle between competing national vested interests, the problem of gold, the problems of depleted purchasing power, the difficulty of the disposal of international surpluses, of high and rising costs and prices, and of problems inseparably connected with the wholesale return of ex-service men to civil life.

" Now," says Australia to America, " if this list of problems merely meant that some big corporations, yours or ours, made rather less money—or even if they meant that there were some lesser degree of general prosperity in your country or ours—we suppose it would not matter very much. **But** the really serious part of the business will undoubtedly be that these problems will express themselves in widespread and perhaps unmanageable manifestations of unemployment and distress amongst the working populations—of your country and our countries. We believe that neither the United States nor the British Commonwealth of Nations by themselves, and working separately, can solve these problems. And if we don't solve them, we are sunk. If we don't go some way towards solving them, we would give the world ten years at the outside—before we all dissolve in hopeless chaos."

Dead Hand in Peace-time

Australia believes that, for our individual **and collective salvation, in the** post-war years, the United States and the

British countries—together with all other countries of goodwill—will have to work closely together, **from the financial, economic,** commercial and many other points of view.

Australia's Minister in Washington, Mr. Richard G. Casey, **who thinks along** these lines, said in America in June, 1941 :

" **We** are accustomed to thinking of the Blockade solely as a weapon of war. Believe me, the Blockade exists, in lesser degree certainly—but the Blockade exists in peace time as well. We have all instituted various subtle forms of Blockade against each other in the years **of peace.**

" I believe that many of the previously accepted principles of international contact and international practice will have to be revised if, having survived **the** war, democracy is to survive the peace.

" We have mutually admitted that the United States **and** the British countries are essential to each other in war, each in their respective spheres. Are we going to go farther, and admit that we are essential to each other in peace—as essential to each other as one blade of a pair of scissors is to the other?

" This peace-time co-operation is going to be much more difficult than war-time co-operation. Now, in war time, all lesser problems have to give way to the vital problem of survival. In peace, we will all tend to tackle each individual problem by itself and not as part of a whole—and, unless we revise our whole approach, we will tend to apply the old-time methods.

" There will be barriers and difficulties in peace that are temporarily set aside in war. The ancient grudge, the historic mutual misunderstandings, the whispered suspicions of motives—in fact all the old skeletons in dusty and smelly closets will be rattling their bones. **And** these old bones may quite well torpedo the future **of** the world—unless we lay the ghosts by positive **and** purposeful action.

" I believe that the most formidable task of statesmanship with which the world has ever been faced is **just ahead of** us at this moment. I believe the **problems that I** have ventured to outline have to be tackled **before the war ends**—and that it is none too early **to tackle them now**, if we are to salvage the post-war democratic world, **and** if Democracy and free institutions are **not** to **become** mere words in the post-war dictionary."

This, too, is the view in Canberra. Mr. Menzies (August 25th, 1941), warning the nation, said he hoped that nobody

in' Australia imagined that the extraordinary and unprecedented help from the United States under the Lease and Lend Act was to be accepted as an act of God, which might be forgotten.

Inevitably, it will create a mass of problems between the United Kingdom, the United States and all the Dominions which it would be foolish to overlook. Indeed, Imperial statesmen will be doing a great service to a vast slice of mankind if they see that the best intelligence is devoted to seeking a solution of these problems while the war is in progress. It would be idle to pretend, of course, that the foundation of a new order is not being well laid in Australia, where, as the nation's war leaders were pointing out at the end of the first two years of strife, the war is teaching new lessons about human relationships and the responsibilities of the Government and of those who are masters of men and owners of capital. Even at that time, it was prophesied officially that the control of profits and the regulation of prices as forms of Government control, for instance, would outlast the war.

Australia-New Zealand Link

Linked closely with Australia's industrial development is New Zealand's. Australian-New Zealand consultative committees are established to confer regularly on common defence and trade problems. Maintenance of armaments and munitions supplies to New Zealand and mutual assistance and co-ordination of defence measures to secure the most economic operation are frequently considered by the committees. Ministerial missions, exchanged between the two countries, have discussed co-ordination of the effort of both. New Zealand is to specialise in the manufacture of certain requirements needed by both, while Australia has agreed to treat New Zealand on the same basis as one of her own States in the matter of supply of certain war materials.

Nowhere was the importance of the links between the various members of the Empire, and the inter-dependence of each unit, better emphasised than at the Eastern Group Supply Conference opened at Delhi in October, 1940. It was recognised that the purpose of the conference did not include the task of considering general economic questions—such as the discovery of new markets : but it would be to rate its value at an exceedingly low level to assume that it did not, by its very existence, create the foundation for machinery which, after the war, may be useful to any group or body seeking a system of planned production directed at improving the well-being of the populations concerned.

Delhi Conference

Britain herself considered that a vital new turn in the relations between the territories constituting the Empire began with the Eastern Group Supply Conference. As Lord Linlithgow intimated in his opening speech, the main purpose of the conference was to consider how the British territories east and south of Suez can plan the production and interchange of goods so as to make themselves into an economic unit which will have a large degree of self-sufficiency in war supplies and will be able to create a surplus which can be drawn upon for the whole British war effort.

Official delegations went, at the invitation of the Government of India, from Australia, New Zealand, India, Burma, South Africa, Ceylon, East Africa, Hong-Kong, Palestine, Malaya and Southern Rhodesia. Total population represented was 500,000,000 and the countries constituted about two-thirds of the Empire. Deliberations concerned such existing and potential theatres of war as the Middle East, including Egypt and the Islamic countries of Western Asia. Apart from this the position and resources of the Netherlands Indies were taken into account.

As a result of the conference it was decided to set up in India an Eastern Group Supply Council. Its purpose was to make the British countries east and south of Suez self-supporting in war supplies. The Supply Council is composed of members nominated by the Indian, Australian, New Zealand and South African Governments with a chairman from the United Kingdom. But because the resources of the various countries concerned were so vast, the Supply Council did not need to start from scratch. Industrial development in Australia and in the other Dominions and in India had a fairly solid foundation: they had made important contributions to the British armies in the field before the conference was held.

Australia assumed the dominant rôle: and in a statement made in Melbourne in October, 1941, on the development of Australia's munitions supplies for the Allies east of Suez, Sir Robert Brooke-Popham said that whenever anything was wanted he had developed the habit of asking Australia for it, and the assurance of quick and certain supplies from Australia meant a great deal to Allied defence plans. He remarked that large quantities of Australian anti-aircraft guns, vehicles, rifles, ammunition and general equipment had been provided, adding that the Far East depended on Australian radio equipment, the importance of which could not be over-emphasised.

Chief business of the Supply Council is to ensure that the



ANZACS TRAIN IN MALAYAN JUNGLE

Slashing their way through the dank undergrowth, Australian and New Zealand troops learn to operate and fight in swampy country.

most effective use shall be made of the resources of the various countries; to see that deficiencies in one country are made good by the others; and to avoid overlapping. It was clear from statistics prepared even before the conference was called that India and the three Dominions alone could supply most of the munitions and military equipment needed by the Forces east of Suez, while at the same time contributing in increasing volume to the needs of the Forces operating from Great Britain. Raw materials for the military effort and for the use of the civil population in the area are supplied by the other participating territories, augmenting this expansion. What was expected of the Council was intelligent direction of the common effort to serve the common purpose : for it was believed that in fashioning such a scheme, and in supervising its application to the whole problem, the Council would be organising a type of economic co-operation which could be of immeasurable worth in the task of reconstruction after the war.

Effect of Frances Fall

Preparations for the conference were begun soon after the collapse of France and the entry of Italy into the war, which made it necessary to use the Mediterranean route 'as little as possible for merchant shipping, so that the energies of the Navy might not have to be diverted from direct war action to the conveying of ships. Consequently, it was desirable that the theatres of war in the Middle East should derive as much of their supplies as possible from the countries east of the Suez Canal, so as to avoid the necessity for passing through the Mediterranean.

The terms of reference of the conference are as follows :

Objects of the Conference : (1) To settle the division of the joint war supply policy for the Eastern group under which (a) the maximum use will be made of existing and potential capacity for the war supply of each participant; (b) the war supply needs of each participant (including essential needs of commerce and industry for the maintenance of the defence services and civil population) will as far as possible be met within the group, the deficiencies of one participant being made good from available or potential resources of the others; (c) any surplus production will be made available to the British Government. It is intended that the main emphasis **should** be on the needs of the participants for the successful prosecution of the war, and that the conference should, broadly speaking, confine itself to the possibility of supplying these needs, and should decline to examine wider economic **problems** such as the scope for new markets. (2) To set up a **Standing**

Committee to ensure that the joint war supply policy is carried out.

Scope of the Conference : (1) Direct war requirements (*i.e.*, the actual needs of the Defence Services for which each participant is or is about to become responsible), (a) (i) Munitions (including motor vehicles of all kinds); (ii) Clothing and equipment and other ordnance stores; (iii) Engineering stores; (iv) Instruments of precision; (v) Drugs, medicines and surgical instruments; (vi) Food; (vii) Petrol, oil, and lubricants; (viii) Naval construction; (ix) Aircraft, (b) Raw and semi-manufactured material required for (a) above and other industrial supplies. (2) Indirect war requirements (*i.e.*, essential needs of the civil population and connected commercial and industrial capacity).

Resources

* The British territories to the south and east of Suez display a great variety of economic development. Australia and New Zealand are, per head of the population, among the wealthiest countries in the world, depending primarily on agriculture, but secondarily (in the case of the former, more particularly) on mining and on manufacturing industry carefully fostered by protection. South Africa is in a similar position, except that the extent of her dependence on mining is greater, and that there a small and relatively wealthy white population lives alongside a large native population with lower standards.

These countries, with their white population of 10½ million, out of a total population of nearly 500 million in all the countries concerned, have perhaps a fifth or a sixth of the total income, but they possess, of course, importance far greater than is represented by this fraction, because, with their high standards of living, they can give up a high proportion of their income to the war effort without undue strain. Whether their industrial resources enable them to convert a large proportion of their productive power to purposes of war otherwise than by trade is a different question, which must be examined later.

Of the other countries concerned, India, Burma, Ceylon, and Malaya are countries of vast and dense population, living mostly by agriculture at a very low material level, though India has achieved very considerable industrial development within fairly recent years. They produce valuable and specialised crops, such as rubber and jute, and have mineral outputs of world importance. The same is true of Netherlands India, which sent observers to the conference. Southern

* The following has appeared in Bulletins issued by the Royal Institute of International Affairs. See Acknowledgments.

