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EUROPEAN BALANCE

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EUROPEAN BALANCE

Peter Matthews

1945

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To

C. H. S. M. and G. E. M.

PREFACE

I BEGAN work on *European Balance* in the summer of 1943 and the MS. had already left my hands when the war in Europe ended.[1] Inevitably, much will have happened between the writing of the book and its publication, but I hope that the validity of its conclusions will not have been affected thereby.

European Balance is an examination, in the light of past experience, of the problems confronting Great Britain as a result of the defeat of Germany. As the war progressed, these problems began to appear in a differing perspective. When Germany was still at, or near, the pinnacle of her strength, the German problem was in the forefront of the picture. But, with the decline in the strength of Germany and the revelation of Russian power, it became apparent that European and world relationships would, after the war, be dominated by the question of relations between the Soviet Union and the western democracies. I have discussed both these questions in the pages which follow.

I ought, therefore, to make my attitude to Russia plain. It seems to me obvious that collaboration between the Soviet Union and the western democracies could have prevented the Second World War, and also that collaboration between Russia and the West is essential for the restraint of Germany and for the maintenance of peace in the future. But I am not one of those who believe that the necessary condition for such collaboration is the acceptance by British opinion of the theory of Soviet infallibility. Russian writers do not hesitate to criticise British policy in the years before the war. In this they are perfectly within their rights. But they cannot complain if we, for our part, point out the errors in pre-war Soviet policy.

Precisely because Soviet propaganda asks us to accept the theory that the Soviet Government can do no wrong, it is easy to fall into the error of carping criticism of the Soviets. I hope that I have avoided this mistake. Where I have criticised the Russians, I have done so in the belief that the maintenance of peace in the future requires that we should recognise past mistakes.

By its massive contribution to Allied victory, the Soviet Union has

[1] The correction of proofs has, of course, given me the opportunity of making the necessary alterations of tense.

earned the right to a paramount share in determining the shape of the peace. But it should never be forgotten that France and Great Britain can alone claim to have resisted German fascism without waiting to be attacked. Russia's experience at the hands of Germany has left the Soviets supremely conscious of their country's need for security. But Russian security will be enhanced if it rests upon a basis of confidence between the eastern and western Allies.

During the war years, a great deal of my time was spent in lecturing on foreign affairs to the three services. I was invariably struck by the questions which were put to me after these lectures. They showed me how much serious thought men in the services were giving to the question of Great Britain's relations with other countries. It was very striking how the members of service audiences insisted on thinking out the problems of international relations for themselves, revealing a very healthy suspicion of anything which appeared to them to savour of official propaganda. *European Balance* is an attempt to answer, in more permanent form, some of the many questions put to me, and I must express my thanks to a great many officers and men whose questions and arguments stimulated my own thought.

I have been very fortunate in the help and advice which I have received from a number of candid friends. Sir John Hope Simpson was good enough to read through *European Balance* in manuscript and to offer a great many suggestions of detail and of substance. The book was discussed chapter by chapter with Martin Wight. Indeed, much of the argument resulted from long talks with him. Dr. Martin Götz also read the book through chapter by chapter and furnished me with much factual material.

I must also place on record my gratitude to Miss Liddell and the Information Department of Chatham House and to Mrs. Barber and the Reference Library of the Ministry of Information for answering a number of questions which arose during the preparation of the book.

My thanks are due to the Editors of the *Spectator*, *World Review*, *Free Europe*, the *Contemporary Review* and the *Fortnightly Review* for permission to incorporate in the book the substance of articles which they had been good enough to publish.

LONDON, 15*th May* 1945.

Part One
The Ascendancy of Germany

Chapter One
THE STRENGTH OF GERMANY

IN January 1941, when the bombing of London was at its height, Lord Vansittart, then Chief Diplomatic Adviser to the British Government, published a pamphlet entitled *Black Record*. This was a series of broadcast talks on the German people which he had delivered in the Overseas service of the B.B.C. Lord Vansittart's treatment of the German problem was highly emotional; he wrote of the Germans as "the Brazen Horde"; he likened them to the Butcher Bird, a gaily coloured creature which specialises in the slaughter of smaller birds. With a candour which did him credit, he admitted that he had himself, as a young man, been bullied by Germans.

Black Record had a very mixed reception. In the emotional atmosphere prevailing at the time of its publication, Lord Vansittart found many admirers, among them not a few who, before the war, had been numbered amongst the most zealous adherents of "appeasement". He had also many critics, some of whom suggested that his pamphlet was "a gift for Göbbels", since it was nicely calculated to stiffen the German will to resist. But "Vansittartism" contained a serious danger which largely escaped notice. Under the stress of nightly air bombardment, *Black Record* found favour with many who, soon after the ending of the war, will come to regard it as a "typical manifestation of war psychosis". In the long run, "Vansittartism" may be found to have influenced British thought principally in the sense of having contributed to a sentimental, pro-German reaction.

Lord Vansittart's writings reveal a profound misunderstanding of British psychology. The peoples of Continental Europe who learned to know the Germans through the invasion and occupation of their countries, can and will hate the Germans. As so many British travellers on the Continent discovered to their chagrin, this hatred, bred in time of war, endures into the peace, and cannot easily be expunged. But the characteristic British attitude to the Germans is very different. Whilst the British people suffered from the malice of the Germans, from their submarines, their aircraft, their flying-bombs and

their rockets, they may have hated the Germans. But the Germans with whom English people have had personal contact have, on the whole, been Germans on their best behaviour, anxious to win the sympathy and support of British opinion. Even when the British have met Germans in battle, they were impressed by his qualities as a soldier. With the insignificant exception of the Channel Islanders, they have never known him as an invader or as a conqueror.

Before 1939, the Germans enjoyed, over the other European peoples, one great advantage in their approach to the British. Before Hitler came to power, they could represent themselves as the victims of injustice and the advocates of a fair relationship between peoples. They could argue that the chief obstacle to a true and lasting peace was the harsh treatment meted out to Germany at Versailles. Because most British people had forgotten the injustices inflicted by Germany upon other countries, this appeal was often irresistible.

So it came about that, even during the first months of the war, British opinion, as reflected in the public controversy over war and peace aims, was preoccupied with the need for avoiding fresh "injustices" to Germany. There was virtual unanimity upon the need for avoiding a "second Versailles". Never again must a *Diktat* be "imposed" upon Germany. By contrast, very few people in Great Britain were familiar with the case for Versailles, the motives which prompted it, or even the terms of the 1919 settlement.

With the end of the war, the British people will again be brought into contact with the Germans. The army of occupation is already meeting them in a mood very different from that of the arrogant conqueror. Even before war ended, British correspondents were reporting that Germans, in territory overrun by the Allied armies, "seemed genuinely pleased to see us", that they "could not do enough for us in little kindnesses". British correspondents have passed on, without comment, statements by Germans that "75 per cent." or "80 per cent." of the German people were "against Hitler". Too often, these correspondents did not pause to enquire whether "75 per cent." or "80 per cent." of the Germans were equally opposed to Hitler in the days of his triumphs. Later, other Englishmen may return to Germany as tourists or as students, to rediscover the delights of the Munich Hofbräuhaus and of the Bavarian climbing hostel. The Germans whom they meet will protest their love of peace and of the British, and their hatred of everything for which Hitler stood. When

Germans are not hating the British with the loathing reserved for the erring relation, they are genuinely pleased to meet Englishmen. They are also glad to "put the German case", and the Englishman, priding himself on his objectivity, is ready enough to listen. These Germans will stand out in sharp contrast to the "Butcher Bird" and the "Brazen Horde" of Lord Vansittart's writings. *Black Record* will be readily dismissed as a characteristic manifestation of war-time passions and propaganda.

By contrast, the British visitor to the Continent will be shocked by the bitterness of the other Continental peoples. He will deplore their "spirit of rancour and revenge". The Allied peoples have formed their own mental picture of the Germans in their rôle of conquering *Herrenvolk*. They will continue to remember Germany as the country to which they, or their sons, were deported as slave labourers. They saw with their own eyes the behaviour of the German conquerors, and read in their own German-controlled newspapers of the shooting of hostages. They will not readily dismiss these things as "war-time atrocity propaganda". They will not readily "forgive and forget", because they have so much more to forgive, and it is so much less easy to forget. Their "spirit of rancour" may, once again, come to be regarded as the main obstacle to a real peace based upon mutual understanding.

Fifteen years after the First World War, I had the illuminating experience of being taken for a German in a Belgian train. The ticket-collector, seeing that I had a ticket for Cologne, had spoken to me in German, and I had replied in the same language. It was very remarkable to discover how the attitude of my Belgian fellow-travellers changed from friendliness to unconcealed hostility when they thought me a German. At the time, this manifestation of hatred seemed to me extremely shocking. I contrasted it with the friendliness and hospitality which I had always experienced in Germany. To-day, in the light of the knowledge of German behaviour in occupied territory, this incident seems less shocking than it did at the time.

Since the broad outlines of the Peace settlement are already evident, it is not difficult to foresee the arguments which Germans and pro-Germans will marshal against it. They will describe it as a "second Versailles", even as a "super-Versailles". In this they will be right, since it is abundantly clear that this settlement will be much more unfavourable to Germany than the Versailles Treaty was. They will explain

that Versailles was responsible for the rise of Hitler, and that, in consequence, a second Versailles means a third world war. They will further insist that it was the policy of France which ruled out a genuine settlement with Germany, and that to-day Russia is following a policy closely modelled upon that of France. Russia, they will explain, is seeking to "encircle" Germany, and Great Britain, by her alliance with Russia, is, once again, a party to the policy of "encirclement".

A citizen of a totalitarian country is fortified against the arguments of foreigners by a long process of indoctrination. If, in the spring of 1939, one suggested to a German that the occupation of Czechoslovakia was unjustified, the answer was invariably the same. He would take pencil and paper, and draw you a map to show how Czechoslovakia was a "dagger pointed at the heart of Germany". The German was always fortified with a ready answer.

The Englishman abroad prides himself on his objectivity. But objectivity means something more than an ability to see the point of view of the defeated enemy. Between the wars, many of us were so anxious to "see the German point of view" that we ignored the point of view of our Allies. Thus it came about that we sacrificed, one by one, the safeguards against German aggression which the Versailles settlement contained. Too late, we discovered that it was not, perhaps, a bad thing to deprive the Germans of an air force and an underwater fleet.

Yet, even to-day, few people in Great Britain realise that, at Versailles, the settlement could have been made acceptable to Germany only if the Allies had been prepared to ignore the just claims of Germany's neighbours. It is not generally known that, in the discussions of the 1919 settlement, Marshal Foch foretold exactly what would happen if the provisions of the Treaty were not enforced; that he foresaw the strategic situation of Munich and of September 1939, and tried, unsuccessfully, to persuade the British delegation to agree to the only arrangement which could have prevented those situations from developing.

The danger, for the future peace of the world, and for the future position of Great Britain, from a fresh pro-German reaction, can hardly be exaggerated. You can make a case for a strong treaty, designed to prevent any revival of German armed strength, always provided that such a treaty is backed by the will to enforce it. You can make some sort of a case for a peace designed to leave the Germans with "no sense of grievance". But you can make no sort of case for a stern peace,

calculated to leave the Germans with a strong sense of grievance, if the will to enforce it is lacking. Propaganda, designed to project into the post-war period the passions of war-time, is bound, in the end, to recoil upon itself, and to play into the hands of the sentimentalists. In this sense, it is less a "gift for Göbbels" than a gift for those post-war successors of the German propaganda minister who will seek to "organise sympathy" among the British public. If the peace is to endure, it must be backed by the recognition that it is necessary. We shall have to understand the reasons for its provisions, and we shall have to be clear in our own minds why it was possible for Germany, twice in a single generation, to start a war of conquest with reasonable prospects of success.

The case for measures of protection against a third German war does not depend upon proving that the Germans are afflicted with a "double dose of original sin", or that "the only good German is a dead one". The starting-point for any discussion of Germany's position in Europe is the recognition that, even if she had been no more aggressive than another nation, Germany's opportunities for aggression would have been infinitely greater than those of any other Power. Without straying for a moment from the firm ground of ascertainable fact, it can be shown that, for a variety of reasons, Germany was peculiarly exposed to the temptation to seek to solve her strategic, diplomatic and economic problems by turning her great natural assets into armed strength. Germany has destroyed the peace of Europe in the past, and may do so in the future, because she has been both strong and aggressive. You can, theoretically, strike at the danger from Germany either by reducing the strength of Germany or by seeking to exorcise her will to aggression. The most valid charge which can be levelled against the peace-makers of Versailles was that they failed to concentrate upon either of these methods. France aimed at reducing the strength of Germany; Great Britain sought to leave the Germans with "no legitimate sense of grievance". The resulting compromise achieved neither aim.

It is a curious fact, apparent to many Frenchmen though largely overlooked in Great Britain, that the Four Years' War, and the break-up of the Russian and Austro-Hungarian Empires which resulted from it, left Germany potentially stronger in 1919 than she had been in 1914. In addition to the 65,000,000 Germans remaining within the borders of the Reich even after the loss of Alsace-Lorraine and the

territory ceded to Poland, 7,000,000 Austro-Germans had been set adrift by the dissolution of the Austro-Hungarian monarchy, a spontaneous process not brought about, but only recognised as an accomplished fact, by the Treaty makers. Over the Czechoslovakian frontier, a further 3,250,000 Austrians, deposed from the position of *Herrenvolk* in the Dual Monarchy, and resenting their incorporation in a predominantly Slav State, represented a further potential asset. If all these Germans and German-Austrians could be brought within the frontiers of a Greater Germany, they would represent a solid block of nearly 80,000,000 Germans. It followed that, given "equality of status" so that the Germans could train soldiers at will, the number of trained effectives in Germany proper was bound to be at least half as large again as the number at the disposal of France. This disparity was enhanced by the fact that the proportion of men of military age was higher in Germany than in France. Unless Germany's "military freedom" was artificially restricted, the "Old Reich", even without the addition of Austria, was bound to enjoy a preponderance in man-power of at least three to two over France. Thus, whilst it seemed unfair to many British people that Germany should be denied "military sovereignty", it seemed to the French inadmissible, in view of Germany's record, that she should be free to establish a long lead. Needless to say, the disparity between Germany's population and that of her other neighbours was even greater. There were two Germans to every one Pole; more than four to every one citizen of Czechoslovakia—and one Czechoslovak citizen out of five was, in any case, a Sudeten German.

If the economic assets of Germany are taken into account, it will be seen that the potential disparity in armed strength between the Reich and its neighbours was even greater. Before the 1939 war, Germany had only one-fifth of the population of Continental Europe west of Russia; but she produced about sixty per cent. of Europe's coal, about half the pig-iron and steel, over half the aluminium, forty per cent. of the cement; one-third of the sulphuric acid. In production of electrical machinery, machine-tools, locomotives, scientific and optical instruments, and, indeed, in engineering of all kinds, Germany dominated the rest of the Continent. It is true that there were many deficiencies in the Reich's war potential. But Germany's vast resources of hard and soft coal, together with her technical efficiency and inventiveness, made it possible for her to fill many of the gaps.

Thus, her deficiency of oil, rubber and even textile raw materials could, to a considerable extent, be made good by synthetic production.[1]

Yet this is not the whole story. For, by possessing herself of a comparatively narrow belt of territory surrounding her own frontiers, Germany can gain control of the principal economic assets of all her neighbours and turn them to her own use. By so doing, she can, at one and the same time, add to her own offensive strength and so weaken her neighbours that they cannot resist her, except with extensive outside aid. She could unite the vast productive resources of Alsace-Lorraine, Luxemburg, Belgium and the northern French departments to those of the Rhenish-Westphalian area and the Saar. She could unite the Polish and Czech districts of Silesia with German Silesia. She could add the arsenals of Czechoslovakia, at Pilsen and Brno, to those of the Ruhr. In a memorandum dated February 25th, 1919,[2] the French Government pointed out that, in the first months of the Four Years' War, the invasion of northern France deprived her of areas furnishing ninety per cent. of her iron ore, and eighty-five per cent. of her pig-iron. Indeed, according to a memorandum of the German iron and steel manufacturers, dated December, 1917, Germany was only able to carry on, during the Four Years' War, owing to the seizure by sudden attack of the French ores, "without which she could never, by any possibility, have waged the war victoriously".[3]

Thus the nearness to German frontiers of the main industrial areas of her neighbours—which are also the principal industrial districts of non-German Europe west of the Russian frontier—represents for Germany a twofold asset. If she can win the first rounds of a war—either by invasion or by bloodless conquest—as she did in 1914, and again in the years 1938-40, she can both add to her own vast strength and reduce that actual, or potential, of her enemies. Military experts calculated before the 1939 war, that Germany could, by artillery fire, prevent the industrial areas of Polish Upper Silesia from functioning without moving a single man across the frontier. Equally, by interrupting the trade of Gdynia and Danzig, Germany could close the route by which, before the war, Poland received two-thirds of her imports.

There is, of course, a reverse side to this picture. For, if the main economic resources of non-German Europe west of Russia lie close

[1] *The Times*, January 29th, 1945.

[2] Cmd. 2169 of 1924, p. 49.