Rhodesia and East Africa differ from these in that population density is much lower, and the white populations, though small, are relatively more important as producers; the communities of Hong-Kong and Singapore are of immense importance, on account of the entrepot trade of these ports, and Palestine, the only country represented at the conference which lies north of Suez, has again a very different economy, and enjoys a standard of life intermediate between those of East Africa and of the white populations in the Dominions.

Moreover, these countries are dependent, in the ordinary way, to very varying extents upon foreign trade. Imports amounted in 1929 to some 47 per cent, of national income in South Africa, 30 per cent, in Australia and New Zealand, and only 6 per cent, in India, though Netherlands India—a country comparable to British India in general economic structure—imported perhaps as much as 17 per cent, of its national income. One important characteristic, however, the British territories concerned have in common—their great dependence for foreign trade upon Europe in general and the United Kingdom in particular, as the following table relating to the main countries shows :

Distribution of Trade, 1938.	Percentage of Imports from—			Percentage of Exports to—		
	Europe, inc. U.K.	United Kingdom.	North America.	Europe, inc. U.K.	United Kingdom.	North America.
India	49	31	8	51	34	10
Ceylon	28	21	3	63	53	16
British Malaya	25	18	4	30	14	33
Australia	53	42	23	74	55	8
New Zealand	54	48	21	88	84	4
South Africa	64	43	21	89	76	2

Imports: General imports according to League of Nations *International Trade Statistics*,
Exports: General exports, same source, except for India, whose exports of domestic produce only are given.

It will be noticed that well over half the import trade of the above countries (except in the case of Ceylon and Malaya) and a considerably higher proportion of their export trade were with Europe and North America. Since a further considerable part of their trade was with Japan, it follows that only a small proportion of the international trade was with other countries around the basin of the Indian Ocean, and, in fact, the economics of such countries, despite the great differences between their economic structures alluded to above, are only to a relatively small degree complementary. Ceylon, for instance, imports foodstuffs from other countries in the area, and India is supplied with both rice and petroleum from

Burma to a considerable extent; India and Ceylon supply the other countries concerned with tea, Australia supplies them with wool, and so on, but the importance of such exchanges is not comparable with that of trade with more distant countries.

Malaya's Rubber

The conference countries, indeed, while they are more than self-sufficient (with relatively little mutual trade to effect the necessary distribution) in foodstuffs and in such raw materials as they need in peace-time, lack manufacturing facilities, and import a considerable part of their requirements of highly finished goods; hence their large trade with the world's chief industrial areas. Malaya is the greatest producer of rubber in the world, and a large exporter of tin, Australia of wool, India of jute, and Burma of tea; Australia has a small and Rhodesia a large export surplus of copper; Burma and Australia have surpluses of lead and zinc, Australia and New Zealand of meat, dairy products, and wool, South Africa and Rhodesia of gold, chrome, and asbestos, and so on. These export surpluses of the whole region are of the utmost importance both to it and to the outside world; their maintenance at existing levels would require increases in production, as industrialisation would increase the absorption of these commodities within the area.

Practically all the other natural materials necessary for industrialisation are available within it; there is a sufficiency of raw cotton from India and East Africa, coal is produced by South Africa, Southern Rhodesia, Malaya, India, Australia and New Zealand in sufficient quantity (over 60 million tons in 1938) for the needs of all the conference countries, including bunkers, and output could, no doubt, be expanded. Iron ore is mined in South Africa, Rhodesia, India, Burma, Malaya, and Australia, and most of the important ferro-alloys are available—manganese from India, chromium from South Africa, tungsten from Burma and Australia, vanadium from Rhodesia, while the small Burmese and Australian nickel supplies may be supplemented from the neighbouring Free French territory of New Caledonia. In petroleum, the British territories represented at the conference are not self-sufficient; India, Burma, and British Borneo produced in 1938, 2,393,000 metric tons (including natural gasoline), while the total consumption was about 7,000,000 tons. Netherlands India, however, can supply this quantity and more—output was 7,394,000 metric tons in 1938, of which over 90 per cent, was refined in the country—and Bahrein Island (1,135,000 metric tons) and Iran (10,358,000 metric tons), being conveniently

situated with access to the Indian Ocean, are normally quite large suppliers of South Africa, India, and Australia.

Industrialisation

Industrialisation has so far gone only a relatively short way. India and Australia produce nearly all the iron and steel they need for their own manufactures—over a million tons (soon to be increased by a further 200,000 or 300,000) in the case of India, and 1,157,000 tons (in 1938) in Australia. South Africa produced in 1938 284,000 tons, or about one-third of the requirements of her industries. The home engineering, metal-working, and vehicle industries, however, do not cover so great a proportion of peace-time home needs. In Australia, for instance, the value of engineering products and vehicles produced at home has been about the same as that of goods in these categories imported, so that about half the home requirements, by value, have been home-produced, and it must be remembered that imports provided practically all the highly-finished goods, such as motor engines, machine-tools, etc.

Roughly the same is true of South Africa and India, the other countries concerned being entirely dependent on imports for their supply of engineering products and vehicles. Altogether, the imports of the conference countries under the heads of iron and steel, machinery, and vehicles, amounted in 1938 to well over £120 million.

In textiles and clothing, too, the area is dependent on imports, though in this field very rapid progress has been made in the past towards self-sufficiency. India, for instance, in 1937-8 imported less than 10 per cent, of her cotton piece-good consumption, producing 65 per cent, of it in her own mills and over 25 per cent, on handlooms. Australia and New Zealand have considerable wool textile industries.

Substantial Achievements

India, Australia, and South Africa have also developed chemical industries within recent years, and it should be possible to provide, after some further development, many of the explosives required for war. Although the conference countries as a whole have been large importers of mercury for detonators, etc., Australia and New Zealand both have small outputs of the metal which it will presumably be possible to develop further. Similarly, nitrates have been a net import, though India has produced about a fifth of her requirements and Australia about a third. Output is mostly in the form of ammonium sulphate from gasworks and coke-ovens, and this would normally expand only with the development of the gas and iron industries, but there is no reason why synthetic

ammonia production should not be developed if necessary. Outputs of the other coal-gas by-products used for making explosives are also, naturally, dependent on the amount of coal raised. Of glycerine there should be no lack; the area is a great net exporter of oils and fats, and the soap industry is well developed in, for instance, South Africa.

It will be seen from this brief survey of the economic position in the conference countries at the beginning of the war that there is, owing to their specialisation on agriculture and mining and to the great world demand for their export surpluses, no question of their becoming self-sufficient within any short period. What is to be hoped and expected is that their industries, both manufacturing and extractive, which contribute directly to the supply of their armed forces, will be developed so as to reduce materially the imports of such supplies from Britain. It is clear that their natural resources for this purpose are excellent, and their achievements, even before the outbreak of war, substantial.

♦

India, Burma, Ceylon

Production of pig-iron and ferro-alloys in the early months of 1940 reached the record monthly figure of 180,000 tons, nearly 40 per cent, above the 1938 average. Though exports fell in January, 1939, to little more than a third of the 1938 average, because of increased home demand, shipments have now begun of 300,000 tons required by the United Kingdom. Similarly exports of manganese ore, in spite of increased Indian consumption, increased to 40,000 tons in January, 1939. India is already one of the great iron-ore-producing countries, and deposits newly discovered in the Punjab are believed to be of a quality equal to that of the best Swedish ore. The output of steel ingots and of finished steel has steadily increased, and now exceeds 100,000 tons per month, against a monthly average of some 81,000 tons in 1938. Within a few years Indian steel production should reach a million tons a year, sufficient to meet practically the whole of normal Indian demand. The two important Tata and Indian iron companies are working to full capacity in the making of varied products, the former company producing special steel for armour-plating of great strength and thickness. New plant for making high-grade steel has been installed. Already armoured cars are being assembled from imported Canadian-**and** American-built parts, and in 1941 3,000 armoured vehicles of all-Indian manufacture are to be provided for the eighty-five new motor-transport sections of the **Army**.

Ordnance factories, already producing a high percentage of

Indian army requirements, are being expanded and their output supplemented by civil engineering works. The range of production includes field guns, anti-aircraft guns, Bren guns, as well as the production of other machine guns and rifles. Many orders have been filled for the United Kingdom, including explosives. Manufacture of shells has multiplied twelve times and of guns seven times since the war began. So far no aeroplanes have been built in India, but works have now been established at Bangalore, and production should begin in the near future, to help to meet the growing strength of the Air Force in India. The expansion of the Royal Indian Navy still depends largely on British yards, but armoured mine-sweeping vessels and patrol craft are being built in India.

Among exports to the United Kingdom and Empire countries for war purposes may be mentioned iron and manganese (already noted), jute, jute bags, cotton, timber, hides, army boots, and coal bunkers for the Royal Navy at Hong-Kong, the Red Sea and the Eastern Mediterranean.

Though neither Ceylon nor Burma is in any sense an industrial country, there are small factories and mills in Ceylon engaged in processing raw materials for export. The most important contribution made by these two countries to the war effort is in supplying foodstuffs and raw materials. Ceylon provides tea (65 per cent, in value of her total exports), cocoa, coconuts, coconut oil, spices (mainly cinnamon and areca-nut), rubber, copra, coir fibre, yarn and graphite. Among the conference countries, Ceylon alone has an exportable surplus of cocoa, for which there is a demand from Australia and New Zealand. She is also the sole exporter of graphite. Exports from Burma greatly exceed in value those from Ceylon—in 1938 the value was nearly 90 per cent, higher; both for exports and imports trade with India accounts for more than half the value of total trade.

By far the most important export is rice, accounting for over 40 per cent, of total values, for together with India, China and Japan, Burma ranks among the foremost of world producers. India usually takes over half her surplus, on average some 800,000 tons annually. She also exports to India practically the whole of her export surplus of petroleum, which has recently amounted to nearly a million tons annually. By meeting India's demand for one of the chief staple foodstuffs required by her native population, and supplying her with petroleum, Burma provides a valuable contribution to India's war effort. In addition, she supplied Great Britain with rice, and, among Empire countries, she is the sole supplier of teak, an essential in the manufacture of warships. Other commodities of which she has an export surplus, and for which

there is an increasing war demand, are lead, wolfram, tin, and zinc concentrates.

Malayan Contribution

The contribution that British Malaya can make towards the general war effort is twofold : she is the largest exporter of rubber and tin in the world. Both for rubber and tin the U.S.A. is by far her best customer, and provides her with a large favourable trade balance with that country. Large quantities of foreign exchange, estimated by Dr. Silcock, Professor of Economics at Singapore, at about \$12,000,000 a month, thus become available to the United Kingdom for cash payments for munitions purchased in the United States. In the three years 1936-1938, imports into the United States from Malaya were more than equal in value to imports from Great Britain, while exports to Malaya from the U.S.A. were little more than 1·5 per cent, of the value of exports to Great Britain.

In 1939 total shipments of rubber (including latex) from Malaya were 553,324 tons, of which 54 per cent, went to the United States, 13 per cent, to Great Britain, 9 per cent, to the Continent of Europe, 7 per cent, to British possessions, and 6 per cent, to Japan. In the first six months of 1940 average monthly production of rubber was higher by more than 30 per cent, than the 1939 monthly average. Exports of tin (smelter), including re-export of tin refined in Malaya, amounted to 61,187 tons in 1938, and rose to 82,089 tons in 1939. Of exports in 1939, the United States took some 70 per cent., Japan over 10 per cent., France 7 per cent., and India 4 per cent.; the proportion sent to the United Kingdom, less than 1 per cent., was small. Production of tin ore during the first six months of 1940 was on average over 40 per cent, higher than the monthly average in 1939.

In addition to the great value of her two main exports, rubber and tin, Malaya holds a unique position, by virtue of her entrepôt and transit trade. To-day Singapore is one of the most important entrepôt ports in the world. It serves, on the one hand, as a centre for the collection, grading, and repacking of the many and varied commodities produced in the Malay States and the East Indian Archipelago, and their subsequent reshipment to the consuming markets of the world; and, on the other, a centre for the redistribution to the Malay States, Siam, Borneo, Sumatra, and other parts of the Malay Archipelago, of the many and varied raw materials and manufactured articles imported.

Published trade figures for British Malaya relate to general trade and the value of the re-export trade cannot therefore be

stated accurately. It is, however, known that a great part of the trade originating in the Malay States passes through the Straits Settlements, either through Singapore or Penang, and it can be assumed that a large part of the trade with Netherlands India and Borneo is of entrepdt character. It has been estimated that of the total value of general exports of merchandise in 1938, amounting to £66,642,000, the value of domestic exports amounted to only £49,412,000, the balance being accounted for by re-exports. For the purpose of entrepdt trade Singapore is ideally situated geographically, and is one of the principal market-places of the world. Malaya, with her dollar credits in the United States, and the strong position she holds by her entrepdt trade, is thus a valuable contributor to the war effort.

Closely associated with British Malaya are the dependencies in Borneo, comprising Brunei, the State of North Borneo, and Sarawak. The principal exports are rubber and mineral oils. Production of mineral oils in Brunei and Sarawak amounted in 1939 to roughly 940,000 tons, or not much less than the output from Burma.

Hong-Kong, though not a producing centre, has a valuable entrepdt trade, including, in normal times, the flow of the greater part of the trade of South China and also a substantial interchange of goods between other Eastern countries, and a proportion of the trade of these countries with other parts of the world.

Australian Resources

Australia is well supplied with mineral resources, and she has built up large stocks of those in which she is deficient. In 1939 the value of ores, minerals, and metals raised amounted to £3,830,000. Iron ore is the principal common metal produced; there is also a substantial and increasing production of manganese ore, and the Broken Hill Proprietary are to manufacture ferro-manganese for use in the steel industry. Though domestic supplies of copper are hardly sufficient to meet increased consumption, expanding production and the use of scrap are expected to meet the demand.

Australia has surplus resources of lead, zinc, tungsten, cadmium, and antimony. For chrome ore and nickel she can draw on New Caledonia; for any deficiency in supplies of rubber and tin she can draw on British Malaya. She had stocks of aluminium sufficient to last well into 1941, and a new factory is to be provided at Sydney for the production of aluminium alloys for the manufacture of aircraft. In Western Australia there are bauxite deposits believed to be of high quality, and elsewhere there are deposits of lower grade, on

the basis of which an aluminium industry may be founded, eventually providing an export surplus.

For mineral oil Australia is dependent on imports. In 1939, irrespective of crude oil, imports amounted to 346,000 million gallons, of which more than 60 per cent, came from Netherlands India. Imports of crude oil amounted to nearly another 28 million gallons, which were refined in Australia.

Local production of fuel oil, mainly benzol, and alcohol from sugar molasses, has been negligible, but efforts are being made to increase production. Australia usually exports a small quantity of coal, and can presumably meet her own expanding demand. For the textile industry large contracts for raw cotton have been placed in India, and it is hoped to increase domestic production by adopting irrigation in place of dry-farming methods. Skilled workers have been imported from Lancashire to set up new machinery and train operatives. The acreage under flax in 1940 was four times that of 1939.

In industry the greatest problem is the manufacture or provision of machine tools of the fineness and precision necessary for the manufacture of many classes of munitions, but arrangements have been made for the domestic manufacture of certain machine tools, and satisfactory deliveries have already begun.

New Zealand

New Zealand is mainly an agricultural country. Her engineering industry is small, and she has practically no resources in metal, though she is self-sufficient in coal.

From all over the country the Government have received offers of assistance from factories, raw materials, and resources of all kinds, also of individual service. Railway workshops are well equipped, and were constructed with a view to a possible turn-over to munition manufacture. Already New Zealand has been able to equip her troops with footwear and uniforms, and to maintain supplies. The manufacture of such munitions as shells, grenades, and Bren-gun carriers is also in progress.

Though New Zealand cannot be an extensive producer of munitions, she is a very large supplier of essential foodstuffs, notably meat and dairy products, to Great Britain, especially valuable in view of the cessation of imports into Great Britain of dairy products from Denmark. Like Australia she also sends her export surplus of wool to Great Britain.

South Africa and Southern Rhodesia

The Union of South Africa, apart from her vital resources of gold, has substantial supplies of raw materials required for

munitions. Her engineering industries, supplying the mines and railways, are well developed. The great iron and steel works "Isacor", founded in Pretoria in 1938, has a capacity of 340,000 ingot tons per annum, now being extended to 440,000 ingot tons; in addition, steel wire is to be manufactured. Ordnance factories have been established at various centres. The munitions programme includes the manufacture of shells in great quantity, motor lorries by hundreds a week, trench mortars, certain types of guns and an increasing number of armoured cars. Thanks to the mining industry, South Africa has some of the largest individual units in the world for the manufacture of explosives, and she is producing a large output of shells, air bombs, grenades, and rifle ammunition. She has supplied Great Britain with explosives, notably T.N.T., and also with small arms ammunition.

Though South Africa cannot, up to the present, turn out aeroplane engines, machine-guns, or more complicated forms of artillery, she is capable of supplying all the simpler forms of munitions in sufficient quantity to meet a large share of the requirements of the Imperial Forces in Africa. She also supplies equipment, including uniforms, army boots made from South African hides, etc. In addition to her contribution in munitions and equipment and her vital export of gold, she supplies both foodstuffs and raw materials needed by the Empire, including her export surplus of maize and dairy products, sugar, citrus fruits, dried fruits, and wool. Great Britain purchased the whole of the 1940 crop of maize, and has arranged to take the whole surplus wool crop for the duration of the war and a year after. All South African timber mills are working at full pressure in order to replace, in some measure, supplies from Scandinavia. During the first six months of 1940 Great Britain purchased merchandise valued at £8,772,000, or more than 46 per cent, of total South African exports, excluding gold; if purchases by the rest of the British Empire are included, the percentage is raised to over 58 per cent. The growth of South Africa's transatlantic trade with the United States is worth mentioning. In the first six months of 1940 South African exports to the United States totalled £2,026,000, or more than the corresponding figure for the whole of 1938; and the adverse trade balance with the United States was less than it has ever been before; it is hoped that the growth of United States purchases in South Africa may steadily increase.

In Southern Rhodesia the Government has now set up a War-time Supplies and Armament Committee to examine available resources for the manufacture of munitions **and also of civilian requirements, in particular those for which the**

country is normally dependent on imports. It is estimated that for the war effort in 1940 £5,000,000 was spent. The territory is rich in certain resources and has valuable export surpluses of maize, tobacco, chrome, tungsten, and asbestos. Production of chrome ore is the largest within the Empire, and amounts to over a fifth of world production. Apart from Canada, she is also the largest producer of asbestos.

East Africa

An Economic Council for East Africa has recently been formed on which representatives from Northern Rhodesia, Nyasaland, Kenya, Uganda, Tanganyika, and Zanzibar have been appointed for the co-ordination of a commercial war-time policy. On November 1st, 1940, the Governors of these East African territories and of Northern Rhodesia and the Resident of Zanzibar met to discuss the nature of the contributions they can make for the prosecution of the general war effort. None of the countries are industrial; they are very largely agricultural. Only Northern Rhodesia has great mineral wealth. Northern Rhodesian production of copper, which is increasing, ranks with that of Canada as the most important in the Empire, and, apart from the Mandated Territory of South-West Africa, she is the largest producer of vanadium. Her output of cobalt is also the largest in the Empire, and she has an export surplus of zinc. The greater part of her copper output, amounting to a monthly figure of some 23,000 tons at the end of 1939, is now being purchased by Great Britain. From Uganda and Tanganyika there is a small export of tin ore, and the latter also exports salt and carbonate of soda.

Among the main agricultural exports of the East African countries are coffee, tea, oilseeds, flax, sisal, and cotton. For sisal, Kenya and Uganda are the main suppliers to the Empire. Another agricultural product is pyrethrum, the basis of many disinfectant powders.

The greatest contribution Northern Rhodesia and the East African countries can make to the war effort is to co-ordinate their production in order to enable the territories to meet both their own and the Empire's war demands to the greatest possible extent. It is also hoped that they may increase their markets abroad.

Chapter XIII

Women in War Work

" Their courage is magnificent, their endurance amazing."
—The Queen, broadcasting to America, August, 1941.

NEVER in the long, sombre history of wars were so many women involved directly as they were by the declaration of the First Total War. In London they were soon punching your bus ticket, delivering your letters, your milk, your paper, your parcels, driving delivery vans, manning fire-stations, being your railway porters, keeping canteens open at the peak of the most destructive of Nazi air-raids, nursing the sick and the wounded, joining all the auxiliary services in hundreds of thousands.