[3] *Ibid.*, p. 54.

to the German frontier, the main industrial districts of Germany, the Rhineland, the Ruhr, German Upper Silesia and Saxony, lie close to the frontiers of Germany's neighbours. A preponderance of strength in the hands of Germany makes it possible for her to add enormously to her power. But if Germany is weak and her neighbours strong, they have an immediately effective sanction in their ability to occupy the regions from which the military and economic strength of the Reich derives. When the French marched into the Ruhr in 1923, most people in Great Britain disapproved. If she had done so ten or eleven years later, when it was plain that the Reich was preparing for war, Hitler's entire plans for conquest would have been forestalled.[1]

Germany's geographical situation in the heart of Europe has been almost as great a source of strength as her control of industrial resources. It was her geographical situation which made it possible for her to deal with her victims one by one. For once fully rearmed, she could strike at her weaker neighbours either in the east or in the west whilst remaining on the defensive on the other frontier. This advantage was, of course, intentionally offset by the disarmament clauses of Versailles, but, once these clauses had been swept away, France could assist her Allies, and vice-versa, only if she was prepared to take the offensive against a power far stronger than herself. Once Germany rearmed, the only counter-balance to her strength could have been a coalition of all her weaker neighbours; but, thanks to her ability to cut Europe in half, Germany could render such a coalition ineffective. Once Germany was rearmed, France and Great Britain could no longer bring immediately effective help to Czechoslovakia in September, 1938, or to Poland a year later.

It was the central position of Germany which provided the strategic justification for the alliance with Italy. Germany, by herself, could dominate the narrow waters leading from the North Sea into the Baltic, thereby preventing British naval intervention in the Baltic. The alliance with Italy was designed to prolong southwards the barrier

[1] I have been told, though I cannot give chapter and verse for the statement, that, in 1933, Pilsudski proposed to the French a joint occupation of German territory as a means of preventing the rearmament which Hitler had so greatly accelerated. It is said that the French favoured this plan, but were reluctant to act without, at least, the approval of Great Britain. When British support was not forthcoming, so the story goes, the plan was dropped, and Pilsudski chose, instead, to sign with Germany the non-aggression pact of January 26th, 1934.

excluding the Western Powers from effective action in Eastern Europe. It must have seemed to Hitler and Mussolini that the armed strength of Italy would at any rate be sufficient to dominate the Central Mediterranean and prevent the use by Great Britain of the direct Suez route to the East.

Some French observers have suggested that the "nomadic" character of the Germans is to be explained by geographical considerations. The territory of Germany lies across the North European plain, and you can travel from the Hook of Holland to Warsaw, and beyond, into Russia, without encountering a range of mountains more formidable than the Wesergebirge, which rises to a height of a few hundred feet on either side of the Weser at the Westphalian Gate. Further south, it is true, Germany was confronted, until the conclusion of the Munich agreement, by the relatively formidable obstacle of the Bohemian mountains. It was partly for this reason that the overwhelming of Czechoslovakia was so important a step in Hitler's plans of aggression. The lack of natural obstacles, both in the East and in the West, has notably enhanced Germany's temptation to make periodic incursions into the territories of her neighbours. It explains French insistence at Versailles that the Germans should at least be prevented from preparing future invasions of France from a secure bridgehead west of the Rhine.

Germany's lack of natural frontiers, particularly in the East, explains why there has, in the past, been no precise dividing line between areas peopled by Germans and by non-Germans. There is, it is true, nothing peculiar to Germany in this state of affairs; natural frontiers are very rare on the Continent of Europe, and, even where they exist, they often run counter to ethnic frontiers. But the existence of German language islands in areas preponderantly populated by Poles, Czechs, Roumanians and Southern Slavs has an important bearing on German policy.

If every German was to be brought within the frontiers of the Reich, this could only be achieved by incorporating in Germany large numbers of non-Germans. The Munich settlement, for example, made Germany a present of 800,000 Czechs—as a first instalment. Here, then, is a constant source of friction in the relations between Germany and her neighbours, a factor constantly leading to war and aggression.

Hitherto, these *Volksdeutscher*, men of German race living outside the frontiers of the Reich, have been of great service to Germany.

Regarding themselves as "superior" to the Slav and other peoples amongst whom they lived, they were peculiarly prone to Pan-German and Nazi ideas. Wolff and Schönerer, two of the founders of the Pan-German creed, hailed from the Sudetenland. These *Volksdeutscher* have rendered most important services to Germany, both at the time of Munich and during the Polish and Jugoslav campaigns. Very prudently, the Soviet Union saw to it, in 1941, that the Germans of the Volga were prevented from playing a similar rôle. Thus the tangle of races on Germany's frontiers is both a standing temptation to aggression, and a marked assistance in carrying it out. But, once again, there is a reverse side to the picture. By the uses to which he has put the groups of *Volksdeutscher* in Eastern Europe, Hitler has led the Czechs and the other Central European peoples to demand their expulsion from the territories in which they have, in many cases, lived for several centuries. In this instance, as in so many others, Hitler must have gambled on the success of his plans for world domination, knowing full well that the price of failure would be paid by others.

As we have already seen, the dissolution of Austria-Hungary, by setting over ten million Germans adrift and depriving them of their position of joint *Herrenvolk* with the Hungarians in the Dual Monarchy, actually enhanced the potential strength of Germany. In another sense, too, the collapse of Austria-Hungary strengthened Germany. The Dual Monarchy had been Germany's ally in the Four Years' War, but it was never possible for the Reich to establish over it the same measure of military, diplomatic and economic hegemony which the Third Reich was to achieve in its relations with the Successor States. The dissolution of the Dual Monarchy and the disruption of economic life in the Danube Basin created, for the new States, economic problems for which Schacht, and after him Funk, offered the solution of complete economic dependence upon the Reich. Economic domination meant that the whole economic life of the Danube area could gradually be moulded to meet the needs of Germany's self-sufficient war economy.

In other respects, too, Germany was able to improve her position as a result of the Four Years' War in a way which more than offset the temporary weakness which followed from her defeat. In the first place, Russia was, for the time being, more adversely affected than Germany. Though the Reich was weakened by military defeat,

Russia had suffered defeat, revolution, civil war and famine. It is true that, in the long run, the Soviet Union was to become infinitely stronger than Czarist Russia had ever been. But she recovered more slowly than Germany. For the time being there was no effective barrier to German aggression in the East. As long ago as 1907, Sir Eyre Crowe had noted the effect on France's position of the Japanese defeat of Russia in 1905. Crowe observed that France was thereby deprived of a powerful support "which alone had hitherto enabled her to stand up to Germany in the political arena on terms of equality".[1] Equally, the eclipse of Russia after the 1917 revolution, although it coincided with the temporary weakening of Germany, caused the French the greatest concern. In a memorandum composed during the Peace Conference, and dated January 10th, 1919,[2] Marshal Foch wrote:

> "During a long period of the past war, Russia, with her vast armies, held a considerable proportion of the German forces. In 1915-16 and even the greater part of 1917, the Allies were numerically superior to the enemy on the Western Front.
>
> "To-day the future of Russia is uncertain, and will, no doubt, remain so for many years to come. Consequently, Western Europe, the cradle of the Western nations and the mainstay of their future, must rely on its own resources in order to frame its destiny and to secure itself against the possibility of a renewed German aggression.
>
> "In fufilling this task, it will not have the advantage of numbers. On the contrary, whatever the political formation of Germany may be, there will always be, beyond the Rhine, a German population of 64,000,000-75,000,000, naturally united by identity of language and thought, and held together by community of interests.
>
> "Against these German forces, Luxemburg, Belgium, Alsace-Lorraine and France can only put a total of 49,000,000 inhabitants. It is only with the support of overseas countries that they could bring their combatant strength, as in 1914-18, up to that of the enemy. But may we not have to wait for that, and for how long?—for America, for instance."

France, too, was, in a permanent sense, more weakened by her sacrifices in the cause of the common victory than Germany was by

[1] Gooch and Temperley, *British Documents on the Origin of the World War*, vol. iii. p. 400.

[2] Cmd. 2169, p. 21.

her defeat. The loss of nearly 1,400,000 men killed in battle was, for a nation of 40,000,000, with a declining birth-rate, a much more serious matter than was the loss of 1,800,000 by Germany, a nation of 65,000,000, whose population was still rising. As we shall see at a later stage, French "casualty-consciousness", the feeling that one must, in the words of M. Daladier, be "avaricious of French blood", lay at the root of the "Maginot mentality" which was to have such disastrous consequences for France.

Such was the situation which resulted from the First World War, and which faced the negotiators of the Versailles settlement. It has, of course, been greatly altered by the course of the 1939 war, by German casualties and by the immense growth in the strength of Soviet Russia. But, before rejecting a stern settlement merely because it has much in common with the Treaty of Versailles, it is as well to recapitulate the situation with which the Treaty makers of Versailles had to deal. In the circumstances, Hitler's achievement in rebuilding the strength of Germany was less miraculous than some have supposed. He recognised the extraordinary potential strength of Germany's position. He also realised the extreme reluctance of the Western Powers to oppose Germany by war. Hitler knew that the memory of the horrors of the Four Years' War, so far from being a deterrent to his plans for aggressive expansion, was one of the strongest cards in his hand. Even if there was, in Germany, a widespread reluctance to fight—and it is not at all certain that this was so—the machinery of the modern police state was strong enough to prevent it from finding any effective expression. Indeed, it was Hitler's readiness to take risks which captured the imagination of the Nazi generation. Only in the Western countries, where public opinion could make itself felt, would the people's fear of war have any effect, and it was all to Germany's advantage that it should do so. It is true that Hitler showed considerable *flair* and skill in timing, particularly in his choice of the moment for reoccupying the Rhineland. Then, and later, at Munich, he played his cards well, but he played with the assurance of one who knows that he holds a great many trumps. He believed, and indeed he had good reason for believing, that if he could win the first two or three hands, he would gain so long a lead that he would be unbeatable.

Hitler recognised that only an "artificial" régime such as that set up by the Treaty makers of Versailles could offset Germany's natural advantages in the struggle for world power. Therefore, his propa-

ganda set about discrediting the Versailles settlement on the grounds of its "artificiality". Similarly, after the occupation of Prague, Hitler sought to justify the dismemberment of Czechoslovakia by describing that country as an "artificial structure". By contrast, German domination of Europe was described as being both "natural" and "inevitable". Students of international affairs may come to the conclusion that, in comparison with the alternative, an "artificial" régime has, perhaps, something to commend it.

If Germany's strength, and her situation in the heart of Europe, offer great possibilities to a Government with aggressive intentions, the country's position also has the defects of its qualities. Geographically, Germany is "encircled" by other states. If the Reich fails to win their confidence, they are liable, in self-defence, to form alliances against her, for only by so doing can they offset her armed superiority over each of them severally. By inept diplomacy, Germany is liable to encircle herself, and, when this happens, she protests that others are seeking her destruction. It is historically a fact that, whenever Germany has been "encircled", this has come about as the result of her own policy, or of the fears which she has engendered in her neighbours. Before the Four Years' War, William II and Tirpitz aroused the suspicions of Great Britain by seeking to add the world's greatest fleet to the world's greatest army. By so doing, they brought into existence the *Entente* between Great Britain, France and Russia. This was a remarkable diplomatic *tour de force* on the part of the Germans, for Great Britain had been on the worst of terms with both France and Russia.

Again, by occupying the "rump" of Czechoslovakia in March, 1939, Hitler succeeded in inducing Great Britain to conclude an alliance with Poland. France had long been trying, without success, to persuade us to accept commitments in Eastern Europe. This, we had always steadfastly refused to do. Equally, after Great Britain had tried, and failed, to make an alliance with Soviet Russia, Hitler brought this alliance into being. Bismarck, alone among recent German political leaders, has shown sufficient skill in his diplomacy to preserve Germany from the encirclement which may so easily result from her position in the heart of Europe. If later German leaders had understood and followed the principles of Bismarckian statecraft, Germany might long since have achieved, without resort to war, the European preponderance and the world position which so many Germans regard as their country's "destiny".

Chapter Two

THE CHARACTERISTICS OF GERMAN POLICY

SPEAKING in the second month of the Four Years' War, Lloyd George defined the attitude of the British public to the war in the following words:

> "We are not fighting the German people. The German people are just as much under the heel of the Prussian military caste . . . as any other nation in Europe. It will be a day of rejoicing for the German peasant and artisan and trader when the military caste is overthrown." [1]

A quarter of a century later, Neville Chamberlain was to say, in a broadcast to the Germans: "In this war, we are not fighting against you, the German people . . . but against a tyrannous and forsworn régime." [2] Chamberlain may, or may not, have been consciously echoing the words of Lloyd George, but the similarity between them is very striking. Both in 1914 and in 1939 a gulf was assumed to exist between the mass of the German people and the Government which plunged them into war. There is no reason for supposing that these views, as expressed by Lloyd George and Chamberlain, were markedly at variance with the opinions of the majority of the British people, at least at the time when they were uttered. German aggressiveness was held to result, not from the will of the German people, but from the ambitious designs of a militarist minority which had temporarily made the masses the instrument of their policy. If the true wishes of the masses could find expression, a very different Germany would be revealed. This same view persisted throughout the inter-war period, except, perhaps, during the years immediately following the end of the Four Years' War. If Germany was aggressive, that aggressiveness was to be explained in terms of environment. The German people was the victim of circumstance; of the ability of a minority to betray and mislead it; of the economic consequences of the First World War and of the peace which followed it; of the "injustices of Versailles". Eliminate these baleful influences, the Hohenzollerns or

[1] *The Times*, September 20th, 1914. [2] *Ibid.*, September 5th, 1939.

the Nazis, the economic malaise and the "injustices of Versailles", give to the Germans the opportunity of finding "work and bread", and they would react very much as the British people reacts.

This frame of mind found expression in some of the panaceas canvassed in the columns of the Press during the first months of the Second World War. Thus, the *Manchester Guardian* published a letter in its issue of September 27th, 1939, from Canon Jack Marriot, who proposed that "freedom (should) be restored to Poland, where her former territories are in German hands, and to Czechoslovakia. But, that there may be no threat or danger to the German people, from such a restoration, it shall be agreed that neither of these States shall fortify their frontiers where they are contiguous with German territory."

It would, of course, be wrong to suppose that this interpretation of German behaviour in terms of environment, which, on occasion, went to such extremes, was universally accepted in Great Britain. It would be equally wrong to suppose that there was unanimity amongst Germany's Continental neighbours in explaining German behaviour in terms of pure heredity. But, broadly speaking, the difference between the dominant British view of Germany and the dominant Continental view can be formulated in terms of environment *versus* heredity. This latter view was forcefully expressed in a section of the French Press during the first months of the war. In the Paris *Excelsior* of September 23rd, 1939, M. Maurice Colrat wrote of the Germans:

> "A Führer will always be found to bring together the forces of Pan-germanism; there will always be found, from the banks of the Rhine to Pomerania, a majority to elect this Führer, a people to acclaim him, jurists to legitimise his crimes, professors to acclaim them, legions to commit them."

On the following day (September 24th, 1939) a contributor to the *Petit Gironde* wrote:

> "The great German mass, in virtue of its plasticity, its political ineptitude, its sheep-like spirit, will always be exposed to the danger of seduction by those who strike its imagination by promising it material happiness obtained by miraculous means. . . . The existence in the heart of Europe of this enormous community, naïvely devoted to self-admiration, seems incompatible with that of a pacific civilisation."

In a memorandum to the Allied Governments dated January 10th, 1919, Marshal Foch had shown himself most sceptical of the view that a mere change of government in Germany would greatly diminish the danger of German aggressiveness. He then wrote:[1]

> "It will undoubtedly not be sufficient merely to change the form of the German Government. Now that the Hohenzollerns have gone, in circumstances peculiarly damaging to that dynasty, and, indeed, to any military monarchy, the danger of a return to the Imperial system must, at least, be remote. But a republic built on the same principles of militarism and the centralisation of power, and taking the whole of Germany in hand, will be no less dangerous, and will remain no less a menace to peace. Experience shows that it would not be difficult to give that character to a republic in a country soaked with the Prussian system, Prussian methods and militarist doctrine, a country in which discipline and the centralisation of power, thanks both to the national temperament and tradition, are still the basis of society. More than that; republican Germany, unhampered by the difficulties which the existence of the small principalities undoubtedly created for the Empire, is likely to derive increased strength from her unity, and from the vitality and energy of a people henceforth in closer relationship to their Government."

It will clearly be necessary to decide between these two contradictory interpretations of Germany, the one which believes that the Germans are no more inherently bellicose than other peoples, and the other which attributes German aggressiveness to German heredity, to the inherent characteristics of the German people. We shall have to decide between the belief in the "two Germanies" and the conception of an "eternal Germany". Or, more precisely, since we are not concerned to prove the peculiar turpitude of the Germans, but rather to deal with a specific problem, we shall have to decide whether the Germans are at present passing, as other nations have done, through a period of aggressiveness, and whether, if this is the case, there is any reason for supposing that this period of aggressiveness is nearing its end. We shall, furthermore, have to take account of the belief, which to-day finds much support from the Left, that, whilst the German "bourgeoisie" and the "industrialists and Junkers" are incurably pug-

[1] Cmd. 2169, p. 20.

nacious and acquisitive, the "German workers", in common with the working class throughout the world, desire nothing but peace, tranquillity and employment. For if this latter interpretation is, in fact, groundless, it may prove highly misleading and dangerous.