In Australia and New Zealand they did all they were asked to do—and a great deal men dare not ask them to do, especially in the blinding heat or in the deluges of rain and acres of mud on the fields of battle oversea.

Turn to nursing: in the great dark paths cut in broad swathes in the First Total War by destructive science, they soon stood squarely to succour those fighting men hacked down by ingenious death-dealing instruments turned so violently against them. Members of the nursing profession were, from the early days of the war, on full-time war service, some serving abroad. Australian nurses, like New Zealand nurses, who served with the B.E.F. in France in the spring of 1940 experienced heavy bombardments at base hospitals and casualty clearing stations on the miraculous return via Dunkirk. Anzac nurses are also serving with the A.I.F. in the Middle East. Dr. Mary Thornton is the only Australian medical woman in the R.A.M.C., and the only woman major in the Corps.

Even New Zealand, with its relatively small population, had about 500 nurses on active service oversea by 1941.

Blood and Fire

Look at this fragment of a vividly clear, **unvarnished, unfinished** full-length portrait of Australian **and New Zealand**

nurses under fire which Ronald W. Monson, war correspondent in the Middle East for the *Sydney Daily Telegraph*, did officially for the British and Australian Governments after the retreat from Greece:

" In the blazing heat of a Mediterranean afternoon a small Australian destroyer, weirdly camouflaged, slipped through the boom defence of a Grecian island and came to her moorings alongside the quay as smoothly as a car drawing in to a kerb. Her deck was crowded with battle-stained troops. But they stood aside, when the gang-planks were lowered, to make way for a colourful little band who clustered amidship in their uniforms of light grey and royal blue—nurses and masseuses who had slipped away under the noses of the advancing Germans.

" All wore tin hats. And they needed them. I had arrived at the same quay just a little earlier with other troops and had been greeted by German dive-bombers dropping a cargo of 1,000-lb. bombs all round us. These nurses were to have left Greece earlier, but a Stuka landed a bomb on their ship at the port of embarkation and sank it. They all looked tired, but amazingly fresh, considering what they had been through.

" A group of Sydney nurses told me bits of their story. They had left their hospital at Kiphisia, near Athens, by truck in the afternoon two days earlier, making for Piraeus. Before reaching there they learned that their ship had been sunk and they were diverted to Argos. Dive-bombers were coming over at short intervals, so it was necessary to travel in darkness. The party, numbering 160, climbed into the trucks again at 9 p.m. and travelled all night, de-busing in a cornfield at dawn. Throughout the day they hid in the corn, crouching down when the German planes came over, machine-gunning the fields and bombing the nearby port at which they were due to embark.

" One sun-bronzed sister from Bondi, near Sydney, whose hair was a little more untidy than when I last saw her in Athens but who had otherwise come up fresh and smiling, explained that the state of her hair was due to continually wearing a tin hat. She said they picnicked off their rations in a cemetery, dashing for the corn every time the Germans came over. They pressed their faces to the ground as the Germans methodically machine-gunned all round them. Their only casualties were some New Zealand nurses whose truck had overturned earlier in the journey. **They were attended to on the roadside**

and taken on to the cornfield. Some of them had a pretty bad time waiting for embarkation.

" I watched these injured nurses coming ashore. They bore themselves with a fortitude that made one feel proud to belong to their race. A group of them, heavily Landaged about their heads, marched ashore like soldiers coming out of battle. After lying all day in the cornfield, at nightfall these girls again climbed into the trucks and were driven a further seven miles. Then they had to unload their baggage and proceed on foot to the port. They did not carry their baggage, they dragged it along because it was heavy and they were worn out from lack of sleep. They had to creep along as silently as possible in the darkness, for nobody knew how close the Germans might be. After walking over two miles, they reached the port and boarded a Greek ship which took them out to the destroyer. While being transferred from the Greek ship to the destroyer in the darkness a New Zealand nurse slipped and fell into the sea between the two ships. Almost before she reached the water an Australian naval rating dived in from the destroyer. They were both in imminent danger of being crushed to death between the two ships, but the men of the Australian destroyer lined the rails and fended off the Greek ship with their feet, and seaman and nurse were hauled aboard by a wire hawser.

" When I talked to these nurses they had made only the first stage of their evacuation voyage. There was still a long stretch of sea to be crossed and the Stukas were coming over continually looking for the transports. But not a single one of them evinced the slightest concern. I have since seen forty other nurses. Forty who stayed behind still longer to get the wounded out. The matron in charge, who comes from Sydney and who told me a little about them, said she did not want any lengthy account published of what they did. That makes it very difficult, for I would like to tell something of the heroism of this little band of women who remained at their posts fully aware of all the hazards confronting them. Perhaps she is right. The simple recital of the fact is enough."

Advance Column

Delightful, mordantly witty Jeanne de Casalis, the stage and radio star who has made a popular personality of the feather-brained character, Mrs. Feather, was in a B.B.C. broadcast programme with Margaret Gilruth, an Australian journalist in London. " Rather to my horror," Miss Gilruth

recounts, "when the Home and Forces programme was well tuned in, Leslie Mitchell, the *comptre*, said: 'Now, Mrs. Feather, let me introduce to you Miss Gilruth from Australia.' And she said, in true Mrs. Feather feathery-brained way: 'Oh, I've heard of Australia! The place where you have the kangaroo who carries its young in its opossum, isn't it, Miss Gilruth?'" More bright barbs like this, aimed so adroitly, might sting into consciousness those millions of women abroad who think little and know less about the island continent. There is ample need for it.

In the most advanced lines of the home fronts stand the Australian and New Zealand women. If there were need for it there would be a women's auxiliary territorial service as vast in its ramifications as there is in Britain. Apart from hundreds of women who are accepting work in munition factories, thousands of unpaid women who spend countless hours knitting and doing the variety of tasks which are done chiefly in the home and are indispensable in war-time, essential services and emergency preparations against the possibility of a direct attack on Australia are being performed largely as a result of the Women's Voluntary Register for National Service. This gives every woman an opportunity to enrol herself for some form of voluntary war service.

By March, 1941, a Women's Air Force in New Zealand, and a Women's Auxiliary for the R.A.A.F. were formed on the same lines as the W.A.A.F. in Britain for full-time service. Women are serving as wireless and teleprinter operators, and in administrative, cypher and domestic duties. As a result, physically fit young men engaged in certain headquarters can be released. Australian women pilots who are prominently linked with popularising flying in Australia and who did yeomen work in harnessing and directing the enthusiasm of women keen to enter air training corps, are Mrs. J. R. Bell, Freda Thompson, Nancy Lyle, Margaret Adams, Claire Thompson, and Nancy Bird, Australia's best-known woman pilot. The Government, in the middle of 1941, appointed Miss Clare Stevenson, aged thirty-seven, as Director of the W.A.A.F., with the rank of squadron leader.

In Industry

All over Australia there have sprung up schemes for training women as fitters, machinists, tracers, draughtsmen, mechanics, engineering, and other occupations. The Government's value of women's work was made clear by Mr. Menzies when he stated that in obtaining man-power for the war industries the Government would not hesitate to enlist women, thousands of whom were burning to serve.

The importance of woman-power to the developing war industries of Australia was also shown by the restriction imposed on Australian women between the ages of sixteen and sixty, which prohibits them from leaving the country unless travelling on national duty or for other exceptional reasons. By June, 1941, 2,000 women were being trained in the development of the manufacture of munitions in New Zealand, including the training of women for farm work, regarded as one of the most important of women's war activities in both Dominions. The Countrywomen's Association in Australia strongly encourages it, and has established training-schools where women receive practical experience in farm work. Women who graduate obtain positions on farms, taking the place of men away on active service.

Voluntary Services

Members of the Women's Australian National Service train as fully and become as qualified for service as women in Britain. For instance, the W.A.N.S. of Sydney organised six defence units in the metropolitan area for co-operation with the military authorities in an emergency. Membership of each unit in the first instance was limited to 100, including three lieutenants and three sergeants, and is now open to all W.A.N.S.s who complete their general training under area officers. Age limit: between nineteen and forty years.

An idea of the extent of the training organisation is provided by the fact that instruction is given by: Australian Women's Army Corps—signalling; Women's Auxiliary Training League—driving tractors; Australian Women's Legion—transport work, cavalry corps and canteen work; Women's Emergency Signalling Corps; Women's Auxiliary Fire Brigade Corps; National Emergency Service of Ambulance Drivers; Women's Air Training Corps—fabric sewing, wireless adjustment, instrument adjustment, and general maintenance work on aircraft; Women's Volunteer Naval Reserve—small boat work; Women's Motor-Cycle Messenger Corps (Sydney); Cavalry Unit (Melbourne)—despatch riding.

Comforts and relief

Day and night, thousands of voluntary women helpers have been working for the Australian Red Cross Society, making clothes and hospital requirements—and raising money. An indication of their indefatigable efforts is that besides the work done for the Australian sick and wounded, the Red Cross Society had, by June, 1941, sent a total of £66,482 to the British Red Cross and St. John Fund.

As with its New Zealand counterpart, the **Australian Com-**

forts Fund has women all over the country providing comforts for the Forces. Cigarettes and food have been distributed by the **fund** behind the front line in the Middle East.

The Y.M.C.A. Voluntary Service have women working on the Waste Products Department of the Red Cross in Melbourne, which raised £600,000 by January, 1941; recreation centres for women and their soldier husbands and friends from military training camps (whole families can be entertained and fed for the day); canteens and hospitality arrangements for the Forces; voluntary work in hospitals for the Forces, for which first aid and home-nursing certificates are required; and the inevitable work circles—making clothes and comforts for the Forces and refugees.

Clothes for refugees are sent to the United Kingdom through the Women of the University Patriotic Fund or the British Children Comforts Fund, one among other organisations which are supplying clothing and comforts for the children of Britain suffering from air raids. This fund was started in Sydney in the autumn of 1940.

Troubles of Soldiers' Wives

The A.I.F. Women's Association was formed to help the wives, mothers, daughters, and sisters of men serving with the Forces. Families take their troubles to the Association's office, and trained social workers help in problems of sickness, debt, and other difficulties. The Association also arranges social meetings among members.