Before seeking to answer these questions, it will be as well to examine the outlook and the characteristics of the militarist, aggressive Germany, its approach to the problems of international relations and the technique of aggression which it has pursued. If there is not "another Germany", there would presumably have been no need for Hitler to create the formidable apparatus of the Nazi terror inside Germany, an apparatus resting upon the concentration camp, the informer and the police spy, designed to exclude public opinion from any share in the shaping of events. But, whether or not we decide that there is "another Germany", it remains a fact that, for some hundreds of years, and almost without intermission, the same militaristic elements, whether in their imperial or their racial-Fascist manifestation, have determined the fate of Germany, and, incidentally, have played their part in shaping the destiny of other European peoples, including ourselves.

Without seeking to fortify our argument by citing Tacitus, we must necessarily begin with Prussia. For, whilst it is wrong to regard the dominant influences in present-day Germany as wholly Prussian—Hitler was an Austrian, who built up his movement in Bavaria, and the majority of his lieutenants were South Germans—it was the policy and the army of Prussia which created the Germany which we know.

Although the danger to Great Britain from Germany only began to impress itself upon the consciousness of the British public towards the end of the last century, contemporaries were remarking upon the militaristic character of Prussia a century earlier. At the time of the French Revolution, Mirabeau was declaring that "war is the national industry of Prussia".[1] In a despatch dated May 16th, 1807, Canning described Prussia as "a Power essentially military, and depending for its greatness as a Monarchy of the first Order less upon the good Government of its People than upon the extent of its Army".[2] Later on in the same despatch, Canning expresses the hope, often echoed since, that Prussia will "build Her future greatness on a more solid

[1] Quoted by Ergang, *The Potsdam Führer* (Frederick William I, Father of Prussian Militarism), p. 1.

[2] *Foundations of British Foreign Policy* (Temperley and Penson), p. 26.

Foundation than that of a military System admirable in Theory till it was tried in action; but of which the Vice and the Weakness (long since discovered by some of the best Politicians of Europe, and perhaps not a little suspected by Prussia Herself) have unfortunately been made all too manifest to all the World, at the moment when the existence of the Monarchy came to be staked upon it". The Hohenzollerns were to discover the correctness of this verdict a century later.

Mr. Robert Ergang, in his admirable biography of King Frederick William I of Prussia (1713-40), published in 1941 with the title of *The Potsdam Führer*, has traced the contribution of that monarch to the growth of the Prussian army and of Prussian militarism.

When King Frederick William ascended the throne in 1713, the Prussian army numbered 38,459 men. When Frederick the Great succeeded his father, its numbers had risen to 83,446 men. Although Prussia came tenth amongst the European states in the extent of its territories, and twelfth in its population, this army was, by the end of his reign, the fourth greatest in Europe, and it was the father's rearmament programme which made possible the conquests of Frederick the Great. As Crown Prince, Frederick William I had ridiculed the attempts of his father's ministers to win territory by diplomacy. "They say", he wrote, "that they will obtain land and people for the King with the pen, but I say it can be done only with the sword."[1] Already in the middle of the eighteenth century Europe experienced, at the hands of father and son, the alternating periods of rearmament and aggression which were to be typical of later Prussian and German policy.

It is characteristic of the outlook of the militarist element, first in Prussia and later in Germany, that they never shared the belief that "war does not pay". Hitler has written, probably truthfully, in *Mein Kampf*:[2] "Had our forefathers made their decisions dependent on the same pacifistic nonsense as that of our present time, we should own altogether only one-third of our present territory. . . . To their natural determination to fight for their own existence we owe the two *Ostmarks* of the Reich." Here, at least, Hitler is not falsifying the truth, for the territories in the East now inhabited by the German race consist, in great measure, of land formerly Slav and subsequently German-

[1] *Briefe an Leopold zu Anhalt-Dessau*, p. 55, cited by Ergang, p. 7.
[2] p. 180 of the American edition (Reynal and Hitchcock, 1939).

ised as the result of military conquest and colonisation. Indeed, it is curious that extreme racialism should flourish in a country whose population, as so many of their names bear witness, derives to such an extent from the assimilation of Slavs. This is peculiarly true of the Prussian landed aristocracy from which Germany has always drawn her military class.

The dominant stream of German thought, drawing upon the lessons of German history, has concluded not only that war pays, but that war is the supreme instrument of national policy. The failure of the assembly of German Liberals who gathered in the Paulskirche at Frankfurt in 1848 to achieve German unity, and the contrasting success of Bismarck's policy of "Blood and Iron", are commonly adduced by the Germans in support of this belief. In 1848, Gustav Freytag, the Prussian historian and playwright, was writing, in phrases strikingly similar to those which Hitler was to use in our own day:

> "We are accustomed to battling against the whole world, and to risking everything in order to achieve everything. And perhaps that is what distinguishes us Prussians from other Germans, we are ready to shed our last drop of blood to have our way. . . . We do not fear, for we are a nation of warriors." [1]

To Germans of this school, war and the piling up of armaments have never appeared as a wasteful catastrophe, but rather as the price to be paid for the fruits of victory. Announcing the outbreak of war with Poland on September 1st, 1939, Hitler told his hearers that the cost of rearmament had been ninety milliards of Reichsmarks. But, when he spoke, this gigantic expenditure had already paid three dividends which must have seemed to him to justify his outgoings, quite apart from any future returns. Austria, with its man-power and its industries, had been added to the Reich; so had the Sudetenland, as well as the "rump" of Czechoslovakia, with the great armament works of Pilsen and Brno. These profits, which included ten million Germans, potential soldiers and arms workers, had been bought at a cost of ninety milliards of marks, and they must have seemed cheap at the price, for Hitler had proclaimed that the Reich which he was building would last "a thousand years". Once acquired, these dividends were ploughed back into the business, contributing to Hitler's later successes. Again, on October 6th, 1939, Hitler announced that

[1] Freytag, *Politische Aufsätze*, p. 86.

German casualties in the Polish campaign had amounted to 44,303, including 13,901 in killed and missing; he added that these losses had been "barely five per cent." of the casualties which had been anticipated.[1] From this statement, it is clear that Hitler reckoned that the price of victory over Poland, and of the annexation of a part of Poland's territory, would be in the order of 250,000 men killed and missing, and a further 600,000 wounded. It was a heavy price to pay for success in a single campaign, but the price was measured against the perspective of "a thousand years". If one visited Germany in the spring of 1939, one was inevitably struck by the sacrifices imposed upon the people by Hitler's policy of concentrating everything upon rearmament and the preparation of war. But it was equally striking that, although these sacrifices called forth a certain amount of grumbling, they appeared, in the main, to be accepted as the necessary price of a policy which had already yielded considerable profits. War was expensive, in terms of budgetary expenditure, forfeited leisure, a reduced standard of living, and, if necessary, human life. But the results to be expected from aggression, results which would become apparent over a long period of time, were nevertheless held to render this lavish expenditure justifiable.

It may be objected that the Germans had experienced, less than a quarter of a century ago, a war which had on the face of it failed to pay. This is perfectly true, but the militarist element in Germany had, nevertheless, contrived to salvage from the wreck of 1918 the legend of an "unbeaten army", stabbed in the back by treacherous Marxists and a civilian population seduced by British propaganda and "lying Anglo-American promises". Though the war of 1914-18 had failed to pay the promised dividend, it had come very near to doing so, and would, indeed, have achieved its purpose "had the organisation of the home front equalled that of the fighting front, and but for the British use of sea-power".[2]

Coupled with the conception of rearmament and war as an investment goes the idea that the territory to the East of Germany is an essentially colonial area suitable for settlement by the German race. This view goes back a long way, and, until Hitler undertook the

[1] *The Times*, October 7th, 1939.

[2] The fact that German U-boats had attempted a "hunger-blockade" of their own, though with less success than was to be achieved later against Republican Spain, was conveniently forgotten.

transfer of population from the Baltic States and Bessarabia in the first years of the present war—a measure prompted by temporary considerations of expediency—its results were to be found in the ethnographical maps of Europe. From the days of the "Ordensritter"—the Knights of the Teutonic Order—who forcibly converted the inhabitants of conquered territory to their own version of Teutonic Christianity, German colonisation has always been preponderantly European. The German "language islands" up the Baltic Coast were a legacy from the "Ordensritter". The German-born Empress Catherine of Russia settled German colonists on the Volga, whence they were prudently removed by Stalin to regions where an onset of "national consciousness" would prove less dangerous. Other Germans from Swabia were settled by Austria in the Roumanian province of the Banat. Imperial Germany pursued a dual policy of settlement and Germanisation in its Polish territories, just as Austria did in Bohemia.

When he wrote *Mein Kampf*, Hitler was true to this secular tradition of expansive German imperialism, although, at a later stage, he, like Bismarck, was converted to the idea of overseas colonisation. In 1923 Hitler was writing of the "absurd colonial policy" of the Empire, and urging that "no sacrifice should be considered too great to obtain England's good will. We should renounce colonies and sea-power, and give up competing with British industry". But the object of this renunciation was to obtain British approval of an alternative colonial policy. "If we desired new soil, then this could be achieved only at the expense of Russia, and the new Reich must set out in the footsteps of the Teutonic Knights (Ordensritter), in order to win with the German sword soil for the German plough, so as to give to our people its daily bread."[1] Hitler strikes this note on the first page of *Mein Kampf*. "Only when the boundaries of the Reich include even the last German, only when it is no longer possible to assure him of daily bread inside them . . . does there arise the moral right to acquire foreign soil and territory."

This "moral right" is held by Germans of this school to derive from an inherent superiority of the German race, which, according to Dr. Robert Ley, the Labour Front leader,[2] "has a higher right than all others. . . . We have a divine right to rule, and we shall assure ourselves of that right".

[1] *Mein Kampf*, pp. 182–3.

[2] In a speech delivered at Cracow on November 8th, 1940.

When Bohemia and Moravia were subjected to German rule in March, 1939, they were constituted a "Protectorate". The part of Poland which was not annexed outright became a "Government-General". This choice of colonial terminology was perfectly deliberate. If Great Britain had a right to colonise Africa, Germany had an equal right, and even a "moral duty" in virtue of her "mission", to reduce the countries of Eastern Europe to the status of colonies.

This venture in empire-building was presented to the German people by its leaders as an essentially idealistic enterprise. Nazi propaganda told the Germans that they were destined to bring order out of the chaotic *Kleinstaaterei* [1] of Central and Eastern Europe. German organising ability was to exploit to the full the natural resources of the German *Lebensraum*; agriculture was to be rationalised and existing barriers to trade swept away. Furthermore, the Germans were taught by their propagandists to regard as "inevitable" the domination of Eastern Europe, and ultimately of Europe as a whole, by the solid mass of eighty million Germans living in a compact area between the Baltic and the Adriatic. British observers singularly failed to realise how strongly Hitler's projects of domination appealed to his fellow-countrymen, and this failure led opinion to underestimate, with disastrous consequences, the resolution of the Third Reich. The ephemeral sacrifices which Hitler's policy imposed seemed trivial to the Germans when they reflected that success would assure the future of Germany for centuries to come.

In this "New Order", the compatriots of Chopin and Paderewski were cast for the rôle of hewers of wood and drawers of water. As *Das Schwarze Korps* wrote: [2]

> "After the war, when Germany will have to use foreign labour to an even greater extent than heretofore, it is obvious that in more responsible and difficult, but also in better paid, industrial and skilled work, preference ought to be given to the German worker. Let the foreigners be used for unskilled work. It is quite wrong that there should be Poles doing skilled work, and Germans merely carrying bricks or breaking stones. When one needs a Pole, it is more fitting on racial grounds that he should in all circumstances serve the German."

Writing in 1912, Sir Eyre Crowe defined the policy of Imperial

[1] Conglomeration of small states.

[2] November 21st, 1940.

Germany in terms equally applicable to the Third Reich. "She wants to have an absolutely free hand in dealing with any problem of foreign policy without fear of meeting the opposition of third parties. She wants to make herself so strong that she can dictate terms to any Power." Militarily, "a completely free hand" meant to Hitler the elimination from the European Continent of any other military power save Germany. In the economic sense, it meant that Germany would have access, within areas under her control, to every raw material necessary to her in time of peace or war. When once this state of affairs had been achieved, Germany would become "so strong that she could dictate to any Power". It is not fanciful to suggest that, to a dictator, accustomed to implicit obedience from his own subjects, the necessity for negotiation and bargaining on the international plane was highly distasteful, and that the ultimate aim of his external policy was to achieve the same state of unquestioning obedience which prevailed within his own frontiers.

If once this state of affairs were reached, there would be very little prospect of its being reversed. The fact that Germany was fighting a war against three Great Powers did not, until defeat was already in sight, prevent her from holding down the peoples of occupied Europe. Had she been victorious, nothing short of internal dissensions inside Germany, with one party invoking the aid of non-German Europe against its opponents, could have destroyed the edifice of German domination.

A Spanish Fascist once remarked to one of his democratic opponents that, in the end, Fascism was bound to triumph because, whereas Democracy required that anti-Democratic parties should be given equal opportunities for pursuing their objectives, Fascism, once installed in power, would eliminate Democracy beyond all chance of recovery. Precisely the same danger arises in the relations between the militarist element in Germany and the other European peoples. The defeat of Imperial Germany in 1918 eliminated the German danger for about fifteen years. Had Germany triumphed in 1918, or in 1940, she might well have held Europe in subjection for several centuries. What this would have entailed can only be understood by a country which has experienced German occupation.

The first object of Prussian, and later of German, policy was to place the country in an unassailable military position. This aim was pursued with single-minded thoroughness. Thus, Frederick William I built

up the military strength of Prussia so that she acquired a position altogether out of proportion to her size and resources. In our own day, Hitler first openly formulated his plans in *Mein Kampf*,[1] then publicly disavowed them,[2] and finally succeeded in putting them into effect.

It is not so generally recognised that the policy of Bismarck was characterised by an equal degree of planning, also openly avowed. This point is very strikingly established in the memoirs of Peter Alexandrovitch Saburov, a Russian diplomat of Bismarck's day. He tells of the visit which Bismarck paid to London in 1863, when he expected shortly to be appointed Prussian Foreign Minister. His idea was to get to know the leading personalities in British public life. Baron Brunnow, the Russian Ambassador, gave a dinner to which he invited Gladstone, the Prime Minister, and Disraeli, the leader of the Opposition. After dinner, Bismarck sat down next to Disraeli, to whom he talked for half an hour. Later in the evening Disraeli came up to Saburov, and said: "What an extraordinary man Bismarck is! He meets me for the first time, and he tells me all he is going to do. He will attack Denmark, in order to get possession of Schleswig-Holstein. He will put Austria out of the German Confederation, and then he will attack France—an extraordinary man!"[3]

In our own day, the scientific planning of German aggression has reached its height in the activities of General Karl Haushofer's "Institute of Geopolitics" at Munich.[4] Mr. Frederick Sondern, Jr., entitled a recent article on the subject of this Institute somewhat sensationally, but not inaccurately, "1,000 scientists behind Hitler". Karl Haushofer, a Major-General of the 1914 war turned Professor, and his son Albrecht, perhaps the closest personal friend of Rudolf Hess, divided the terrestrial globe between them, the father taking the "Indo-Pacific Space" and the son the "Atlantic Space" as their particular fields of study. With their countless disciples, drawn from Germany's younger economists and historians, these two men undertook the "scientific" study

[1] "German Austria must return to the German Motherland." "We demand the union of all Germans . . . in a Greater Germany."

[2] "Germany neither intends to interfere in the internal affairs of Austria, nor to annex Austria, nor to conclude an Anschluss." "After three years, I can regard the German struggle for equality as concluded. We have no territorial claims to make in Europe."

[3] J. V. Simpson, *The Saburov Memoirs*, p. 3.

[4] For a fuller account of Geopolitics see *Generals and Geographers* by H. W. Weigert.

of every country in the world, and the foreign policy which they have advocated was thus based upon an enormous mass of factual data, political, economic and strategic. The evolution of Hitler's master plan owes much to the influence of the Haushofers and their Institute.

One of the weaknesses of German planning for aggression has been the fact that the strategic aspect of a given situation often blinded the German militarists to other considerations. In 1914, the strategic plans of General von Schlieffen required the invasion of Belgium. From the purely strategic standpoint, the decision to attack Belgium was as sound in 1914 as it was in 1940, but the Kaiser's Government failed to realise that an attack upon Belgium, whose neutrality had been guaranteed both by Prussia and by Great Britain, would unite British opinion in its determination to fight and defeat Germany. Again, in 1939, the decision to annex the rump of Czechoslovakia was, strategically, perfectly sound. For the territory thereby acquired formed the southern pincer for the later attack upon Poland. But the disadvantages of occupying Bohemia and Moravia enormously outweighed the strategic advantage. Post-Munich Czechoslovakia, deprived of its strategic frontier, was already wholly at Hitler's mercy, and its economic resources could have been harnessed to the requirements of German policy without the occupation of the country. Hitler's occupation of Prague opened the eyes of British opinion in time—and only just in time—to ensure the ultimate defeat of the Reich.

If the strategic considerations which underlay German policy during the years 1933-39 had been understood, many mistakes of British diplomacy might have been avoided. We should have realised, for example, that the remilitarisation of the Rhineland, so far from being prompted simply by motives of prestige or wounded feelings, was intended to serve a perfectly definite strategic purpose. Similarly, we should have understood that the campaign for the "return" to the Reich of the Sudeten Germans was not prompted by any concern for their real or supposed misfortunes—which were negligible in comparison with those of the South Tirolese. It was conceived simply and solely as a strategic move in the planned policy of German aggression.

Attempts have been made to explain the aggressiveness of this militarist Germany in terms of a frustrated nationalism or of the consequences of economic adversity. Germany, it has been argued, became aggressive because she was dissatisfied with a territorial arrangement which left many millions of Germans under foreign rule. But, whilst

it is true that, under the Versailles settlement, substantial numbers of Germans came under the rule of Poland, Czechoslovakia and Italy, no such excuse can explain the conduct of Germany in 1914. At that time, Germany and German-Austria ruled over many millions of Poles, Czechs, Southern Slavs, Italians and Frenchmen. Germany had then no legitimate cause of complaint against the territorial order in Europe. On the contrary, a just settlement, in terms of self-determination, could only have been achieved at Germany's expense.

Nor can German aggressiveness be explained away by the plea of economic adversity. It is perfectly true that, when Hitler took power, some five million Germans were unemployed, as much owing to the world depression as to the economic clauses of Versailles. But, in 1914, Germany was an exceedingly prosperous country, with a flourishing foreign trade; indeed, she was capturing markets from Great Britain, and seemed destined to achieve an increasing measure of prosperity and well-being. Yet that fact did not weigh with the Kaiser's Government, for the aims of German policy went far beyond the attainment of prosperity for the German people. The Kaiser's Government, like Hitler's Government, was prepared to sacrifice the temporary well-being of the people, as well as their lives, in the pursuit of European and ultimately world domination.

It is naïve to suppose that the mere attainment of prosperity will in itself deflect Germany from aggressive aims. It is equally naïve to imagine that mere economic advantage will appear to Germans of the militarist school a sufficient inducement to warrant their abandoning aggressive policies. As late as 1939, there were still people in Great Britain who supposed that, at the price of a £1,000,000,000 loan which would permit the Reich to overcome foreign exchange difficulties and to participate once more in international trade, Hitler might be prevailed upon to mend his ways. To suppose this was to overlook the fact that Hitler was planning for "a thousand years".

In 1919, Marshal Foch assessed German policy in terms equally applicable to the Third Reich of Adolf Hitler:

> "The investment of all her assets in a strong army, based on compulsory universal service, and the practice of regarding wars of conquest as a national industry, had conferred solid benefits on Prussia. . . . All classes, all her resources, all the means of action and of production, all individuals, and all associations, were disciplined,

militarised, centralised. . . . Public instruction was soon impregnated with the same principles. . . . The next stage was the growth of a sense of moral superiority, of a specific destiny and mission, justifying every iniquity provided it led to the ascendancy of Germany." [1]

It would be hard to find a better description of the methods and outlook of National-Socialist Germany. Yet, when these words were written, the National-Socialist Party had yet to be founded and Adolf Hitler was still an "unknown soldier of the World War".

Yet to suggest that the Germany of Hitler is not so very different from the Germany of the Kaiser and of Bismarck is not to suggest that there is no "other Germany". In 1848, a liberal, democratically-minded assembly at Frankfurt attempted to achieve the unification of Germany on a parliamentary basis. After the defeat of 1918, a Social-Democratic Party was, for a dozen years, the largest single party in the Reichstag. In 1918, the German people turned its back on the Hohenzollerns so completely that, throughout the inter-war period, the German Nationalist Party, which was the heir to the monarchist tradition, thought itself lucky if it persuaded ten per cent. of the German electorate to vote for it at the polls. Even at the election of March 5th, 1933, the last in which the voter had to some extent the protection of the customary democratic safeguards, not more than forty-four per cent. of the German electorate voted for the National Socialists, with a further seven per cent. casting their votes for Hitler's Nationalist Allies. It is perfectly true that, from 1933 until the present day, Hitler has felt it necessary to maintain concentration camps for the "enlightenment" of his political opponents. It is perfectly true that Hitler's first victims were Germans, Socialists, Liberals, Communists and Pacifists. Many of these people showed great courage. It is easy for citizens of a free country to tax the Germans with a "lack of civil courage" when not themselves exposed to the terrible consequences of resisting the Nazis.[2]

No fair-minded observer can deny the existence of an "other Ger-

[1] Cmd. 2169, pp. 18-19.

[2] If we admit the existence of an "other Germany", we must also note that there was an "other Stresemann". Dr. Stresemann, who was subsequently to lead Germany into the League of Nations, declared in the Reichstag on March 18th, 1918: "I do not believe in Wilson's universal League of Nations. I believe that, after the conclusion of peace, it will burst like a soap bubble" (Wheeler-Bennett, *The Forgotten Peace: Brest-Litowsk*, p. 304).

many". But hitherto this "other Germany" has unhappily been no match for the militarist Germany of which William II and Hitler are typical. In 1848, the Liberals of Frankfurt succumbed before the Prussia of the Hohenzollerns. On the eve of the Four Years' War, the German Social Democrats, who had vociferously proclaimed their opposition to war, dutifully voted the Kaiser's war credits. Although the Germany of 1914–18 had some semblance of a democratic façade, and although opposition to the war began to develop when it was plain that victory was unattainable, the elected representatives of the German people, including the Socialists, loyally supported the Kaiser's war, just as the mass of the German people loyally supported Hitler's war, so long as it seemed to promise success. When on July 20th, 1932, Franz von Papen illegally suspended the Social-Democratic Government of Prussia, the German Socialists tamely submitted, without resistance, as they were to submit to Hitler's suppression of democratic institutions a year later. (The Communists actually collaborated with the Nazis in the Berlin traffic strike of December, 1932.)

Of all the failures of the Liberal elements in Germany, perhaps the most striking was that of the Saar Plebiscite in 1935. The issue before the electors of the Saar was between the maintenance of democratic institutions, freedom of speech and the rights of trade unions, coupled with the retention of the German identity of the territory, on the one hand, and incorporation in the Reich, with the consequence of total Nazification. Rather less than ten per cent. of the Saar electors voted against inclusion in the Third Reich. Before the election took place, a long procession of adherents of the *status quo* who had gone over to the Nazis was brought to the microphone of the German wireless network to urge the electors to cast their votes for the return of the Saar Territory to Germany. The same sorry spectacle was to be repeated on the eve of Munich, when the German Agrarian and Christian Socialist parties in the Sudetenland, who had championed the cause of reconciliation with the Czechs, went over, lock, stock and barrel, to Henlein, the local Nazi leader. Alone among the Democratic parties of the Sudetenland, the Social Democrats, led by Herr Wenzel Jaksch, found the courage to uphold their principles to the end.

It may be objected that the Saar Plebiscite was influenced by the Nazi terror, and this is undoubtedly true. For, though every precaution was taken, under international supervision, to see that votes were cast freely, anyone who came out openly in opposition to the

Nazis did so with full knowledge of the consequences in the event of Nazi victory. Furthermore, the Nazi "German Front" had unrestricted use of the wireless network of the Reich, whilst the opposition could reply only with their Press. It is none the less surprising that the voters in the Saar Plebiscite, who gave such an overwhelming vote of confidence to Hitler, were not discouraged by the Röhm purge, which took place only six months before on June 30th, 1934, and by the assassination of Dr. Dollfuss, the Austrian Chancellor, in July, 1934.

The Saar Plebiscite is instructive in another sense. A vote against Hitler might have been expected in a great industrial area such as the Saar. Suggestions that the German workers have in the main been staunch opponents of German Fascism are not borne out by the verdict of the workers in the Saar Territory. Individual working-class politicians, in the Saar as elsewhere, showed great heroism in continuing to oppose National Socialism, risking exile or the concentration camp. But the great majority of the working class in the Saar undoubtedly preferred the reinclusion of the territory in the Nazi Reich to the opportunity of passing judgment upon German Fascism by opting for the continuance of an independent democratic province.

In the conflict between the militarist, aggressive element in Germany and the potentially pacific element, the former has consistently profited from certain well-known characteristics of the German people. Thus, the German has an inherent respect for constituted authority. Though many Germans condemned the pogrom of November 9th, 1938, it did not occur to them, on that account, to question the excellence of their Government. Thus, the Germans are persuaded of their racial superiority, and believe that Germany has a "mission" to rule "inferior" peoples. Thus, the Germans have a veneration for their armed forces; it was considered supremely shocking that a British naval officer could be shown on the screen drunk in the film of "French without Tears". After the 1914 war, the prestige of the defeated army in Germany was infinitely higher than the prestige of the victorious army in Great Britain. The Germans are, furthermore, a highly impressionable and sentimental people, peculiarly vulnerable to the wiles of the showman. Success in politics goes to the man who appeals, not to their reason, but to their imagination. Hitler recognised this when he made politics an affair of flags, bands and parades. All the other political parties copied his militarisation of politics, until Germany boasted a whole profusion of political armies and "fronts",

a Socialist "iron front" and a Communist "red front" in addition to the Nazi "brown front".

A song popular in Germany before 1939 and characteristic of the strain of irresponsible romanticism in the German character contained the couplet:

> " *Wir wissen nicht wohin es geht.*
> *Wir wissen die Fahne vor uns weht.*" [1]

One may argue that this song is characteristic only of the militarist element in Germany. But it is significant that, even after the ordeal of 1914-18, it was still possible to romanticise war as a thing of flags and bands, of warriors returning to the embraces of nut-brown maidens. The songs about "Jewish blood spraying from the knife" and the song with the refrain "*Blut muss fliessen, Blut muss fliessen*",[2] reflect an even less savoury side of the German character.

To say that the mass of the Germans love war for war's sake, that they are inherently bellicose, and that they looked forward with relish to the 1939 war, is an obvious exaggeration. Although, in his unguarded moments, Hitler openly avowed in *Mein Kampf* his acceptance of war as a necessary instrument of German expansion, the "peace offers" with which he sought to cloak his aggressive plans were intended as much for internal as for external consumption. Yet it was possible for the Nazi party, within two decades of the end of the Four Years' War, to set about reviving the romantic conception of war without thereby forfeiting the support of the mass of the German people. Even to-day there is little hope that the diet of brass bands, flags and uniforms served up to the Germans during the past ten years will lead to a reaction against militarism and militarised politics.

Other peoples, in other ages, have passed through phases of aggressiveness comparable to that through which the Germans have been passing. But the experience of the years 1919-39 shows the danger of assuming too readily that this phase in the development of Germany is at an end. If the Germans appeared to have undergone a "change of heart" in 1919, they proved themselves capable of a second *volte-face*, this time in a different sense, during the 1930's. Even if the Germans were to decide, after their latest defeat, to set up a German Soviet Republic, there is no guarantee that they would not discover,

[1] " We don't know where we are going.
We know the flag flies before us."

[2] " Blood must flow, blood must flow."

a generation or so later, that it was the "manifest destiny" of the German Soviet Republic, in virtue of the "inherent superiority" of the Germans over the Slavs, to dominate a "Soviet Europe".

In so far as problems in international relations can be regarded as "soluble", two possible "solutions" of the German "problem" suggest themselves. The first is that, by the imposition of restrictions upon the military sovereignty of Germany, the Reich should, for an indefinite period, be denied the opportunity of again attempting to solve its problems by aggression. The second is the ordering of Europe in such a way that the Germans will have no sense of grievance, and will wish voluntarily to collaborate with other peoples for the maintenance of peace. The latter solution, if it is feasible, and if it can be achieved without sacrificing the just claims of Germany's neighbours to German conceptions of a "just peace", is obviously the more desirable, for it has the merit of being based upon consent.

Each policy has its risks and its drawbacks, each is based on an estimate of the probable future behaviour of the Germans. The case for the latter depends upon the possibility that a Germany will emerge from the 1939 war in which the moderate, pacific, elements are sufficiently effective to preserve themselves against a recrudescence of the bellicose and aggressive elements.

The ordeal through which Germany has been passing as a result of Hitler's policy may be expected, during the immediate post-war period, to tip the scales in favour of moderation. But the experience of the inter-war years suggests the danger of too lightly assuming a permanent change of heart, which will outlive the immediate memory of war and defeat.

Chapter Three

VERSAILLES RETROSPECT

IN the controversy over "War Aims" which bulked so large in the British Press during the first months of the "phoney war", there was something like unanimity upon one point. Whatever settlement might be reached after victory, the one thing to be avoided was a "second Versailles". For it was argued that, but for Versailles, there would have been no Hitler, and, but for Hitler, there would have been no war. To-day, more than five years later, it has come to be generally recognised that the peace settlement will contain many provisions reminiscent of Versailles. There will be unilateral disarmament of Germany; there will be reparations; there will be an independent Austria. Thus there will, in effect, be a "second Versailles". Yet this fact has called forth scarcely a word of protest from a public which, when the war opened, seemed substantially agreed that it was just this which must, at all costs, be avoided.

You can explain this *volte-face* of opinion in one of two ways. Either Versailles was the result of war-time passions and prejudices, which have been revived by a renewed experience of war, or else Versailles, which was so generally rejected by British opinion between the wars, had more to commend it than was recognised at the time. If the second explanation is the correct one, then the principal cause of the Second World War was not so much the error of imposing the Versailles *Diktat*, but the failure to appreciate its merits and the lack of the will-power to enforce it. If the Treaty of Versailles was both foolish and criminal, then it is as well to recognise the fact, and to act accordingly. On the other hand, if the provisions of Versailles were, broadly speaking, justified, then we shall only be right to reapply them if we understand the need for them and accept the necessity for enforcing them. Otherwise, we shall experience once more the disastrous retreat from the Peace, a process which led Germany to the threshold of world domination.

Broadly, the case advanced against the Versailles Treaty ran as follows: the Treaty was condemned to failure because it was an imposed settlement, which ignored the wishes and rights of the van-

quished party, and because it was devised in a spirit of rancour and with an unseemly and precipitate haste. Its territorial provisions were condemned as being "unjust" to the Germans; its military clauses were criticised because they denied "equality of status" to Germany; its financial provisions were rejected because, on the basis of the "war guilt clause", they led to the imposition upon Germany of reparation payments which it was beyond Germany's power to discharge. The Treaty as a whole has been criticised because it was held not to have been in conformity with the Fourteen Points and the other pronouncements of President Wilson which were accepted by Germany—after having first been rejected—as the basis for the armistice.

It cannot be denied that Versailles was a "dictated" Treaty. This is unquestionably true, though in this respect it did not markedly differ from most treaties concluded at the end of a war. The Treaty of Frankfurt, which concluded the Franco-Prussian War of 1870-71, was also an "imposed" Treaty, for, though there was negotiation between the parties, the French negotiators accepted the cession of Alsace-Lorraine only because they preferred this sacrifice to the continuance of a hopeless struggle. Every peace treaty in history which has not resulted from stalemate has reflected the preponderance of one group of belligerents over the other, and has been accepted by the vanquished side as a lesser evil than the continuance of the war. If the German delegation had negotiated with the Allies, point by point, the resulting agreements would still have reflected the fact that the Allies were militarily in a position to insist upon their wishes, and that the Germans were not in a position to refuse the Allied demands. The Munich settlement was equally a *Diktat* in the sense that Great Britain, France and Czechoslovakia accepted a "settlement", which they would have rejected if they had felt themselves strong enough to refuse.

A Treaty negotiated under the pressure of superior force instead of being simply imposed by superior force might have been, in appearance, a negotiated settlement. But the only settlement which could be described as being solely the result of negotiation would have been a Treaty in the conclusion of which the element of force was totally eliminated. Assuming that both sides had discarded the factor of force, of their physical ability to insist upon their own point of view, then, and only then, would the Treaty have resulted from consent. But was there ever any chance of such general and voluntary agreement?

Take one example out of many. No. 13 of the Fourteen Points,

which, with certain other pronouncements of the American President, had been accepted by the Germans as the basis of peace, read as follows: "An independent Polish State should be created which should include the territories inhabited by indisputably Polish populations, which should be assured a free and secure access to the sea, and whose political and economic independence and territorial integrity should be guaranteed by international covenant". If Point 13 was to be carried into effect, Poland would have to be provided with a "corridor" to the sea in "indisputably Polish territory". This necessarily meant the severance of East Prussia from the rest of Germany. Germany might accept this—as she did—as being preferable to further fighting. But there could be no "agreed" solution of Poland's frontiers in the sense of a solution voluntarily accepted by both parties. The Polish conception of a just solution involved, as a minimum, the creation of the "corridor"; the German conception of a just solution involved the maintenance of the territorial link between East Prussia and the rest of the Reich, even if that should mean that Poland was denied "a free and secure access to the sea" and that "territories inhabited by indisputably Polish populations" were kept under German suzerainty. There might be a "just solution" in the sense of a solution which seemed to an absolutely impartial observer to be the fairest possible compromise between the rights and wishes of the two parties. But an objectively "just" settlement of this particular problem was bound to be rejected by one or both parties, because their points of view were not reconcilable. Therefore, if the Peace makers had waited for the voluntary acceptance by the Germans and the Poles of an agreed solution to this particular problem, there would have been no Peace Treaty, for, without the application of force, agreement would have been impossible. If, rather than postpone the conclusion of peace between them for an indefinite period, the two parties had patched up some sort of agreement, there would still have been no basis of consent. One or both parties would have made the agreement feeling that it had suffered an injustice.