The Countrywomen's Association, with a large membership all over the country, employs itself in providing comforts for the Forces and for refugees. They take an interest in local military training camps, and do repairing and mending for the men. They provide also recreation rooms and hostels for men of the Forces on short leave. Their " Sheepskin Vest Committee " in Sydney has been collecting pelts for vests and fleece wool for spinning from members all over the country. The skins are prepared and proofed, and distributed through the Queensland Comforts Fund to the Forces, especially to the Navy and Air Force. The Association is also raising money for war purposes. Some branches subscribe to the Empire penny-a-week scheme for the Red Cross; others buy Australian War Savings Certificates.

I happened to walk into Australia House in the Strand one morning about eleven o'clock, and there, standing just inside the great iron doors, chatting casually with four Australian airmen who had dropped in for their mail, was Queen Elizabeth, gay, smiling in beige. With her was Mrs. S. M. Bruce, wife of the High Commissioner, and both had just come downstairs

from an inspection of Australian women's war work done by members of the Australian Women's Voluntary Service (London), which Mrs. Bruce founded. This organisation provides comforts and arranges hospitality for Australians serving in Britain. Parcels are sent to men of the Forces and clothing is provided when necessary. Women of the voluntary services run the Australian Forces Centre at Australia House, a club for all Australians serving in the Forces.

"She makes you feel so at home," one of the airmen, a West Australian, said to me, referring to his conversation with the Queen. "She's so natural."

Wonder

As I went across Britain to-day, and yesterday, and the day before that, watching with the eye of a Dominioner the shifting scene at this moment of history, the incredible wonder, the miracle of Imperial unity, the deep sense of family, came home to me again and again as it repeatedly does, freshly and anew. Perhaps nothing emphasises it so much as the unexpected meeting, in a tiny out-of-the-way place, of an acquaintance from a home town, from Sydney or Dunedin, some one in overalls, or uniform, working determinedly. Surprisingly, one's eyes seem to open again, amazed and startled, as the power of the link, the pull of the great, imperishable ties, is glimpsed in an act of abnegation.

I remember one Sunday in the winter, snow on the ground, walking into a little hotel at Abingdon, a few miles from Oxford, and in the dining-room catching the eye of a woman whom suddenly I was as sure I knew as she was that she had met me. We had, ten years before in Sydney. Odder still,, we discovered that we had lived in the same part of London and had been bombed out about the same time. She had been in London, on a holiday from Sydney, when war broke out. Now she was in the blue slacks and blouse of a driver in the London auxiliary ambulance service.

"But why aren't you home?" I wanted to know.

"Oh," she laughed, "they can get on without me there : but here I'm really useful. I've been driving through London *blitzes* for weeks and I couldn't leave now after what I've seen English women suffering."

They are everywhere to be found in Britain, these courageous self-sacrificing women from the Dominions, working as nurses, working in the Services, helping keep watch and ward at night over sleeping London beneath a bomber's moon.

You can see the Empire in a wondrous series of pictures if you think of its women working with love and grit to keep intact the vast Imperial fabric. In the largeness of the Empire,

in the grandeur of its structure, there is a corresponding largeness and generosity of spirit in the women of the Empire. This spirit is so tremendous and so powerful that as a force it is beyond measure : it expresses itself unobtrusively, even casually, yet it is one of the greatest single forces in the whole armoury of the Commonwealth. Unconsciously, a young Australian woman, who is in London as an ambulance-driver, revealed a part of it when she wrote to *Time and Tide* :

" . . . air-raid calls amount to standing about in the streets for five or six hours waiting for people to be dug out. I won't pretend that this is a particularly refreshing entertainment in itself—if only one could help in some way it would be different, but there's nothing to do, and although one doesn't feel frightened one does feel rather naked and at the mercy of every bit of shrapnel dropping from the heavens . . .

" However, there's also another side to it. The people directly affected are magnificent, and so are the rescue and demolition squads—theirs is the lousiest job of the lot: they're always cheerful and they never stop working for a second—under the most impossibly difficult conditions—not even pausing for a cup of coffee.

" I wouldn't miss being in London now for all the tea in China. I was brought up with the idea that the English were the salt of the earth—a race apart, and that conviction died slowly, and very painfully and finally, I thought, at the time of Munich. Now it's worth any amount of unpleasantness, discomfort and danger, to know that it was a correct estimate after all.

" And it's grand to see these superb qualities coming out all the time. I feel more light-hearted than I've felt for a long time. My own shift pleases me mightily; they behave, when they go out in the barrage on a call, exactly as they've always behaved going out on exercises in broad daylight—they even wrangle in the street with the stretcher parties, over blankets, and always come back with the correct number, very pleased with themselves. They've always been high spirited and enthusiastic and they're no less so now. . . ."

Chapter XIV

Sketches of Four Southern Leaders

*' The more I see of the Tsar, the Kaiser and the Mikado, the better am content with democracy."

—Theodore Roosevelt, 1905.

" The presence in this country of the chosen leaders of the great Dominions is always welcome, and it is an immense support to the British Government in times like these."

—*The Times*, 1941.

As a brief spectacle, the fall of Robert Gordon Menzies from the position of Prime Minister of Australia abruptly held the attention of the Empire.

After more than two years in the highest office in the land, he resigned on August 28th, 1941. Coming suddenly at the end of almost two years of war, and a really dazzling air trip to the Middle East, Britain, Eire, Canada, and America, it was one of the most interesting climacterics that has been witnessed in Dominion politics for some years. The Canberra correspondent of *The Times* (August 30th, 1941), explaining it, remarked :

" Mr. Menzies said recently that he would devote his retirement to philosophical speculation. If this leads him on a quest for the root cause of his deposition he will probably find it in what a shrewd Australian analyst of the Australian character has described as the average Australian's profound distaste for pre-eminence. It was Mr. Menzies' singular misfortune that he was the pre-eminent leader of a Cabinet of average Australians. It would be idle to pretend that there is anyone else of his calibre in Australian public life to-day."

Whoever the shrewd Australian analyst was, he was doing less than justice to the Australian people—or his meaning is merely ambiguous. For his analysis can be read to mean that the reason, in part at least, for Mr. Menzies' resignation was that he was a brilliant, intelligent individual, a clever politician, and that the average Australian, like the average Australian politician, does not wish a leader to be much, if

at all, intellectually superior to himself. And this, of course, would be to present an inaccurate picture. Australia has produced several men as intelligent as Mr. Menzies, as he would be the first to declare, some more brilliant; and some of them have been very good, successful Prime Ministers, others Chief Justices of the High Court.

Editorially, *The Times*, on the previous day, was much nearer the mark when it wrote :

" Australian party politics were never more difficult to follow and have seldom presented a less attractive picture; but it is important to remember that all parties are equally determined to conduct the war with the greatest possible vigour. The dissension is over questions of method, and perhaps even more over questions of personality."

Mr. Menzies is a man with a distinct personality.

To people in Britain, a sidelight on an allegation of sordid political intrigue and its bearing on the sudden resignation was given by *The Times'* Canberra correspondent on September ist, when he reported :

" Mr. J. Leahy, president of the Queensland Country Party, declared that the move to oust Mr. Menzies originated when he was oversea and was unable to defend himself. Those who sponsored his removal (said Mr. Leahy) adopted the verbal subtleties of Japanese diplomacy by extolling the value of national unity while they were actively engaged in destroying it. The Country Party, he said, considered that the intrigue against Mr. Menzies was mean and contemptible, and had the courage to say so. Mr. Menzies had done a great job for the Empire and it remained to be seen whether Mr. Fadden could fill his shoes or would ruin a useful career by harbouring too great an ambition."

Independence

I fixed a picture of Mr. Menzies in my mind as I saw him one afternoon at the Dorchester Hotel speaking to one of the most representative, critical audiences one could be asked to meet. The National Defence Public Interest Committee invited scores to lunch to hear him. Even outside, uninvited people gathered in the halls, listening. Perhaps he has never been seen or heard to better advantage. He was a picture of assurance.

The catholicity of the audience was amazing. Stage personalities like Miss Irene Vanbrugh were there, industrialists like Lord Nuffield, smart in khaki; the readable, fabulous

Fleet Street character, Hannen Swaffer, and strings of officials from the offices of various Governments, including the British Government.

Said people after his lucid speech (he dwelt on Australia's war effort, urging the sky must be the limit if the Empire was to win reasonably quickly) : " Menzies is a great talker ! "

As a statesman, he was something new, different. To begin with, there was nothing impersonal about him. There was the different voice, distinctly Australian. His comparatively easy-going manner, the suggestion of the delight he could take in pouring phials of acid on stuffed-shirts and mandarins. At the same time his intelligence was as plain as a pikestaff, and you watched him with a certain amount of caution, treated him with respect since you knew instinctively that he could bite pretty sharply. He was aggressively independent, a master of sarcasm and subtle insinuation. So they summed him up.

There, that day, stood a Dominion statesman who held, with almost pontifical elegance, a hard-headed, Widely experienced crowd of people with no more difficulty than Lord Birkenhead held them in his heyday. Lady Eleanor Smith, Birkenhead's daughter, said to me long after Mr. Menzies had left Britain : " Yes, a lot of people say he reminds them of my father in the speed and pointedness of his speeches."

There he stood easily, a solid, challenging, slightly ironical lump of Australia, dumped in the middle of London's West End, attracting admiration because of his obvious independence yet so wholly demonstrating that this independence sprang from a conviction that the Empire had never been more securely united and that, just as in a family circle, frankness was welcomed as a tonic.

The whole burden of his tale of Australia's determination to fight to the death if necessary was one of " family ".

Reactions

He shone that day—glittered, in fact. This thick-set, grey-ing, strong-haired, sharp-witted Prime Minister, given to enthusiasm but never to emotionalism, who was head of a thrusting lovable seven million people, impressed London during his 1941 visit as he never impressed it before, and as perhaps has no other Australian-born Prime Minister. (True, William Morris Hughes, Prime Minister in the Great War period, was one of the most colourful, picturesque, vigorous Dominion statesmen in London in the Great War—but he is a Welshman.)

Will he return to the limelight ? No one can tell, although some believe he may.

Nothing very unusual marks the inside story of Mr. Menzies; it includes few, if any, really bizarre episodes. He has a solid middle-class background. Outstanding above all other features is his personality. Wherever he is seriously discussed—and that is in a great variety of places and in several parts of the world—invariably the circle of conversation narrows suddenly from the subject that caused his name to crop up to the man himself, his attitudes, habits, his personal characteristics, his aims, his wide-ranging mind, his traits, his limitations, his ambitions.