Or take another example. The French and British delegates held that, in view of Germany's record, it was unthinkable that the Germans should be allowed a technical equality of military status which, in view of the Reich's natural advantages, would, in fact, have left Germany the strongest military power on the Continent. The Germans, for their part, would never have consented voluntarily to any settlement

which imposed upon their country a limitation of armaments not shared by other countries. The French felt that, in the circumstances of 1918, certain restrictions must be imposed upon German sovereignty to offset the fact that there were 65,000,000 Germans and a further 7,000,000 German-speaking Austrians as against 40,000,000 Frenchmen. The German negotiators were bound to resist any suggestion that their country be given an "inferior" status which would deny to it the right to rearm on a basis of technical "equality" with the French. The two points of view were irreconcilable. If superior force had not compelled the Germans to accept the French and British standpoint, there would have been no basis for a settlement.

The rejection of the Treaty by a great part of British opinion as an "imposed" Treaty rested on the assumption that, with infinite patience and goodwill, it would have been possible to arrive, by negotiation, at a settlement acceptable both to the Allies and to Weimar Germany. But this belief was groundless. If there had not been an "imposed" Treaty, whether or not the fact of its imposition was cloaked by formal negotiations, there would have been no Treaty at all.

By the same token, the failure of the Treaty to commend itself to all its signatories is not to be explained by the haste with which it was negotiated. It is perfectly true that it was negotiated in haste, under the pressure of an insistent demand for the demobilisation of the Allied armies. But, if the Allied and the German points of view were irreconcilable, or were only to be reconciled temporarily because Germany preferred to sacrifice her point of view rather than continue to fight for it, there was no reason to suppose that they would have been reconcilable, say, in 1922 or 1935 "after the passions of war had cooled". The Treaty might have been a more lenient Treaty, particularly in so far as reparations were concerned. But the gulf between the Eastern frontier which Germany would have accepted voluntarily and the Western frontier which Poland would have accepted, and the gulf between British determination to deny Germany a sizeable fleet and German unwillingness to have the size of her fleet determined for her, would have remained. At any later stage, the same dilemma would have arisen as in 1919. The negotiators would have been forced to the conclusion that an "agreed solution" was impossible, and that therefore either there could be no Treaty, or the differences between them would have to be resolved by force.

It follows that it was equally vain to hope that the shortcomings of

the Treaty could subsequently be corrected by an agreement to "revise" them peacefully. For, to take the case of the Polish corridor, the Germans would have welcomed "peaceful change" in their favour —their acceptance of No. 13 of the Fourteen Points notwithstanding— but the Poles would certainly have refused to sacrifice any territory. For they would have denied that the German conception of a "just settlement" was synonymous with abstract "justice".

We may admit, then, that the failure to achieve a voluntary agreement at Versailles was not to be explained by the haste with which the negotiations were conducted. But, when we have admitted this, it remains true that Versailles would certainly have been a better treaty—by the nature of things it could not be a universally acceptable treaty—if it had not been concluded under immense pressure by men who, for the most part, had endured the strain of four years of war. For example, when it became necessary to enforce certain of its provisions, it became evident, as Mr. W. M. Jordan has shown in his admirable study of the making and enforcement of the Treaty,[1] that its drafting suffered from haste. Public opinion in the Allied countries, as Mr. Harold Nicolson has pointed out,[2] was in the contradictory position of demanding a most severe peace, whilst at the same time requiring immediate demobilisation, which would have deprived the Allied Governments of the means of sustaining severe demands. In the attempt to resolve the dilemma, the Allied leaders tried to reduce to the minimum the time needed for reaching a settlement.

Though the failure of the Treaty makers to achieve a settlement acceptable to both sets of belligerents is not to be explained by the haste with which the Versailles Treaty was concluded, it can hardly be denied that the spirit of rancour prevailing in the Allied countries left its mark on the settlement. In Great Britain, an election had been held at which the voters had given their support to the slogans "Hang the Kaiser" and "Make the Germans Pay". When it was felt, at Westminster, that the financial provisions of the Treaty might prove "too lenient", Mr. Lloyd George was sharply called to heel in a telegram from members of the House of Commons. Mr. Jordan has written (*op. cit.* p. 104) that "People had come to expect that the cost of the war would be laid upon the enemy, and politicians shrank from

[1] W. M. Jordan, *Great Britain, France and the German Problem*, 1918-1939.

[2] Harold Nicolson, *Peace-making*.

deflating popular illusions about the amount the enemy was likely to pay". There were undoubtedly people in France who saw in reparations the means of permanently crippling German economic life, and French policy was influenced in part by this hope and in part by the desire, clearly incompatible with it, to ease France's precarious financial position by obtaining large sums of money from the Reich. Yet, apart from the reparations question—and the financial clauses of the Treaty had become inoperative before Hitler came to power in Germany—the provisions of the Versailles Treaty were dictated by rational considerations and not by popular animosity.

In 1924, the Foreign Office published as *Papers on the Negotiations for an Anglo-French Pact*,[1] much of the correspondence which passed between the Allied delegations at the Paris peace conference. These documents deserve very careful study, for many of the questions over which Lloyd George and Clemenceau disputed are no less actual to-day than they were a quarter of a century ago. The Anglo-French divergences which these documents reveal, whatever their rights and wrongs, prevented the two major European Allies from keeping the peace by following a common policy. We shall examine these documents in detail when we come to analyse French policy; but one thing emerges very clearly. The military provisions of the Treaty, so far from being merely the result of Allied "rancour" and of a desire to "humiliate" Germany, were devised on the basis of a careful analysis of Germany's past policy and of the reasons which had brought it so near to success. The history of the inter-war years was to prove that none of these French fears were groundless; that she had foreseen with extraordinary clarity the inherent danger of her position. When Hitler set about destroying Versailles, he did so, not because its provisions were "humiliating", but because, so long as they were enforced, they prevented him carrying out the policy of *Mein Kampf*. Unless the Allies were prepared to gamble on a "change of heart" in Germany, on the ability of moderate and peaceful elements to maintain themselves in power, the opportunities for aggression inherent in Germany's position could only be offset by measures of security, by physical guarantees, such as were embodied in the Treaty. The true danger lay, not in the terms themselves, but in the very real possibility that they would not be enforced, at least for long enough to ensure that there had been a real "change of heart". To the French

[1] Cmd. 2169.

it appeared senseless to create the new nation states to the east of Germany, in deference to the theory of self-determination, and then to leave the Reich in a position in which it could, at the appropriate moment, destroy them.

Equally, the French believed that a most important factor making possible German aggression had been the numerical superiority of the Germans over their victims. To them, therefore, it seemed the height of folly to make Germany a present of 7,000,000 Austrians. The Austrians might plead, with some justice, that the refusal to allow them to join the Reich was a denial of "self-determination". But the event was to prove that, within six months of the *Anschluss*, Germany was in a position to dismember Czechoslovakia, and within a year, 8,000,000 Czechs had been deprived, in their turn, of that same right of self-determination.

It should be clear, then, that the military provisions of Versailles, so far from having been simply the expression of Allied rancour, of a desire to "humiliate" Germany, were based upon a most careful appraisal of the factors leading to, and encouraging, German aggressiveness. In the light of subsequent experience, it has become plain how accurately the French forecast the dangers to which their country was exposed. Lloyd George can claim, in another sense, that he, like the French, showed prophetic foresight at the Peace Conference. In a memorandum sent to Clemenceau on March 26th, 1919,[1] he wrote:

> "You may strip Germany of all her colonies, reduce her armaments to a mere police force, and her navy to that of a fifth-rate power, all the same, in the end, if she feels that she has been unjustly treated in the peace of 1919, she will find means of exacting retribution from her conquerors."

The prophecy was fulfilled, but was there any prospect of avoiding war by the means which Mr. Lloyd George prescribed? Mr. Lloyd George wrote: "It is not difficult to patch up a peace that will last until the generation which experienced the horrors of the war has passed away. Pictures of heroism and triumph only tempt those who know nothing of the sufferings and terrors of war. It is therefore comparatively easy to patch up a peace which will last for thirty years." But when the war generation had passed away "the main-

[1] Cmd. 2169, p. 76 *seq.*

tenance of peace will then depend upon there being no cause of exasperation constantly stirring up the spirit of patriotism, of justice or of fair play. To achieve redress our terms may be severe, they may be stern and even ruthless, but at the same time they can be so just that the country on which they are imposed will feel in its heart that it has no right to complain."

Lloyd George was to prove over-sanguine in his estimate of the period for which the memory of the war would operate in Germany; and he did not foresee that this same memory would restrain opinion in the Western countries from sanctioning the measures necessary to restrain a fresh outbreak of aggressiveness. But, leaving this factor out of account, was there any serious possibility that the peace, that any peace resulting from an Allied victory, would leave Germany in this frame of mind? Or is Mr. Brogan right in saying that:

> " For what irked the rulers of Germany, long before the rise of Hitler, was not the injustices of Versailles, but the loss of the war. The fundamental injury done to Germany could not be remedied by the withdrawal of the 'war guilt' charges or financial adjustments. The fundamental injustice was the loss of the war by the people who, in its own eyes, deserved to win it, as the most efficient nation, militarily and economically, in Europe and the world." [1]

If Mr. Brogan is right, then there is little hope of our ending the war, in the late Sir Nevile Henderson's words, "in such a way that the only grievance the Germans have shall be against their own rulers, against the leaders and against the system which brought them again to defeat".[2]

Clemenceau, in his reply to Lloyd George's memorandum, suggested the price which it would be necessary to pay if the Allies wished to "appease" Germany—his use of the word "appease" is interesting. Germany, he argued, was before the war a great power whose "future was on the water". "It was of this world power that she was proud. It is this world power that she will not console herself for losing. Now, without being stopped by the fear of her resentment, we have taken away from her, or are about to take away from her, all her colonies, all her battle fleet, a great part of her commercial fleet in reparations. . . . We are thus dealing her the blow which she will feel

[1] D. W. Brogan, *Is Innocence Enough*, pp. 59-60.
[2] *The Times*, November 11th, 1939.

most, and we imagine that we shall appease her by certain improvements in the territorial conditions. This is sheer illusion, and the remedy is not equal to the disease",[1] and again, "The Conference has decided to call into existence a certain number of small States. Can it, without injustice, sacrifice them by imposing upon them, out of consideration for Germany, unacceptable frontiers?"[2]

If Germany was to be appeased, then this could be done only if the Allies, both Great Britain and France, were prepared to renounce what each held to be the indispensable guarantee of its future security, and even then, "appeasement", in Clemenceau's view, would have meant in 1919 what it was to mean in 1938, namely the imposition of injustice upon the States to the east of Germany. If the gamble of appeasement succeeded, the lasting peace which would result might be held to justify the sacrifices imposed upon Germany's neighbours in the name of "justice for Germany". If the gamble failed, Germany would be in a position in which she could reasonably expect to win the first rounds in a fresh contest for power. Only the intervention of extra-Continental and perhaps even extra-European forces would then suffice to offset the advantages which Germany would have won by bringing under her control the sources of industrial and military strength lying just across her frontiers. The intervention of Great Britain, and, perhaps, the United States, might suffice to bring about Germany's defeat, but, in the meanwhile, many millions of people would again suffer the ordeal of occupation by Germany and the devastation of their countries by invasion.

It may be agreed, then, that a peace in conformity with German ideas of justice would, in fact, have meant injustice to Germany's neighbours. Indeed, it is questionable whether Germany would, in the long run, have considered as acceptable any peace which resulted in the loss of territory once German. But, if it was inevitable that Germany would be dissatisfied with the peace, two gratuitous causes of grievance were added. The first was the conflict between the Fourteen Points together with President Wilson's subsequent pronouncements, and the actual terms of peace; the second was the amount of the reparations which the Allies attempted to levy from the Reich.

At a later date, German propaganda was able to dwell on the theme that the Reich had been "tricked into surrender" by the bait of the

[1] Cmd. 2169, p. 89. [2] *Ibid.*

Fourteen Points, only to discover that the Treaty imposed by the Allies, when "Germany was defenceless", bore little or no relation to the agreed basis of the armistice. The Allies could reply that, when she still believed in her ability to win, Germany had truculently rejected the Fourteen Points, and that, when she finally decided upon an armistice, she was in no position to bargain about the terms of peace. But the thesis that Germany had been deceived by the Allies provided most useful ammunition for the propaganda campaign against the Treaty, both inside Germany and, which was more important, in Allied countries. In every crisis between 1933 and 1939, Hitler was markedly assisted by the fact that, in Great Britain, so many people had come to regard Versailles as the root of all evil that the successive elimination of its provisions was almost welcomed, even if Hitler's methods sometimes appeared unorthodox and even disquieting.

We have already given some consideration to Point 13, the point which provided for the creation of a Polish State "including the territories inhabited by indisputably Polish populations" and which should enjoy "a free and secure access to the sea". It can be taken as absolutely certain that, even if this provision had been carried out with a truly superhuman sense of justice by a mediator from Mars, it would have been bitterly resented by the Germans, their prior acceptance notwithstanding. It is also noteworthy that Point 9, which by general consent was violated as flagrantly as any other, was never invoked even by Hitler himself. For Point 9 laid down that "a readjustment of the frontiers of Italy should be effected along clearly recognisable lines of nationality". Because it suited Hitler's policy to associate Italy with Germany in his plans of conquest, the Führer was content to ignore the fact that the Treaty of St. Germain had subjected the unquestionably German-speaking population of Meran and Bozen to Italian rule. If the Peace settlement inflicted injustice upon the Germanic peoples, then, surely, there was no graver injustice than the subjection of the South Tirol to the Italians. But, as we shall see at a later stage, Hitler was only interested in the "injustices" of Versailles in so far as the righting of these "injustices" could be used as a pretext for Germany's schemes of expansion.

Indeed, the same is true of Point 5, which promised "A fair, open-minded and absolutely impartial adjustment of all colonial claims". It is possible that the existence, during the present war, of German submarine bases in Africa, and the opportunity which the Germans

would have derived from the possession of colonies for raising large native armies, might have turned the scale against the Allies. But it is difficult to reconcile Point 5 with the outright confiscation, without prior negotiation with Germany, of the entire German colonial empire. Yet, as we have shown earlier, Hitler was perfectly prepared to sacrifice Germany's claims to her former colonies, as the price of British connivance with his plans for European colonisation, just as he was prepared to buy Italian support with the surrender of the South Tirolese. Germany's colonial grievances were valuable as a vehicle for propaganda and as a bargaining counter. But neither the loss of the German colonies, nor the so-called "Colonial Guilt Lie", bothered Hitler unduly. He was after bigger game than the return of Tanganyika. It is true that, at a later stage, Hitler's appetite for colonies developed apace, and, in his speech of October 6th, 1939, there is to be found a demand for

> "the colonial possessions due to the Reich and appropriate to its needs. This means *in the first place* the return of the German colonies".[1]

Yet even if you admit that so staunch a German militarist, nationalist and expansionist as Hitler was not unduly disturbed by the manner in which the Peace settlement diverged from the agreed basis of the Fourteen Points, this divergence remains a serious charge against Allied statesmanship. You may argue that, where the Treaty diverged from the Fourteen Points, the Treaty makers were right and the promulgator of the Fourteen Points wrong; you may object that President Wilson's principles did not provide a practical basis for the peace; but in that case it was both foolish and dishonest of the Allies to agree to this basis.[2]

Hitherto, we have been concerned with the charge that Versailles was a bad Treaty because it was bound to drive Germany into opposition, to "divide Europe into two opposing camps". We have suggested that any treaty resulting from the defeat of Germany, and any treaty which took from the Reich territory which had once "belonged to it"—even though its inhabitants might happen to have been Poles, Frenchmen or Belgians—was likely to be rejected by the Germans.

[1] *The Times*, October 7th, 1939.

[2] Cf. G. M. Gathorne-Hardy, *The Fourteen Points and the Treaty of Versailles* (Oxford Pamphlet on World Affairs).

The case against the Treaty on the score of its economic and financial clauses falls into a different category. If the Treaty was bound to be rejected by the Germans, the addition of a further grievance may be held to matter little. But reparations, on the scale on which the Allies sought to extract them, had further and more serious effects. For the victors, as well as the vanquished, were bound to suffer if the attempt to collect impossible sums in the form of reparations produced economic and financial chaos and retarded, or even rendered impossible, the recovery of Europe and the world from the effects of the Four Years' War.

Furthermore, an attempt to collect impossibly large sums of money from Germany was liable to have another, not less important, consequence. If one part of the Treaty came to be regarded in Great Britain as wholly inapplicable and unjustified, the prestige of the whole settlement was bound to suffer, and in consequence other provisions of the settlement, upon the enforcement of which the security of Great Britain, as well as that of France, ultimately depended, were the less likely to be enforced. It could be taken for granted, as Clemenceau foresaw, that the Germans would seek to overthrow the settlement. If Great Britain was unwilling to sustain it, then its prospects of survival were slight. For it could be assumed that the Germans would seek to undermine Versailles by attacking it at its weakest and least defensible point.