A man has to possess a lot of personality for that to happen : and it happens as frequently in London as it does in clubs and homes in Melbourne, or Adelaide, or Brisbane. His eclipse as Prime Minister has not altered this.

Depending on how you react to him, his style of charm arrests you or it leaves you cold. Listen to ordinary people talk about him and you will conclude he is at once complex, rational, sentimental, a political battler, dreamer, realist, a man of ungaugeable moods. As with many men of stature, an injustice some critics do him is to accept one of these facets of character as a full-length portrait of him.

He fills Australians with detestation and affection, confidence and doubt, nationalist ecstasy and boredom. Winston Churchill did all these things to the British people in the period between 1918 and 1940. He was called a war-monger one day, a far-sighted genius the next. His luminous newspaper articles, like his speeches, were digested or tossed unread in the waste-paper basket. "A swashbuckling braggart" and "That man knows what he's talking about" were used in the same house by different persons at the same time. So it is with Mr. Menzies. He is a positive personality with a mind which is forceful, original in many respects, and explosive as a force.

Dropping Bricks

Apart from the fact that he has piled it up at the early age of 45, his record in politics does not account for the tides of feeling flowing strongly in his favour and against him. A brilliant member of the Bar, he entered the Victorian Parliament in 1928 as a Legislative Councillor : later he was elected for Nunawading in the Assembly. Under the leadership of trim, kindly Sir Stanley Argyle, he was Attorney-General and Minister for Railways. Entering Federal Parliament in 1934 as a member for Kooyong (Victoria), he was Attorney-General in the Lyons Government, and twice went to London—first in 1936 to appear for the Government in an extraordinary Privy Council case on marketing powers, and in 1938 as a member of the Australian Trade Delegation.

Unlike Hitler's, his imagination is far from being solely poetical: he has colour, feeling, sympathy and a way of expressing himself that is hardly ever prosaic, frequently shot through with fleeting pieces of subtlety, ironic humour which is not infrequently mistaken for a sneer.

His speeches have a shine about them, even when they are bad speeches, which is rare. He makes more second-class speeches than first-rate ones, partly for the reason that nobody can continuously make first-rate speeches about second-rate subjects, of which there are in the world many more than first-rate subjects. He never shies from dropping bricks, even hurling them, if he thinks it is necessary. Usually, because it is so deliberately done, the crash is wildly startling.

Poise

To some who meet him, Mr. Menzies seems vain, bumptious, opinionated. Yet it is easy to confuse poise with all three. He has poise. Neither the London audiences nor the War Cabinet, on which he sat almost daily for ten weeks, ever saw him ruffled.

His loyalty and broadmindedness are beyond doubt. His physical courage is positive. In one of the biggest blitzes Plymouth has known he left Lady Astor's house, where he was staying, refused to go to a shelter, drove all around Plymouth in a hailstorm of high explosives and incendiaries, seeing for himself how the British civilian re-acted under murderous fire, offered help wherever he could. Ordinary British working people cheered him, a tribute which embarrassed him.

An entertaining raconteur, he is never afraid of telling a story against himself. Menzies Hotel in Melbourne is an old, old institution. The fact that it has the same name as the former Prime Minister is accidental. At a dinner at the Savoy he entertained his guests by saying: "Soon after I became Prime Minister some girls from a school were passing Menzies Hotel, when one of them, glancing at the name and thinking she had made a discovery, said: 'Well, the New Prime Minister hasn't wasted any time in making money, has he?'"

He reads a lot; in his younger days he wrote poetry which he managed to get published. Once he has mastered the material, he writes speeches remarkably quickly. The words **S**ish: more important, they are usually the right words, **S**e has dabbled in journalism only a very little, although he would be good at it. Some say if he were half the journalist Mr. Churchill is, instead of being so good a lawyer, he would be able to be a better Prime Minister.

Heartening, sometimes powerful, Mr. Menzies' speeches in London did immeasurable good. They explained a great deal of what Australia has done, is doing, and intends to do : how she is to fulfil her part in factory and field : they showed how deeply Australia is in this conflict. " Everything we have is at stake with everything you have."

The keynote of most of his speeches was " More effort ". True, this was not a new note, but it gained strength by being struck in the heart of the Empire by a Dominion leader whose recital of what vast changes Australia was making in her life created a mild sensation—even among more than 200 members of the House of Commons who might have been expected to know but who had little or no idea of the magnitude of the great effort being made behind Australia's home front until he lifted the lid before their eyes.

On that memorable private occasion, indeed, he so impressed them that the Secretary of State for India and for Burma (Mr. Amery), presiding, said : " Mr. Menzies has been so extraordinarily lucid I don't think it would be fair to ask questions " ! It was a triumph. Whenever you went into the Commons' lobbies during his stay in London after that speech some Member would tell you about it.

Critics

At home, in Australia, his critics are several—from newspapers to the Senate, from the House of Representatives to the public. He has some political critics in Britain, too.

Presenting you with even a very rough sketch of him, impartial observers will tell you that it would be incomplete without a touch of emphasis on the oddest highlight of his occupation of the Prime Ministership—that, with all his manifold gifts, on many occasions he cannot succeed in convincing more than half the people at one time. Certainly what he says sometimes runs the risk of being spoilt by the way in which he says it, although this has never happened in Britain, where all he has said has been welcomed and understood.

Some political commentators in London, criticising his political tactics after he had resigned, saw only weakness in his offer to serve under Labour leadership if a National Government were formed. If it was not an indication of weakness, they said, it was an indication of a self-abnegation remarkable in a politician. They pointed to the fact that in Britain when Mr. Ramsay MacDonald brought the rump of his discredited party into coalition with the Opposition in 1931, he at least retained the leadership of the National Government that resulted. After Mr. Menzies' resignation a

great many Australians by their spontaneous demonstrations in the streets and at railway stations showed him in what high regard they hold him.

Even on major subjects, like international relations, he finds people disagreeing with him, at least with his method of expression. Take an interesting example. To the Foreign Press Association in London in March, 1941, in a speech considered in Britain to be a good, unambiguous one, he dealt with relations between countries with interests in the Pacific, observing that "because Japan has made an agreement of some kind with the Axis Powers", we should not permit ourselves, willy-nilly, "to drift into an atmosphere with regard to Japan which is dubious and dangerous".

Reactions in Australia were striking. Some critics quickly slapped the label "Appeasement" on it. Certain members of the Australian War Advisory Cabinet disapproved of it. In view of the misapprehension which existed in Australia as to the true nature of his speech, he met Australian newspaper correspondents to recapitulate the substance of it, in the course of which he said :

" There is no difference between the views I expressed and those which I read here as being expressed by the leader of the Opposition, Mr. Curtin. I should regard it as unfortunate if public discussion in Australia proceeded on any other basis. Certainly there has been no misapprehension in the minds of my audiences here."

The Sydney Morning Herald, finding his references to the implications of Japan's adherence to the Axis Pact puzzling, remarked:

" The Prime Minister's speech to the Foreign Press Association in London must be regarded as a well-meant attempt to pour oil on the troubled waters of the Pacific. To the extent that he succeeds in calming present agitations the peoples concerned will be grateful to him. There is a danger, however, that certain passages in his address, which at best were not fortunately phrased, will be read, both here and abroad, as implying that the waters are not really disturbed at all, and that their placidity never need be ruffled so long as all those who dwell around the ocean behave frankly, sensibly, and in general like good fellows. In his commendable anxiety to improve a delicate situation Mr. Menzies would seem to have fallen into the error of minimising its seriousness, to the bewilderment of public opinion in Australia, and in contradiction of his own assertion that 'there should be no pretence about international relations V

Entirely opposite was the conclusion of *The Herald*, Melbourne:

"The basis of Mr. Menzies' speech was a plea for frankness and commonsense in diplomatic discussion, and an emphatic refutation of any belief that war in the Pacific was inevitable. That plea was entirely healthy. It was in no sense a gesture of appeasement. It is one thing to realise that danger of war exists in any sphere, but quite another thing to believe conflict to be unavoidable. In either case, safeguards are essential, but, while hope of peace remains, the wise nation is that which, while making its attitude clear, avoids giving unnecessary offence to its neighbour."

"Mr. Menzies' object, quite clearly, was to emphasise that every consideration of commonsense and mutual interest dictated that Australia and Japan should establish good relations. At the same time, however, he did not overlook the fact that Japan had made an alliance with Germany, and had taken other steps that were not conducive to peace in the Pacific."

The *New Zealand Herald* wrote :

"The approach made by Mr. Menzies to the whole question of relations with Japan lacks the firmness which has lately characterised the official British attitude."

"Australia's Pacific responsibilities are also the responsibilities of New Zealand. Unfortunately, Mr. Menzies' attitude appears to be somewhat dubious. While he speaks hopefully of his Government's efforts to place relations between Australia and Japan on a basis of mutual understanding, he is also compelled to state that Australia has been forced to pursue a policy of local defence in order to resist with her own forces the attack of any aggressor."

On the other hand, the *Auckland Star* took the view that Mr. Menzies' speech was not appeasement, but better deserved to be called statesmanship.

A British Mirror to Mr. Menzies

Broadly speaking, Mr. Menzies' stay in Britain, from March to May, 1941, was a great success. Broadly speaking, because, naturally, he had to impress the public, the statesmen, the politicians, and the Press, and it is impossible for any man, even Mr. Churchill, to register the same degree of success in all quarters. The conclusion generally expressed

after he had gone was that it would be of lasting value to the British people to have had among them such a robust representative from a Dominion playing so splendid a part in the war.

So far as the man in the street is concerned, he saw Mr. Menzies for only a few seconds on a newsreel. For the millions, he acquired most of his stature as the eloquent, sturdy embodiment of the fighting spirit of the Australian troops. Their heroic feats in North Africa held the headlines before he arrived. The echo of their deathless daring in Greece was ringing in every home after he left. Praise for their preparation to meet the worst Hitler can hurl against them in the next Middle Eastern battle was sounding before he had gone.

What did those in Britain think of him? Mr. Menzies carried away a Press cutting book compiled for him by Australia House officials and a newspaper clipping agency who combed daily the Press of the United Kingdom and Eire for any line published about him. If it is studied with the essential amount of objectivity, it amounts to a fairly good mirror reflecting glimpses of the picture of him which a considerable section of the newspaper-reading public saw. There are about 900 clippings, long and short, and photographs.

Most of the clippings are reports of speeches: about 20 per cent, are gossipy paragraphs noting his husky appearance ("He is like John Bull," one reader wrote to the *Daily Telegraph*), his tastes in literature, his audiences with the King, his handshakes with De Valera, his demonstrations of kindness to persons less fortunate, his physical courage, his selection of one of Mr. Churchill's earliest books ("The River War", published 42 years ago) to read *en route*, his quips with the groundsman at Old Trafford cricket ground, his voice ("He schools his ear to the cadence of words by reading verse," Lord Castlerosse wrote in the *Sunday Express*), his attendance at practically every meeting of the War Cabinet, his readiness to snub snobbish officials, his wise-cracks, his downright democratic manner.

Other clippings are from editorial columns. After he had flown to America, editorial references to him continued.

Only Cabinet Ministers like Lord Halifax or Mr. Eden, or outstanding visiting personalities like Raymond Gram Swing or Wendell Willkie have addressed audiences so large and representative as one or two of those Mr. Menzies faced.

"I think I have made only two worth-while speeches in London—speeches worth printing," he said to a friend before he left for New York in May. This is typical of his self-criticism.

In War Cabinet

The Times, saying goodbye, remarked, "He goes back fortified by what he has observed and possessed of a knowledge of war needs here and of the ways in which they are being met such as only close personal contact with Mr. Churchill and personal participation in the work of the War Cabinet could give him." The *Daily Express*, boldly, openly clamouring for his return and inclusion in the War Cabinet, said after he had left, "We want in the War Cabinet the foremost, ablest, most competent brains that the Empire can produce. We want such a man as Menzies helping right at the top." By way of suggesting how he should arrive in the War Cabinet, it added that the solution of Mr. Menzies' domestic problems was the formation of a National Government.

Still, many believed Mr. Menzies would get a seat on the British War Cabinet somehow. Political writers like Mr. Beverley Baxter, M.P., asked in the House of Commons that it be considered.

Quite properly Mr. Menzies gave no intimation of his opinion of the individual strength of members of the War Cabinet, except Mr. Churchill. What he thinks about him was snappily expressed in Manchester: "He's a bobby-dazzler. He's one of the greatest leaders in all history. He is a real crackerjack, as we say in Australia." Undoubtedly Mr. Menzies' ability impressed Lord Beaverbrook, who, partly because he is a Canadian, has about many things ideas different from those of some of his English friends. Mr. Menzies was equally impressed by Lord Beaverbrook's forcefulness. The analytical quality of Sir John Anderson's mind attracted him.

Outside Government circles, Mr. Lloyd George probably was the most vibrant Parliamentary personality he met.

Publicly, Mr. Churchill expressed no opinion of Mr. Menzies. As Chancellor of Bristol University, Mr. Churchill, in conferring honorary law degrees on Mr. Menzies and Mr. John G. Winant, America's Ambassador, said of Mr. Menzies' mission: "He brings with him the strong assurances of the democracy of the Australian Commonwealth that they will with us go through this long, fierce, dire struggle to the victorious end."

Such assurances Mr. Menzies gave the people frequently. What he contributed when he sat at the War Cabinet is not **E**reclaimed officially. There is a strong impression he was, at least, fearlessly critical at times, and his clarity of mind, lucidity of expression, his swiftness in taking up the threads and outline

of almost any subject were recognised. Mr. Menzies' chief qualities, as assessed in London, are that he is able to make sensible statements, is capable of a good summing-up of a situation, that on several subjects he has a vigorous, fresh outlook and can say what he wants unambiguously, and is, too, unafraid to be critical even on subjects about which experts frequently think they alone are competent to talk, as is sometimes the case with chiefs of the fighting services.

In any discussion on the value in war-time of advice from "colleagues from the Dominions", it is recognised there is something in the fresh mind, the common-sense, the determination to see things for themselves, and the readiness to criticise which Dominion statesmen bring to bear on British problems.

The Times thinks these qualities are more than an accident of personality, but remarks Mr. Menzies is possessed of them to an exceptional degree. It believes, however, that "in all the Dominions there are leaders with the same initial advantages of outlook and a proved capacity for leading in a democracy. Field Marshal Smuts, to take the most notable instance of all, would be an outstanding figure in any company of statesmen." It characterises Mr. Mackenzie King as a man who "stands for the magnificent output of Canada in men and armaments"; it also warmly tributes Mr. Fadden's abilities, and those of New Zealand's Prime Minister, Mr. Fraser.

Snub

Pressmen quickly marked him down as someone from whom they could lure a wise-crack even when he prefaced his Press conferences with the usual "I've nothing to say* Have you?" Best among these were:

"You can put me down as an optimist; no man can come to England and not be an optimist."

"We don't mind the English calling us Colonials; it's nothing to what we can call them."

"Cigars are so dear here. This one is one of Winston's. I wonder where he buys them."

Voted to be the stalest gaff was the one he made on his return from Plymouth, bombed while he was there: "Air raids are like mothers-in-law—the farther you are from them the better."

The most publicised snub he gave was the one he administered at a Press conference to an English official who said, "Excuse me, sir, your lunch is waiting." Mr. Menzies retorted, "Push off! You must have seen I am engaged in an important interview. Push off." A. J. Cummings relished

publishing this in the *News-Chronicle*. He thought it could only do uppish officials a lot of good.

Not many of the public saw Mr. Menzies. Knots of people in England, Ireland and Wales, watching him taking a cine-film of a bombed building, groups standing about in a factory he was visiting, a few girls at a mobile canteen or a jovial crowd preparing for bed at a tube station, gave him a cheer. British officials and representative audiences surrounded him chiefly.

Officials were helpful. Mr. Winant best epitomised the Anglo-American attitude of willingness to assist when he drawled to Mr. Menzies, "If there is anything I can do to help, just holler."

Mr. Menzies' preference for candour was perhaps strikingly underlined when he remarked that as Mr. Churchill's guest at Chequers he made sure Mr. Churchill did not corner all the conversation, despite the fact that they sat talking and smoking until well unto the early hours of the morning.

MR. FADDEN'S SPECTACULAR RISE

Arthur William Fadden, Mr. Menzies' successor, is 45. Quicker than many, he has become a noteworthy figure in the national life. No one, probably, ever got to the Prime Minister's office with so little experience. Impartial observers were unsurprised. All the same, to rise in a year from the back benches of the House of Representatives to the first political position in the country was not exactly an unspectacular feat.

Only four years before, he had been the junior member of the House with apparently an unexciting, more or less humdrum career ahead of him. But his opportunity came when, as a member of the Australian Country Party, he repudiated the leadership of Sir Earle Page when Sir Earle, as leader of the party, broke with Mr. Menzies in 1939. When the United Australia Party-Country Party Government was formed under Mr. Menzies' leadership in March, 1940, Mr. Fadden was given the post of Assistant Treasurer.

Even in this junior Cabinet job he revealed a capacity for rapid, logical thought and decisive action. After the tragic air disaster at Canberra in August, 1940, when Federal Ministerialists were incinerated, he was given the task of controlling the Department of Air with full Cabinet rank. His brief control of this important service won him further respect, and the Country Party turned to him for leadership when it faced a deadlock.

He was rising like the temperature in a tropical heatwave.

Following the general election, Mr. Menzies gave him the full Treasury portfolio : he became a Member of the War Cabinet. Up in Queensland, where he has spent most years of his life, they watched his rise no more closely than they did elsewhere in the Commonwealth.

So there was little surprise when Mr. Menzies, before departing for Great Britain, early in 1941, nominated him as Acting Prime Minister. He did more than discharge his duties well: he frequently stole the headlines in the London Press from Mr. Menzies while Mr. Menzies was in London. He is not comparable with Mr. Menzies as an orator. It was what he said that was important, however, not how he said it. As an example of how his statements can impress outsiders, it is perhaps worth noting that Quentin Reynolds remarked when he had read one of Mr. Fadden's crisp summaries of the Far Eastern situation : " That guy seems to be able to slap the nail on the head without a lot of preliminary work with the hammer."

Mr. Fadden is an accountant by profession, and his office is in Brisbane, where his home is. His wife lives there with their two sons and two daughters.

MR. CURTIN'S HOUR

Mr. John G. Winant was designated United States Ambassador to London when he made his final report to the International Labour Office and tendered his resignation of the directorship of that organisation. His comments on world affairs in that report are reminiscent of many things Mr. Curtin has said. Mr. Winant declared his belief that the future lies with the cause of democracy, and that the cause of democracy is the cause of social justice. Democracies could not survive (he continued) unless they could achieve effective co-operation between Governments and organisations of employers and workers.

What was to be the foundation of the stronger democracy of the future ? The conviction had become more widespread that the world belonged to the common people. There was also a realisation of the small extent to which the plain men of the world had had a share in national and international responsibilities and in the practices of free collaboration which were essential to a democratic way of life.

Political democracy must be broadened to include economic stability and social security. An unemployed or poorly employed citizenry was no basis for winning the peace. No opportunity to enlarge the social content of democracy must be lost. No opportunity to strengthen the social and civic rights of the great majority of citizens must be neglected.

No opportunity to wipe out the want and the hopelessness of the pre-war period must be ignored.

To say that Mr. Curtin's outlook on the broader issues is not dissimilar is to say that the Australian Labour movement can produce leaders with a considerable vision.

On his first visit to Melbourne as Prime Minister (October 13th, 1941), answering the crowd who roared, "We're with you for victory, Jack!" he declared: "Only free men and women can use the opportunity to work out a free social order. You people are not used to being told what to do. You like to have some say in what is to be done. That is the real issue at stake in the world. We shall not suffer dictation from within, but we must have the maximum strength within to prevent dictatorship from without. Only by standing together can we win the victory." This was very close to a cardinal point made in a 150,000-word report which 100 delegates and seventy advisers from thirty-three nations were studying a fortnight later at the International Labour Office Conference in America: "The survival of democracy depends on the successful co-operation between organised Labour, industry and Government."

Comments made by Mr. Curtin on the international situation in 1941, included:

"It would be foolish to say that the Berlin-Rome-Tokyo Axis is a mere phrase. It would also be absurd to say that the East has no association with the West in this age of marvellously rapid communication. Sydney, in actual distance, is farther away from London than Tokyo is from Berlin."

"The enemy does not read the Statute of Westminster. He will set it aside."