Yet to admit that the reparations clauses, in the form in which the Allies sought to impose them, were bound to fail, and with disastrous consequences, is not to say that reparations, as such, were inexcusable. Even on the assumption—and it is an incorrect assumption—that Germany was no more responsible than any other Power for the outbreak of the Four Years' War, there was still a case for reparations. For, apart from the brief appearance of Russian forces in East Prussia, the war had been fought wholly on non-German territory, and Germany had a moral duty to bear her share in making good its ravages. The wealthiest departments of France had been turned into battlefields, as had great parts of Belgium. When the Germans retreated, they "scorched" the territories which they left. The British merchant marine had suffered enormous damage at the hands of U-boats and surface raiders, whereas the German merchant navy had been forced by British predominance at sea to remain within its harbours. Great Britain had been obliged to disburse a great part of

her overseas assets, whereas Germany, thanks to the operation of the blockade, had not had the opportunity of expending hers to any comparable extent. If some reparations had not been levied, German industry would have been left in an advantageous position compared with the ravaged industries of France, whilst the German merchant marine would have been favourably placed to compete with the merchant marine of Great Britain.

It may, of course, be objected that, though there was a moral case for reparations, their imposition was economic folly, since it was liable to damage the recipients more than the country which was compelled to pay. Clearly, countries receiving coal and other deliveries free of charge were likely to look at this problem in a different light from Great Britain which saw markets for British coal supplied free from Germany. The economic case against war debts is as strong as that against reparations. If there is a case against the payment of reparations, as a disturbance of normal international financial exchanges, exactly the same arguments can be advanced against the payment of war debts. War debts, like reparations, must be paid either in gold or securities, or by an excess of exports over imports. If it was economic folly to demand the payment of reparations, it was quite as foolish to demand the settlement of inter-Allied war debts, particularly when the principal creditor country, the United States, insisted on excluding payment in goods by maintaining a high tariff barrier against their entry. So long as the European Allies were required to pay war debts, it was inevitable that they would seek to pass on a part of the burden to the country responsible for all the prodigious expenditure which the war had involved.

In the form in which the Allies sought to impose reparations, they, in fact, turned out to be a boon for Germany. For German propaganda could point to the contrast between the comparatively light indemnity imposed on France in 1871—although without justification, since the Franco-Prussian War, as Bismarck later admitted, was forced on the French and fought on French soil—and the formidable sums which Germany was required to pay under the provisions of Versailles. The great strength of Germany's position in the inter-war period was that she was able to persuade a substantial part of opinion in Great Britain that Germany was "the aggrieved party" and that all the misfortunes of that unhappy period were to be attributed to the errors and "injustices" of the Versailles settlement. The assault on the other

provisions of Versailles, the provisions which prevented Germany from reverting to aggression, was assisted by the fact that reparations, in the form in which the Allies sought to collect them, were so clearly indefensible.

As it turned out, even from the economic standpoint, reparations were not an unmixed evil for Germany. To permit the Reich to pay the sums demanded, very substantial loans were made to Germany. By 1932, however, the payment of reparations had ended, and the service of the Dawes and Young loans was discontinued soon afterwards. Indeed, it has been suggested [1] that the sums lent to Germany to enable her to pay reparations greatly exceeded the sums which she herself paid on that account. The artificiality of the prosperity caused in Germany by her extensive borrowing in the 'twenties was demonstrated during the financial crisis, but Hitler was to profit from the fact that the Allies, in their anxiety to recover reparations, had advanced money for the modernisation and rationalisation of German industry.

From the psychological point of view, the effect of reparations upon the attitude of the Germans to the Four Years' War, and to war generally, was catastrophic. It might have been hoped that the experience of 1914-18 would prove conclusively to the mass of the German people that "war does not pay". Inflation, though it was enormously accelerated by the occupation of the Ruhr, had already assumed serious proportions before the war ended, as is proved by the fall in the exchange value of the mark during the last months of fighting. But, thanks to reparations, the Germans were able to blame upon the Allies consequences which flowed from the war itself, and from the singularly inept handling of Germany's finances during the conflict.

It may be noted that, during the course of the war, the German Government had announced its intention of saddling the Allies with the whole cost of the struggle. Speaking before the Reichstag on August 10th, 1915, the German Finance Minister, Karl Helfferich, brushed aside the need for additional taxation, explaining that the cost of the war would ultimately be met by indemnities from the defeated foe.[2] Admittedly, the fact that Germany also thought in terms of massive indemnities does not, of itself, provide a justification for the

[1] For instance, by Mr. Harold Butler, in *The Lost Peace*.

[2] Bogart, *Direct and Indirect Costs of the Great World War*, p. 202.

Allied reparation policy. But, if the German intention of forcing the Allies to finance Germany's war does not excuse the subsequent Allied attitude, it deprives the Germans of any right of criticism.

In Vol. II of Stresemann's *Letters and Papers* there is an illuminating comment upon the policy of accepting foreign loans as the basis of German reparation payments:

> "If, by means of a large loan, amounting to almost a milliard of gold marks, if by large, long-term investment of foreign capital in German industry, we interest others in us to the extent that they are bound up with our collapse or recovery, that appears to me the only sensible policy that a country in our position can adopt."

At a later stage, Dr. Schacht was to apply just this principle to Germany's trade with the countries of South-Eastern Europe. By contracting large clearing debts with Germany's trade partners, and by making the liquidation of these debts dependent upon a progressive expansion in the volume of their trade with Germany, he was to use German indebtedness as the means of gaining a virtual monopoly of the foreign trade of many of the countries of South-Eastern Europe. It remains to be seen whether the holders of Dawes and Young stock will again constitute a pressure group interested in the imposition of moderate terms upon Germany.

Before we leave the question of the Treaty, we must consider two further criticisms, one French and the other British. At Versailles, the French had demanded, first the creation of an independent Rhineland republic, and secondly the permanent maintenance of Allied bridgeheads on the right bank of the Rhine. This latter demand had been prompted by the fear that Germany, as in 1866, would seek to prepare the way for a new attack on France by first dealing with the countries on her eastern frontier, thus leaving herself free, at a later date, to throw her whole weight into an attack on the French without the danger of a two-front war. The British and American delegations strongly objected to both these demands, and they offered, as a *quid pro quo* for their abandonment, a joint Anglo-American guarantee of assistance to France in the event of attack. By the terms of the Treaty, the acceptance by Great Britain and by America of this obligation was dependent upon its ratification by both, and, when the United States refused to ratify the Treaty, the guarantee lapsed, since Great Britain argued—as she was, legally, perfectly entitled to

do—that America's refusal to accept the guarantee absolved this country from doing so single-handed. It may well be argued that the French demands, whose renunciation had been obtained by the offer of the Treaty of Guarantee, were unjustifiable in themselves. But the French were left with the feeling of having been tricked into making concessions by an offer not subsequently implemented, and this feeling contributed to later misunderstandings. At a later date, the British Government offered France a guarantee in the West, but the French, obsessed with the fear that aggression from Germany, when it came, would come first in the East, urged upon Great Britain an outright alliance. This the British Government refused, and it was not until 1925 that France received a guarantee in the form of the Locarno Agreement, whereby Great Britain undertook to come to the assistance either of France or Germany, in the event of an attack upon one of them by the other, or of a "flagrant violation" of the demilitarised Rhineland zone.

Finally, there is the criticism that the treaties of peace led to the creation of a substantial number of small and medium-sized States "too weak to be capable of survival". To this it must be replied that these States were not "created" by the Treaty makers. They had come into being of their own volition, through the disintegration of the Austro-Hungarian, Ottoman, Russian, and, to a lesser extent, German Empires. Their existence was sanctioned at the Peace, but this was already a fact confronting the Peace makers. With the overwhelming support of Anglo-Saxon opinion, the Allies had taken their stand on the principle of self-determination. That principle might have been carried even further, as Hitler has shown, by breaking down Czechoslovakia and Jugoslavia, and, in fact, the Treaty left certain small peoples in association with one another in single States. The Czechs, Slovaks and Carpatho-Ukrainians were brought together in Czechoslovakia; the Serbs, Croats and Slovenes in Jugoslavia. The break-up of the old Empires clearly showed that they had outlived their capacity to unite the peoples who had lived within their frontiers until the 1914 war. Large, multi-national States, formed on a voluntary basis, might have been more desirable, though experience has proved how difficult they are to achieve. But they could only have resulted from voluntary association. The Treaty makers may be blamed for not doing more to foster the growth of larger units, better capable of self-defence. But they cannot be blamed for the

process of disintegration within the four Empires out of which the "dwarf States" sprang.

There is no denying the fact that the power-relationship brought about by the Peace settlement was artificial. It was bound to be artificial if it was to offset the consequences of the war, which, but for the safeguards comprised in the Treaty, would have left Germany the potential master of Europe. Twenty years after the conclusion of the Treaty, the growth in the power of Russia was creating a situation in which, if the statesmen of the day had but realised it, the relative strength of the Reich was on the wane. Looking back, we can now see that, by maintaining for a few years longer the checks on German sovereignty which the Treaty imposed, Europe could have arrived at a period in which Germany's relative capacity for aggression would have declined with the rise in the strength of Russia. But the statesmen of 1937 cannot, perhaps, be wholly blamed for failing to realise that the Soviet Union, then engaged in "liquidating" the flower of the Bolshevik party, and many others besides, would develop into the Russia which we have learned to know since June 22nd, 1941.

The Treaty makers of 1919 were faced by a choice of risks, each of them formidable in its own way. They had to balance the risk of forcing Germany into embittered opposition by too great severity against the risk of offering her the chance of aggression by too much indulgence. Perhaps the most serious charge against the peace treaties of 1919 was that the choice was never squarely faced. Germany was not conciliated, but, since the Treaty was allowed to go by default, she was not restrained either. Here lies the principal danger to be avoided in future.

Chapter Four

THE POLICY OF THE SMALL POWERS

ONE striking consequence of the Four Years' War was a substantial increase in the number of European States. Finland, Latvia, Estonia and Lithuania broke away from Russia. Poland freed herself from the dominion of Russia, Germany and Austria-Hungary. Czechoslovakia also broke away from Austria-Hungary, who lost territory to Roumania and Jugoslavia, the successor of Serbia, and broke up into the separate Austrian and Hungarian States. Alone amongst the small States which had existed before the war, Montenegro forfeited its independence, becoming a part of Jugoslavia.

The Western Allies had, in general, supported the principle of self-determination, particularly after the conclusion by Russia of a separate peace with Germany. The aspirations of Poles, Czechs, Slovaks, Serbs and Croats towards nationhood were an important weapon against the Central Powers, and Austria-Hungary, in particular, was greatly weakened by the defection of her Slav subjects. Russia, on the other hand, had favoured the aspirations of the Czechs, whilst opposing those of the Poles. A telegram from M. Sazanov, Russian Foreign Minister, to the Czar's ambassador in Paris, dated February 24th, 1916, says: [1]

> "In general one must bear in mind that we are prepared to allow France and England complete freedom in drawing up the Western frontiers of Germany in the expectation that the Allies, for their part, would allow us equal freedom in drawing up our frontiers with Austria and Germany.
>
> "It is particularly necessary to insist on the exclusion of the Polish question from the subjects of international discussion and on the elimination of all attempts to place the future of Poland under the guarantee and the control of the Powers."

It has already been pointed out that the Treaty makers of Versailles, Trianon and St. Germain cannot properly be blamed for adding to the

[1] Cmd. 2169, p. 5. (The text of this note was published by the Soviets after the opening of the Russian Foreign Office archives.)

number of European States. The Peace makers may be blamed for not reversing this process, or for not fusing the small States into larger units; they cannot be reproached with the fact that the small States had come into being. In fact, it was left to Hitler to carry the process of atomisation to its ultimate lengths, by the creation of independent Slovakia and Croatia, and by seeking to foster an autonomist movement in Brittany, a nationally conscious Flemish movement in Belgium and the separation from the rest of France of the Flemish-speaking regions on the Belgian frontier.

Although, at a later date, the Treaty makers were taxed with the "Balkanisation" of Europe, the process had, at the time, met with considerable approval, for it had been felt that the attempt, by Germany and Austria-Hungary, to frustrate the national aspirations of the Slavs, had been a contributory cause of the war. On the other hand, Lloyd George certainly had his doubts about the new States. In a memorandum sent to Clemenceau on March 26th, 1919, whilst the Conference was in session, he said:

> "I cannot conceive any greater cause of future war than that the German people, who have certainly proved themselves one of the most vigorous and powerful races in the world, should be surrounded by a number of small States, many of them consisting of people who have never previously set up a stable government for themselves, but each of them containing large masses of Germans clamouring for reunion with their native land." [1]

At the same time, Lloyd George's objection appears to have been more to the inclusion of large German populations in the new States than to the fact of their independence.

It has often been argued that the multiplication of the European States, the "Balkanisation" of Central Europe, was one of the main reasons why the Versailles settlement was doomed from the outset. It is asserted that the military, diplomatic and economic weakness of the new States made them a source of temptation to the aggressors and therefore contributed to the outbreak of the Second World War. This argument deserves to be carefully examined.

It is, of course, perfectly true that the relative strength of Germany was considerably enhanced by the disappearance of the Russian and Austro-Hungarian Empires, although the existence of these Empires

[1] Cmd. 2169, p. 77.

had not prevented the outbreak of war in 1914. It is also perfectly true that Hitler's Germany, profiting by the economic consequences of the break-up of Austria-Hungary, found it easy to subdue the small Successor States economically, and, later, diplomatically and militarily as well. But it is also true that Austria-Hungary, though in a better bargaining position than her successors, pursued a policy subservient to that of Germany before the last war.

Again, it is perfectly true that the weakness of Denmark, and the apparent weakness of Greece, encouraged Germany and Italy in their aggression; but it is also true that the great strength of the Soviet Union and the United States proved no deterrent to the aggressive policies of Germany and Japan. The weakness of Latvia, Lithuania and Estonia might well have proved a temptation to the Reich; but the fact that these three small republics were incorporated in the Soviet Union did not preserve them from having their territory completely overrun by the Germans.

Nor can the small countries justly be reproached by the Great Powers for failing to unite, and for allowing their territory to be attacked piecemeal by Germany in pursuit of Hitler's "one by one" policy. France, Great Britain and the Soviet Union remained inactive whilst Czechoslovakia was subjugated. The Soviet Union watched the successive attacks upon Poland, Norway, Denmark, Greece and Jugoslavia without coming to their assistance. Indeed, Soviet policy at the time of Germany's invasion of Poland, whatever its motives, was calculated to help, rather than to hinder, the Germans. Belgium and Holland may be blamed for refusing all consultation with the Allies before the attack of May 10th, 1940, but it was the weakness and unpreparedness of the Allies, rather than the absence of pre-arranged plans for collaboration, which made the German victory in the West possible. If Denmark, Norway and Sweden had pooled their strength, regarding an attack on any one of them as an attack on all three, it is possible that the defence of Scandinavia might have been more effective. But there is no reason for supposing that this added strength would have deterred Germany from attacking Scandinavia, any more than the infinitely greater strength of the Soviet Union—plus the Baltic States and half Poland—deterred her from attacking Russia.

Nor does it necessarily follow that the fusion of the small States into very much larger units would have frustrated Germany's policy of

fostering divisions between the small peoples. But for the Pittsburgh agreement concluded between Czech and Slovak leaders in America during the 1914 war, there might have been an independent Czech Bohemia and an independent Slovakia. Yet the fusion of the two peoples did not prevent the Germans from exploiting the rivalries between an element of the Slovaks and an element of the Czechs. Nor did the fusion of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes in a single Jugoslavia prevent the Germans from exploiting the friction between the three peoples. If it is true that Balkan rivalries have been a cause of European instability, it is even more true that rivalries between European Great Powers, with their attempts to create spheres of influence in the Balkans, have exacerbated Balkan rivalries. So long as the Great Powers were able to agree amongst themselves—as they did during the Balkan Wars which preceded the outbreak of the Four Years' War—Balkan rivalries might bring suffering and conflict to the Balkans, but they did not endanger the peace of Europe as a whole.

To say that the small Powers, by their refusal to co-operate in meeting German aggression, were no more to blame than Great Powers which followed the same policy, is not, of course, to condone the policy of neutrality. Every Power, great or small, which sought to remain outside the conflict, made its contribution to Hitler's successes and to the prolongation of the war. If Turkey had fulfilled her obligations to Great Britain in 1944, the liberation of the Balkans, and of all the occupied territories, would have been hastened. If Eire had placed bases at the disposal of the United Nations, the Battle of the Atlantic would have been won at an earlier stage, and the date on which Great Britain and America would have been in a position to open the liberation of Western Europe would thereby have been advanced. Nor can the achievement of the European neutrals in remaining outside the war be claimed by their Governments as a vindication of their own policy. Turkey, Switzerland, Sweden and Eire remained neutral because Germany did not choose to attack them. Eire's neutrality, in particular, was the consequence of British naval power—to the maintenance of which the Dublin Government refused to make any contribution. It was also due in no small measure to the continuance of "Partition"; to the fact that, against the repeated protests of Mr. de Valera, British, and later American, forces were stationed in the six counties of Northern Ireland. But for the presence of these forces, Germany might well have attempted to land in Ireland,

for a successful landing would have brought about the complete encirclement of Great Britain, and her isolation from sea-borne supplies. Sweden, not content with leaving Norway to her fate, actually deviated from neutrality to the extent of allowing German troops and war material to pass over her territory on their way to Northern Norway.[1]

In fact, Hitler's plans of conquest were throughout assisted by the refusal of the peace-loving Powers to combine against him, and in this the Great Powers bore a greater share of responsibility than the small ones. When Belgium, in 1936, repudiated collaboration and announced her intention of following a policy "*exclusivement Belge*", she did so on the ground of the refusal of the Great Powers to make effective a system of collective security.[2] Belgium was following the example of a group of "neutral" Powers—Spain, Finland, Holland, Switzerland, Sweden, Denmark and Norway—which had explained, in a communiqué issued on July 1st, 1936,[3] that:

> "In our opinion, it is inadmissible that certain articles of the Covenant, especially the article on Reduction of Armaments, remain a dead letter, while others are applied.
>
> "We declare that, so long as the Covenant in its entirety is applied only in an incomplete and inconsequential manner, we are obliged to take note of this in our application of the Sanctions article."

When they moved back towards a policy of neutrality, the small Powers were reverting to a policy which, after the Four Years' War, had fallen into general discredit. Belgian neutrality had been guaranteed by international treaty, yet neither the guaranteed neutrality of Belgium nor her policy of remaining aloof from the hostile groupings of the Great Powers preserved her from attack.

When the Peace Treaty, and the League Covenant which formed part of it, were negotiated at Versailles, it was accepted that the policy of neutrality had been proved bankrupt. Belgium had been attacked, despite her declared policy of neutrality, guaranteed by international

[1] It is true that Great Britain also deviated from neutrality, to Japan's advantage, by prohibiting, for a time, the use of the Burma road for the transport of war material to China. Sweden could claim the same measure of justification as Great Britain for her action in permitting Germany the use of Swedish railways on the route to Norway.

[2] *The Times*, October 15th, 1936.

[3] *Daily Telegraph*, July 2nd, 1936.

treaties. Switzerland had escaped the same fate only because the German High Command had considered that the results of a march through Switzerland would not justify the effort and cost involved. The United States had intended to remain neutral, but had, nevertheless, become involved in the war. Thus the explicit repudiation of neutrality was embodied in the terms of Article XVI of the Covenant, which declared: "Should any Member of the League resort to war in disregard of its Covenants . . . it shall *ipso facto* be deemed to have committed an act of war against all other Members of the League." It was the action of a Great Power, the United States of America, in refusing to ratify the Peace Treaty and the League Covenant, which initiated the drift back to the discredited policy of neutrality. Switzerland, which stood out for a position of limited neutrality—she declared herself ready to collaborate in economic sanctions against an aggressor, but refused to participate in military action or allow the passage of troops through her territory—could claim special circumstances to justify her action. Since her population included German-speaking, French-speaking and Italian-speaking elements, it was held that action by her against Germany, France or Italy might jeopardise her national unity.

Neutrality having proved no safeguard, the best hope for the small States lay in an effective system of pooled security whereby they would be assured of the assistance of an overwhelming coalition if they were threatened with attack. Participation in such a system would, of course, have its dangers. For an aggressor, faced by a hostile coalition, would naturally seek to attack it where it was weakest. Even if the ultimate victory of the coalition was ensured, that victory might not come before some of the small States had been overrun and occupied by the aggressor. Thus, even if Germany was faced by a coalition which was certain to triumph over her, nothing could prevent the overrunning of, say, Denmark. Inevitably, participation in a general system of pooled security entails greater risks and greater dangers for a small than for a large State. This is all the more true in an age in which the technical development of armaments, and the increasing cost of equipping the armed forces of a country with complicated modern weapons, has widened the gap between the strength of small and large countries.

In the solitary instance of an attempt to make collective security effective, when Italy attacked Abyssinia, the smaller countries showed

themselves, in general, quite as ready for the sacrifices involved by joint actions as did the Great Powers. There were, of course, exceptions: Austria looked to Italy for protection against the threat from Germany; Hungary had found in Italy a champion of her claims for territorial change. But the prospect of losing an important fraction of their trade did not deter Roumania, Greece, Jugoslavia and other small countries from joining in economic pressure. They recognised that, unless Italy were effectively restrained, they might themselves suffer the fate of Abyssinia.

It had, however, become plain, following upon the refusal of America to ratify the League Covenant and the resulting whittling-down of Article XVI—the sanctions article—that the security to be expected from League membership would be, at the best, highly problematical. Alliance with a Great Power might supplement, or, if need be, replace to some extent the security which the League seemed unlikely to provide in full measure. If the League of Nations failed to create a universal, overwhelming alliance against any and every aggressor, more limited alliances might provide the answer to the danger of aggression from a specific quarter. If the threat of aggression came from a small Power—Hungary or Bulgaria—groupings of small Powers might suffice. The Little Entente—Czechoslovakia, Jugoslavia and Roumania—was specifically designed against the threat of Hungarian aggression; the Balkan Entente—Jugoslavia, Roumania, Greece and Turkey—was designed to deal with the threat of aggression by Bulgaria. Both groupings were attacked as being intended solely to bolster up an unjust *status quo*. To say that Hungary and Bulgaria, if they could have reversed the verdict of the Four Years' War by a successful attack upon their neighbours, would have made territorial arrangements equally unjust, is not a complete answer to this charge, even though the statement is probably true. Hungarian opinion regarded as unjust any territorial settlement less favourable to her than that which had been upset by her defeat in 1918, whilst the Bulgarians hankered after the territories which had, for a brief period, been awarded to her by the Treaty of San Stefano in 1878. Just as there is no conceivable frontier between Germany and Poland which would be regarded as just and acceptable by both Germans and Poles, so there is no conceivable territorial arrangement which would be willingly accepted both by Hungary and her neighbours, and none which would commend itself equally to Bulgaria and the countries on her

frontiers. By any criterion, the territorial settlements which the Little Entente and the Balkan Entente sought to perpetuate were one-sided and unjust settlements. But there was no alternative settlement which was both inherently just and recognised as just by the parties to the various frontier disputes.

If the choice lay between the maintenance of peace by the Little Entente and the Balkan Entente, at the price of an unjust settlement, and the imposition of an equally unjust settlement by Hungary, or Bulgaria, or both, there was much to be said for the two alliances. In fact, when Germany revised the Hungarian-Roumanian frontier by the "Vienna Award" of 1940, the settlement imposed on the two countries, though it was "fairer" than that of 1919, brought no improvement in their relations. Before 1940, Hungary had been dissatisfied whilst Roumania had no fault to find with her frontiers. After 1940, both countries were dissatisfied, and each sought to revise the new frontier to its own advantage.

We may admit then, that, in the conditions of the twentieth century, a small State cannot provide for its own security, and that a Great Power can assail even a group of small States with every prospect of success. But it must also be conceded that, in the aggregate, the small nations have made a very important contribution to the defeat of Germany. If Poland had decided to surrender without a fight in 1939, it is very possible that Germany would have achieved the hegemony of Europe. If Norway and the other small countries had capitulated, the shipping position of the Allies would have been affected to an extent which might have been decisive. At one of the darkest periods in the struggle, Greece had the honour of being the first Allied country to inflict defeat upon the Axis on land. Greece and Jugoslavia, by their decision to resist both Germany and Italy, imposed upon the Germans a delay which had important consequences for the outcome of the 1941 campaign against the Soviet Union. If Turkey had been prepared to align herself with Germany, the way would have been open for an attack upon the British position in the Middle East from the North. Thus the inherent right of the small nations to a say in the determination of their own destiny is reinforced by their highly significant contribution to the Allied victory.

To many people in Great Britain, the fact that these small peoples exist, and that they are afflicted with the same degree of national consciousness as the populations of larger States, is frankly a source of

annoyance. When they insist that they have a right to be heard, their claims are readily dismissed with the argument that they allowed themselves to be overwhelmed "one by one". But the small Powers are certainly no more culpable in this respect than the Great Powers. They are a factor in European affairs which cannot, in justice, be overlooked.

Chapter Five

THE FATE OF CASSANDRA

FRANCE emerged from the Four Years' War not merely as the strongest military power of Europe, but as the only military power of any consequence. Russia was in the throes of revolution, civil war, famine and chaos. Germany had been totally defeated in the field, denied the right to an air force, had her navy reduced to that of a fifth-rate power and her army to a strength of a hundred thousand men, without "offensive weapons". Austria-Hungary had ceased to exist. The weakness of Italy was apparent to every observer. Given the existing preponderance of France over Germany, together with the fact that most of the new or reborn States of Central Europe moved in the French orbit, there seemed, at least on the surface, to be every reason for supposing that France would be able to enforce against Germany the terms of the Versailles Treaty.

Contemporary British observers can, perhaps, be excused for failing to recognise the inherent weakness of the French position, which was the reality behind a façade of apparent strength. Some of the reasons why France, apparently so powerful, had in fact been fundamentally weakened, in relation to Germany, by the war and the developments resulting from it, have already been suggested. The factor of Russia was temporarily excluded, and the Soviet Union was to recover more slowly than the Reich from the consequences of war and internal upheaval. In place of the formidable barrier which Russia had constituted on the East of Germany, a barrier which had held firm during more than two and a half years of war, the Reich was faced in the East by a number of small, weak States. Most important of all, the Four Years' War had made inroads upon French man-power which, taken in conjunction with the trend of her birth-rate, gave to many Frenchmen the feeling that a repetition of the holocaust of 1914-18 would be fatal to national survival. In Germany, experience of defeat produced a profound, though temporary, revulsion against war. In France, the price paid for victory left the feeling that another war, even if it were again a victorious war, might well mean the destruction of France's whole European and world position.

To many observers it seemed, in the years after 1918, that Germany's experience of costly defeat would deter her from any further essay in world domination. They were to discover that France—and Great Britain also—were far more anxious than Germany to avoid another war. In the event, the profoundly pacific attitude of France, born of her knowledge of the cost of war—even of a victorious war—was to prove one of Hitler's most important assets. The uncompromising pacificism of a section of French opinion, and the readiness for appeasement which was to develop amongst elements both of the Left and of the Right, derived in considerable measure from the fear that a new war would mean virtual extinction.

In its appraisal of France's position after the victory of 1918, French opinion was preoccupied almost as much by the memory of 1870-71 as by that of 1914-19. In 1870-71, France had been defeated in a single-handed contest with Prussia. In the years 1914-18 she had narrowly escaped defeat, even though she had fought as a member of a mighty alliance. In the first months of the war, the Germans, although faced by the threat from Russia in the East, had come near to capturing Paris, and only the Russian offensive had prevented the fall of the capital. Again, in March 1918, the Germans nearly succeeded in driving a wedge between the British and French armies. In 1914, the Germans had been narrowly forestalled in an attempt to capture the Channel ports, thereby rendering infinitely difficult the arrival of British reinforcements. Again, in 1918, the enemy had come near to capturing these same ports in time to prevent the disembarkment of the American Expeditionary Force. It had been a near thing both in 1914 and again in 1918.

Behind the Four Years' War there was the memory of 1866 and 1870. With powerful Allies, France might survive the ordeal, though only by a hair's-breadth, and at a frightful cost in French lives. But if Germany again succeeded in defeating her enemies in detail, France's fate was sealed. Remembering that the defeat of Austria, a potential ally, in 1866 had prepared the way for her own defeat in 1870, France felt deeply concerned in the affairs of Central Europe. British opinion, with no such memories, felt that French entanglement in Central European affairs meant the danger that Great Britain would be involved in war over distant quarrels in a part of the world which was notoriously unstable and exposed to the danger of conflict.

British opinion, seeing only the façade of strength, and failing to

detect the real weakness of the French position, found it highly irritating and unreasonable that the strongest military power of the Continent should be so concerned about her security, and so anxious for additional guarantees. If the strongest European Power sought to strengthen her position still further, there must, it seemed, be some sinister explanation. The clamour for security could be explained only as a smoke screen to cover designs for an unjustifiable ascendancy. British opinion did not pause to consider whether the unchallenged military preponderance of France over Germany was not, perhaps, the only alternative to an even more unassailable German preponderance over France, and over Europe as a whole.

From the first, informed French opinion did not suffer from the illusion that the temporary preponderance of France, which resulted from the purely fortuitous circumstances of the years immediately following the First World War, would prove in any way durable. In the memoranda presented to the principal Allied Governments by the French Government, and by Marshal Foch, the weakness of France's position is very forcefully exposed.[1] These documents provide the clue to French policy throughout the inter-war period. If the force of the French contentions had been appreciated in Great Britain, many subsequent misunderstandings would have been avoided. Germany might have been held in check, at least until the recovery of Russia had deprived the Reich of the opportunity for aggression which the circumstances of the inter-war period afforded her.

Marshal Foch recognised that, unless Germany was prevented from converting her man-power and her industrial resources into military strength, France would be powerless against her neighbour in the East. He saw that technical equality of status meant an actual handicap for France; that if, for example, France and Germany each enforced a two-year period of military service, the German army would always be at least half as strong again as the French. Indeed, there is a note almost of defeatism in Foch's appraisal of the situation, drawn up a little more than three months after the Allied victory of November 1918.

Thus he wrote of the possibility of a German attack made from the Rhine bridges, in which case "the battle which we will have to face on the plains of Belgium will be one in which we shall suffer from a considerable numerical inferiority . . . once again, Belgium and Northern France will be made a field of battle, a field of defeat".[2] France

[1] Cmd. 2169 of 1924, *passim*. [2] *Op. cit.*, p. 87.

might survive initial reverses, but only at a terrible cost. "There is no English or American help which can be strong enough, and which can arrive in sufficient time to prevent disaster in the plains of the North, to preserve France from a complete defeat, or, if she wants to save her armies from this, to free her from the necessity of withdrawing them behind the Somme, or the Seine, or the Loire, in order to await there the help of her allies." [1]

Furthermore, France, in view of her exposed position, could not contemplate with equanimity the danger of initial reverses. In its memorandum of February 25th, 1919, the French Government stated: [2]

> "Given the exposed geographical position of France, we have two aims, equally imperative: The one is victory; the other is the protection of our soil. It may be admitted as certain that, thanks to the solidarity embodied in the Covenant of the League of Nations, final victory would rest with us in the event of a new German aggression.
>
> "But this is not enough. We cannot allow, between aggression and victory, the invasion of our soil, its systematic destruction, the martyrdom of our fellow-citizens in the North and the East, as in 1914. It is to guard against this second danger, no less than against the danger of defeat, that a guarantee is necessary."

In 1914, France had been able to hold out for long enough to permit the arrival of powerful British forces, although the ports at which these forces disembarked were very nearly lost in the first months of the struggle. But the circumstance which allowed the French to win the necessary time could not be relied upon in a future contest.

> "If, in 1914, we succeeded in holding out long enough for England to create her big armies, if we managed to hold out on the Marne, at Arras, and finally on the Yser, it was because Russia was holding, on her side, a considerable portion of the German forces, was invading Silesia and threatening Berlin. This counterpoise has disappeared; it will be long before it is restored." [3]

To some extent, the new States of Central and Eastern Europe might have provided an alternative counterpoise, but it would inevitably have been much weaker than that which Russia had afforded. Furthermore, some time would inevitably have to elapse before these new States became a military factor of any importance. But these new States were themselves exposed to attack, and, if Germany were to

[1] *Ibid.* [2] *Ibid.*, p. 52. [3] *Op. cit.*, p. 87.

attempt, once again, to eliminate the potential Allies of France in the East as a prelude to an attack on France, they would be her first victims. The only guarantee of their survival would be a relationship between France and Germany which would permit the French to intervene decisively in defence of the new States on Germany's eastern frontier.

> "Supposing that Germany, mistress of the Rhine, were to wish to attack the Republic of Poland or the Republic of Bohemia. Established defensively on the Rhine, she could hold in check (and for how long?) the Western nations coming to the aid of the young republics, and the latter would be crushed before they could receive aid." [1]

The weakening of the barrier to the East of Germany would inevitably affect the strength of the barrier constituted by France on Germany's Western frontiers, and a weakening of this Western barrier would endanger Great Britain and ultimately the United States, as well as France herself. Initial successes against France would be sufficient to prevent the deployment of British forces on the Continent:

> "If, in 1914, the Germans, after hustling back the Belgians, the French and the few British divisions then in line, had taken the Channel ports, the aid brought by Great Britain in 1915 to the common cause would have been delayed, if not prevented.
>
> "If, in 1918, the Germans had taken Paris, the concentration of the French armies south of the Loire, and the restriction of our war industries, would certainly have delayed, with consequences of the utmost gravity, the landing and the transport by rail of the American army, then just beginning to arrive." [2]

The dangers, which French statesmanship sought to avoid after the last war, have been recapitulated at some length for two reasons: first, because French policy during the inter-war years can be understood only as an attempt to forestall these dangers; secondly, because the course of events was so fully to justify French fears. The Allied statesmen, to whom these memoranda were addressed in the early months of 1919, may well have marvelled that, after the total defeat of Germany, their French colleagues could be preoccupied with such gloomy forebodings. Yet it was to become apparent that Foch, so far from being over-pessimistic, had been too sanguine. At the time of Munich, and again in September, 1938, Germany, "mistress of the

[1] *Op. cit.*, p. 46. [2] *Ibid.*, p. 42.

Rhine", of which she had regained control on March 7th, 1936, and "established defensively" on this formidable river barrier, was able to hold in check the Western nations until first Czechoslovakia, and then Poland, had been crushed. Munich had been a bloodless "Sadowa"; it was duly followed by a second Sedan, as catastrophic as that of 1870. France witnessed the loss, not only of the ports through which succour reached her in the First World War, but of her entire metropolitan territory. This time "the martyrdom of our fellow-citizens in the North and East" was shared by the entire population of metropolitan France.