"The war has made the present position of the Dominions as vulnerable as Great Britain."

"We think it imperative for the safety of Australia that both the front door and the back door of Singapore should be safeguarded, so that it will always be a base upon which the defence of Australia may be pivoted, rather than a base from which an attack on Australia may be launched."

"We should not allow islands in the Pacific to become the springboards from which an attack on this country could be launched."

Mr. Curtin's aim throughout was to secure—in the picturesque idiom of the Australian—"a fair crack of the whip" for the worker. He was saying early in 1941 that many of the old ideas in relation to capital and labour would

have to be scrapped; that wages were more important than profits; that the conduct of Labour would give the key to the national effort, and that the treatment of Labour would give the key to the conduct of Labour in making that effort.

Speaking with almost evangelical fervour, he would say :

" The Government knows it, but I want the employers to know it. Any particular employer can be replaced by a Government official or a volunteer. The rank and file is irreplaceable and indispensable. This is a total war and it requires a total effort. Sacrifices will have to be completely equal. I do not want to take advantage of the war to set up a new social order. I refuse to fall for the dogma of those who would seek to take advantage of the war to perpetuate the existing social order. If the workers are not to take advantage of the present crisis, the employers must not. There should be some appropriate appreciation of social standards.

- " Just as the worker has to spend more time in the factory, the privileged class should spend less time in stupia frivolity. They can afford to give more. If they don't, the choice is for them when the war is over. The aggrandisement of those who toil not, neither do they spin, must end."

Australia—and the Labour Party—were lucky to have plain John Curtin holding the torch for the workers in the First Total War. Not only the Government, but the people and the workers recognised his value. At the annual convention of the Australian Workers' Union there was great applause when the president, Mr. J. McNeill, said :

" Speaking for 100,000 members, we reaffirm our loyalty to Mr. Curtin, and warmly commend his efforts to infuse energy and efficiency into our war effort. We declare our confidence that he held the Labour movement true to its principles in this most perilous crisis in Australia's history, and that while calling upon the workers not to spare themselves in our efforts to defeat our Nazi-Fascist enemies, he will, at the same time, use his personal influence and the strength of his party to preserve the democratic liberties of the people and to raise the living standards of the working class to the highest possible level.

" If we are given the wherewithal, we shall have thousands of hammers ringing out in the naval dockyards and factories, and tens of thousands of men in our munition annexes/'

Mr. Curtin has been Leader of the Opposition in the Commonwealth Parliament since 1935. He was born in 1885, and was educated at State schools. From 1911 until 1915 he was at the Trades Hall, Melbourne, as Secretary of the Timber Workers' Union. In 1917 he went to Perth to become editor of the *West Australian Worker*, an appointment which qualified him for membership of the Australian Journalists' Association, the badge of which he still proudly wears, and to which he points as one of the reasons for his unremitting patience with newspaper men.

Until 1920 he edited the paper. Then he was elected to the House of Representatives, as an endorsed Labour candidate. Before this he had been prominent in Labour political circles. In 1924 he was an Australian delegate to the International Labour Conference at the League of Nations, Geneva. He was defeated at the 1931 election, but was returned again in 1934. In 1935 he succeeded the Honourable J. A. Scullin as Leader of the Opposition. Mr. Curtin is one of the ablest debaters in the House, and his criticism is invariably constructive.

NEW ZEALAND'S SECOND LABOUR PRIME MINISTER

Half a century ago, a fair-haired boy was frequently seen leaning on the counter of his father's cobbler's shop in a Ross-shire village in the Scottish Highlands. Chin in his hands, he listened to his father chatting with his customers about politics. The boy was Peter Fraser, who, as second Labour Prime Minister ever to hold office in New Zealand, visited Britain in June-August, 1941, and America in September on his way home. He impressed in a quiet way.

Up and down the United Kingdom, he explained New Zealand's war effort, expressed New Zealand's admiration for the fortitude of the British people. Perhaps he recalled that the first open-air speech he made in his life was from a soap-box at the celebrated "orators' corner" of London's Hyde Park.

He is a favourite among the workers, although his critics say that his spell is vanishing now. On one occasion, in Wellington, his speech was interrupted by one of the audience shouting, "I haven't see you do a hard day's work in your life." Someone else retorted: "Why, the last time I saw Peter he was shovelling clay from the bottom of a seven-foot drainpipe trench!" And that was true.

He has a dour kind of humour. In Parliament he has spoken with knowledge of farmers' problems, although he is not a farmer. Once a Member implied that since the Prime Minister was not a man of the land he was hardly competent

to speak, and added : " For myself I can at least claim that I was born on the land." The dry reply was: " A sheep could say as much."

Haggis

Middlingly tall, dry, bleak-eyed as Leon Blum, who relatively never fought much harder for the underdog, Mr. Fraser, a simple, somewhat reserved character who impressed Mr. Churchill and Lord Beaverbrook with his canny, persistent understatement, said in London to the British people in August: " We stand by you to the finish." A few weeks before he had seen New Zealand boys with blood-soaked bandages arrive in Egypt from Crete, tiredness stamped in dark rings under their eyes, unquenchable courage lining their jaws.*

He strips his speeches of glitter until they look like haggis—and not infrequently they have a good deal of the vital quality of that unlovely dish. If there was one criticism by impartial observers of his speeches in Britain it was that they were over-cautious. He is fastidious, almost intolerable, in his cultivation of accuracy, which makes him strong in a conference, a dangerous enemy in the political field.

Intelligent, if pedantic, he is a lion for work. Sandwiches on a tray at the War Cabinet rooms in Whitehall frequently composed his mid-day meal during his stay in London.

A dour-looking man, with eyes which behind spectacles seem to seldom open more than half-way; a high prominent forehead; a voice that lets you imagine villagers walking to kirk on a fine Sunday morning. Unsurprising, this, when you discover that he was born in the Scottish Highlands in 1884 and stayed there until he was 26 and went off to New Zealand. He has been in the Dominion ever since.

Up in Ross-shire they feted him, honoured him in innumerable ways when he arrived in August. He likes returning to the village where he spent his boyhood.

Wealth is not found in his background; he has never sought money for its own sake and is not rich. He lives simply with his Scottish wife, remembering their frugal days when they were first married.

Romance

There is something of a Dick Whittington romance about his rise. If he had but once set off to go to New Zealand, changed his mind, then changed it again, there would, of course, be a close analogy. Just as poor Dick Whittington turned again and became Lord Mayor of London, poor Peter Fraser became Prime Minister of New Zealand. Since he is

as earnest as Ramsay MacDonald ever was, it is possible he would have become Prime Minister of England; or, at least, a power in the Labour Party.

You will meet several people, some his relatives, around his Ross-shire village who will tell you he had a sound enough beginning in learning about public affairs. His father was a stalwart of the Liberal Party, its local agent for a time in his village, and as a child he heard him talking by the hour.

Young Peter was nurtured in an atmosphere of political discussion, radical Liberalism, dogged Scotch thoroughness and logic. And logically, as it seemed to him—for Liberalism appeared more and more to be a spent force—he gravitated gradually to the Left. Before sailing for New Zealand on his great adventure in 1910 he was a member of the Independent Labour Party in Scotland and London. He fraternises with members of the Party when he comes to London.

His love of learning is passionate. He attempts to eradicate ignorance. Never a foolishly vain man, though assessing shrewdly the value of his accomplishments, he is his own sharpest critic.

As a labourer, he worked practically from the day he arrived in Wellington harbour. In his spare time he persevered with his self-education. He is a self-made man in the fullest sense of the term. He hauled, like a navvy, on the Wellington wharves.

Loyalty

Politics, naturally, gripped him. The Labour Party in New Zealand at that time was a negligible force: it barely had growing pains, it was so young. Mr. Fraser's introduction to the Party was through the worker's door, not the political door. A good deal of his political success turns on that fact. When he climbed on to the hustings he knew what he was talking about.

"You can't catch out old Peter," they say affectionately on waterfronts of New Zealand. "He's a wise one; he knows," and they wag their heads, chuckling away, as they read in the newspapers how he has discomfited one of his opponents in Parliament. "Peter's a smart fellow," they say. The workers like him, trust him.

No one more than Mr. Fraser in the early days was closer to, no one had more of the confidence and warm admiration of, Henry Holland, father of the Labour movement, who died in 1933, just two years before the New Zealand Labour Party went into office for the first time.

Loyalty, like righteousness, is strong in Mr. Fraser. **Mr. Holland**, later to be leader of the Opposition, and Mr. Fraser

were elected to Parliament at succeeding by-elections in 1918. They took their seats together shortly before the Great War ended. That Parliamentary partnership, which ten years later was to be shared by astute Walter Nash (Finance Minister and Deputy Prime Minister in September, 1941), suffered strains and stresses but never broke.

If it had, would the Labour Party have yet succeeded in being entrusted with the running of the country? For that partnership did as much for the Party's success as any other partnership in the whole New Zealand Labour movement.

A tenacious, somewhat silent man; a man of prodigious industry in his efforts to master facts—with a great capacity for acquiring and holding ready in his mind a store of well-assimilated information, as you can see if you look at the way he sets about gathering facts.

Aside from working as a labourer, he tried his hand at local administration, was a member of the Wellington City Council, the Harbour Board, and other local bodies. He left his mark there, though. Example: He was largely instrumental in formulating the Wellington Municipal Milk Scheme, which gives to the municipality a virtual monopoly in whole-milk distribution—a plan that has worked well, solving problems of distribution and wasteful overlapping to a degree hardly anywhere else achieved, either in New Zealand or any other part of the Empire.

Niche

Portfolios for him in the Savage Government were easy to find: education, health and marine. By his interest, and his study of the first two, he knew more about them than anyone else in the Party; with the Ministry of Marine, concerned as it is with dockside affairs, so vital to the harmony of New Zealand's life, he had corns on his hands as proof of his link with the waterfront.

But of his ministerial record it is too early to attempt an assessment. His work is incomplete. The war has cut across it and for the time being delayed the achievement of much of his aim. Already it has won for him a high place among the statesmen not of New Zealand alone, but of the wider Commonwealth.

He has scores of critics. Now and again the Nationalists (roughly, equivalent to the Conservatives in Britain) call him a dictator, say he is obsessed with a desire for autocratic power, that he wants to be a Mussolini, or have as much power over, say, banking as Stalin. His friends say this is so much political **hot** air: his critics retort—"Time will tell."