The French memoranda reveal very clearly Foch's understanding of the technique of German aggression and of the material factors which had made German aggression possible in the past, and would make it possible again in the future unless measures were taken to forestall it. France had experienced two German wars, the one fought wholly, and the other largely, on her own soil. Because Germany was the immediate neighbour of France, and because France had suffered so infinitely more than Great Britain from the aggressive policy of Germany, Frenchmen had given much more study to the character of German policy than had the British. Whilst the British were eagerly on the look-out for signs of a change of heart among the German people, the French always assumed that Germany's change of heart would be short-lived. Whilst British opinion dismissed as of small significance evidence of a German determination to rearm as occasion offered, the French seized upon such evidence as the inevitable confirmation of their fears. To the ordinary Englishman, it seemed only natural that Germany should demand "equality of status"; that the Germans should reject any permanent discrimination against their country. If Germany demanded "equality", in the French view it could only be as a stepping-stone to supremacy, for, once Germany was freed from discriminations, there was no longer any way of preventing the Germans from establishing themselves in as strong a relative position as France previously enjoyed.

France clung tenaciously to the provisions of the Versailles Treaty and opposed its revision in Germany's favour, because, to Frenchmen, there seemed to be no half-way house between a régime designed to leave Germany powerless and a state of affairs in which the Reich would be free to pursue its "one by one policy". To the French, it always seemed senseless to allow Germany to rearm, and then to fight

her when she had reached the pinnacle of her strength. France is reported to have agreed with a suggestion made by Pilsudski in the autumn of 1933 for a joint preventive war destined to forestall German rearmament, making her concurrence conditional only upon the approval of Great Britain. Again, when Germany marched troops into the Rhineland on March 7th, 1936, the first reaction of the French Government was to favour ejecting them, although, among French public opinion, there were very clear signs of a reluctance to go to war, if war could be avoided.

To say that French opinion recognised the danger from Germany very much more clearly than did British opinion is not, of course, to clear France from her share of responsibility for the failure to deal with the German threat in time. Indeed, one can argue that the French were more to blame than we, because they saw the danger, and were content to allow it to develop without taking any preventive action. But French reluctance to undertake, single-handed, action which was demanded by the interests both of Great Britain and of France can be understood. Why should France, who had suffered so much more heavily in the Four Years' War, take upon herself the whole sacrifice of a policy whereby both countries would be protected? And had not Great Britain, by concluding the Naval Treaty of 1935, condoned the principle of German rearmament, only seeking to restrict its scope in the sphere which primarily interested the British?

Unless there was a real prospect of a "change of heart" in Germany —and French opinion, in the main, rejected this possibility—a weak Germany was the necessary condition of French security. If the only way to keep Germany weak was to start a "preventive war", then a preventive war was justified. For France's principal concern was to prevent a fresh, massive sacrifice of French lives, and a life sacrificed in time might prevent the sacrifice of nine, or even of ninety-nine, when Germany was prepared to fight in circumstances advantageous to her.

If Germany was to be prevented from preparing a second Sedan by first achieving a second Sadowa, there must be an effective barrier to the East of the Reich, as well as to the West. Since the Russian factor had been eliminated for the time being, France had to provide the unifying force, holding together the countries which would be ready to check a fresh German *Drang nach Osten*, and supplementing their far from adequate strength. Thus the French system of alliances was

designed for a twofold purpose; its function was to reinforce the barrier to the East of Germany and to ensure that, if Germany struck first in the West, France would not be without Allies on the Continent.

There was nothing inherently contradictory between the French policy of alliances and the strategy of the Maginot Line. Both were designed to offset the country's numerical inferiority to Germany, the one by increasing French strength in the defence of her own frontiers, the other by ensuring that, if France was attacked, she would not fight alone. If the alliance policy, essentially defensive in its aims, called for a strategic offensive in support of the Eastern Allies, the Maginot Line would still play a useful part. For every strengthening of the French frontier would reduce the number of divisions which would have to be allotted to purely defensive duties, and increase the size of the expeditionary force available for the assistance of the Poles or the Czechs.

Yet the existence of the Maginot Line, or rather the defensive mentality which resulted from it, and from the casualty-consciousness which had led to its construction, did, in a sense, militate against the alliance policy. For the existence of the Maginot fortifications, and the belief that they covered the whole French frontier against attack, fostered the illusion that France would never again have to fight the Germans otherwise than from the cover of impregnable casemates. If war with Germany came, it would consist of a costly and fruitless frontal attack by the enemy upon the Maginot forts, and there would be no repetition of the losses sustained in the Four Years' War.

The Polish General Staff, and possibly the General Staffs of the other Eastern Allies of France, recognised the danger inherent in the existence of the Maginot fortifications. They recognised that a country, accustomed to think in terms of a bloodless victory achieved through the efficacy of steel and concrete, would be reluctant to face a struggle beyond the Maginot Line. Through their effect upon the mentality of the French people, the eastern fortifications of France lessened the likelihood that the alliances would be honoured, and this doubt played its part in discrediting the French security system in the eyes of Poland after the rise of Hitler. The Maginot Line was thus a factor making for the growth of French isolationism, though even the isolationists would have been horrified by any refusal by France's Eastern Allies to honour their obligations in case of need.

Indeed, the principal shortcoming of the French alliance system was

the fact that French opinion was not educated up to its commitments. It was comforting to feel that, if France had to fight again, she would not fight alone; that any attack by Germany would inevitably involve the Reich in a two-front war. But it was far less comforting to discover that every alliance imposes obligations commensurate with the benefits resulting from it, that France could only expect help if she was herself prepared to give it. Those Frenchmen who raised the cry in 1938, "We don't want to fight for Czechoslovakia", and who subscribed to the opinions expressed in Marcel Déat's "Die for Danzig?" article, would have thought it natural for Czechs and Poles to give their lives in accordance with their treaty obligations to France.

When the time came for fulfilling France's obligations, the growth in the strength of Germany had deprived the alliances of all reality. For, by then, Germany had a strongly fortified Western frontier, and France could bring immediate assistance to the Czechs or the Poles only by a frontal attack upon the Siegfried Line. To men whose whole conception of strategy taught the folly of such an attack, whose whole reliance had been placed in steel and concrete, such an attack was unthinkable. It would have involved just such a holocaust of French lives as the whole policy of France during the inter-war years was designed to avoid. Even if the attack was successful, it would so weaken France as to seal her fate as a European and world Power.

For a people as casualty-conscious as the French, the implementing of the alliances was only thinkable if Germany was weak. If the Reich was as strong as France, and still more so, if it was stronger, any attempt at assisting the Czechs or the Poles would involve national suicide. Furthermore, since Great Britain introduced conscription only in the early summer of 1939, and since it would take time to transport across the Channel even a modest Expeditionary Force, practically the whole burden of bringing military assistance to the Poles or the Czechs would fall upon France. The disproportion between the losses suffered by the two countries would be as great as, if not greater, than it had been in the First World War. Only an immediate attack on the Siegfried Line could help the Czechs or the Poles, and, if the attack was to come in time, it would have to be carried out by the French practically unassisted by the British.

It is no exaggeration to say that Foch foresaw the military situation which developed at the time of Munich, and again a year later, and that he sought to meet it in advance. If Germany controlled the Rhine

and its bridges, she would one day be in a position to choose between a direct attack on France and an eastward advance conducted in circumstances which would preclude effective intervention from the Western Powers. Therefore, the Rhine must be made, at the very least, the military frontier of Germany. Furthermore, France could not be content with military control of the left bank alone. The Rhine must be a barrier to a German attack upon France, but it could not be allowed to screen Germany against France in the event of a German attack upon Czechoslovakia or Poland. Germany must not be allowed to profit from the opportunity of cutting Europe in two and dealing with her victims in the East before help came from the Western democracies. The French Government's memorandum of February 25th, 1919, says:

> "The common security of the Western and overseas democracies demands that Germany shall be unable to renew her sudden attacks of 1870 and 1914. To prevent Germany from renewing that attack, her forces must be denied access to the left bank of the Rhine, and her Western frontier must be fixed on the river. To forbid such access, it is necessary to occupy the river bridges.
>
> "By this means, and by this means alone:
>
> (*a*) Germany will be deprived of her offensive base;
>
> (*b*) the Western democracies will find reliable defence, in the first place owing to the width of the Rhine, which will preclude any sudden attack by means of gases, tanks, etc., and secondly, owing to its straight course, which will prevent any flanking movement." [1]

The French Government soon dropped its demand that the political frontier of Germany should be fixed on the Rhine, but the demand for the prevention of German access to the Rhine was maintained, and it was incorporated into the Treaty, and subsequently confirmed at Locarno, by the provision for the demilitarisation of the Rhineland. In view of Allied reluctance to permit an indefinite occupation of the Rhine bridgeheads, the term of this occupation was fixed at fifteen years, subsequently reduced to ten as part of the Allied policy of reconciliation which followed upon Locarno. The French were offered a *quid pro quo* in the shape of an Anglo-American guarantee, but this lapsed with the refusal of the U.S. Senate to ratify the Treaty. This

[1] Cmd. 2169, p. 47.

whole episode left the French with the feeling that they had been cheated of the security which they held to be necessary, not only for themselves, but for Great Britain, and ultimately, for America as well.

To successive French Governments, the disarmament of Germany, the demilitarisation of the Rhineland, the Maginot Line and the alliance system seemed to constitute the necessary minimum basis of French—and European—security. In view of subsequent events, French fears do not seem as groundless to-day as they did to the greater part of contemporary opinion in Great Britain.

In fairness to British opinion, it must be conceded that the hostility which was felt for the French security system was due, in part, to other manifestations of French policy. The British attitude is best summed up in the terms of a letter addressed to Poincaré by Ramsay MacDonald on February 21st, 1924:[1]

> "People in this country regard with anxiety what appears to be the determination of France to ruin Germany and dominate the Continent without consideration for our reasonable interests and future consequences to European settlement . . . they feel apprehensive of the large military and aerial establishments maintained not only in Eastern, but also in Western France . . . they are disturbed by the interest shown by your Government in the military organisation of the new States of Central Europe; and finally they question why all these activities should be financed by the French Government in disregard of the fact that the British taxpayer has to find upwards of £30,000,000 a year as interest upon loans raised in America, and that our taxpayers also have to find large sums to pay interest on the debt of France to us, to meet which France has as yet neither made nor propounded, as far as they can see, any sacrifice equivalent to their own."

Great Britain's attitude to the inter-war policy of France must be taken in its context. The British were as concerned to bring about the economic recovery of Europe as France was to achieve security. The French method of achieving security seemed to reduce the prospects of economic recovery. Great Britain felt that, if France could afford to grant loans to her Eastern Allies with the idea of assisting the creation of their armies, she could afford to pay her debts to Great Britain. But it remains true that the armaments which France held

[1] *The Times*, March 3rd, 1924.

to be so necessary for her own protection were a source of anxiety to Great Britain; that Great Britain interpreted the French security system as designed to achieve for France the "domination" of the European Continent. In essence, the disagreement between the two Allies boiled down to this: Great Britain, seeing Europe as it was, with Germany but newly defeated and disarmed, could find no sufficient justification for French policy; France, on the other hand, was thinking, not of the existing situation, but of the position which would arise if Germany was allowed to rearm, as indeed she was already doing *sub rosa*.

It is a remarkable, and little noted, fact that, in 1939, Great Britain set about, at the last moment, attempting to create a system of defensive alliances exactly modelled upon that which France had built up during the years immediately following the war. By so doing, the British Government implicitly conceded that there was, perhaps, more to be said for a system of defensive security against Germany than had been apparent fifteen years earlier. But by 1939, the conditions which had made the French system an effective reality had ceased to exist. A promise of help to Poland from France had some meaning when the Rhineland was demilitarised and France could enforce an immediate sanction upon the Reich in the event of a German attack on the Poles. But, with the Rhineland fortified, the Rhine bridges securely in German hands and the barrier of the great river stretched across the line of a French advance, it was certain that, without Russian assistance, Poland would be overwhelmed before she could receive aid. Furthermore, the Germans had already possessed themselves of the Bohemian mountain barrier, the only effective natural obstacle to the German army's advance to the East.

To most Englishmen the French collapse of 1940 was the product of the inherent instability of French Governments, of the corruption of French policy and of the venality of the French Press. It was the product of treason and of a mistaken conception of strategy. It has led to the very general belief that British statesmen were wrong to place any reliance on France or to take any account of France in the planning of British diplomacy and strategy. It seemed to justify the involuntary suspicion of France and of Frenchmen, and the involuntary feeling of superiority which derives from the primitiveness of much French plumbing. When the B.E.F. was cut off owing to the defeat by the Germans of the French Ninth Army, British opinion had the

feeling that Great Britain had been "let down". The readiness with which Laval, Darlan and their like lent themselves to the policy of "collaboration" added to this feeling. There followed Oran, Dakar, Syria and Madagascar. When North Africa had been liberated, the Giraud-de Gaulle controversy seemed, once again, to justify British suspicions of the French and of their inability to unite in the cause of liberation. Indeed, even those Frenchmen who were pledged to support Germany seemed equally unable to bury their personal conflicts in the interests of "collaboration".

Few Englishmen recognise that the French feel, equally keenly, that they were "let down" by Great Britain; that British policy was consistently hostile to the measures of security designed to protect France against a renewal of the German menace; that Great Britain used her influence against any attempt to set a term to German rearmament until it was too late; that the conclusion of the Anglo-German Naval Treaty gave to the Germans the feeling that Great Britain was prepared to sanction German rearmament; that the reluctance of Great Britain to introduce conscription encouraged Germany, and left France wondering whether Great Britain was in earnest, even after the conclusion of the Anglo-Polish alliance; that the smallness of the British contingent in France in 1940 once again left practically the whole burden of defence against Germany on land to be borne by France.

It is indisputably true that the causes, to which British opinion attributes the French collapse, were of major importance. Again and again, British visitors to Paris in the years which preceded the war noted with disquiet that French politicians seemed preoccupied with internal questions, and often with questions which to the outsider seemed trivial, to the exclusion of great international issues. To take but one example, when Hitler occupied Austria, France was without a Government. At a time when Germany was devoting her whole energies to rearmament, French labour was reluctant to abandon the forty-hour week, although it was plain to the outsider that a nation of 65,000,000, working a fifty-five or sixty-hour week, was bound progressively to outdistance a nation of 40,000,000, working a forty-hour week. Whilst Germany was marshalling her strength for war, French opinion was completely divided over the issue of the Popular Front reforms. The rift in French opinion was heightened by the Spanish issue. Many of the Third Republic's most powerful news-

papers and periodicals were at the service of the highest bidder. Powerful elements on the French Right fell an easy prey to the red herring of anti-Communism. On the Left, the French Communist Party, with its slogan of "an hour lost to production is an hour gained for revolution", allowed itself to become the servant of German policy. Under the aegis of Vichy, Right-wing appeasers joined hands with renegades from the Left like Doriot, Déat, Marquet—and Laval himself.

It is true that corruption, and the instability of French Governments, contributed to the collapse. It is also true that the Popular Front Government was engaged in a laudable, but untimely, attempt to make up for long arrears of social advance at a time when Germany's whole energies were being devoted to preparations for war. It is, furthermore, true that the French Government, alone among the governments of the invaded countries, stayed behind in France to collaborate with the invader. But it is very probable that France, even if she had possessed the most honest and vigorous politicians in the world, would have gone down before Germany, in view of the great preponderance in man-power, and the even greater material preponderance, which the Germans enjoyed. Nor can it be categorically asserted that Great Britain's fate would have been markedly different from that of France but for the fortunate geographical accident that Great Britain is protected by a tank obstacle twenty-one miles wide.

One can draw every manner of conclusion, many of them contradictory, from the French collapse. The most obvious, and, perhaps, the most misleading, is that drawn by "T. 124", the anonymous author of a volume on "Sea Power". It is that Great Britain can survive the overthrow of France, and yet escape defeat. This is, in a sense, true, though it is more than questionable whether, without the intervention of the United States and Russia, Great Britain had any chance of regaining a foothold on the Continent and of defeating Germany. It is also very plain that France, occupied by a hostile power, provides a most dangerous base for attack upon Great Britain. Nor can it be denied that the overthrow of France placed in enemy hands resources which would otherwise have been used in the joint struggle against Germany.

This latter point is of great importance. For, if it is true that France has been further weakened by defeat and occupation, it follows that she is that much more likely to fall into the orbit of a power hostile to

Great Britain. If one thing emerges clearly from the course of the war, and of the diplomatic contest which preceded it, it is that a resolute and aggressive power can add enormously to its own strength by harnessing weaker States to its military preparations. At the time of Munich, there were people who imagined that Czechoslovakia could be "neutralised", that it could become, in a diplomatic sense, a "second Switzerland". The event proved that, precisely because Czechoslovakia was a weak State, it was bound to be drawn into the German orbit so soon as it had been detached from the orbit of France. If France has been weakened by her ordeal in two world wars, her weakness is an argument for ensuring that she does not fall under the domination of a hostile Power.

If one studies the diplomatic history of the years before 1914 and of the period 1933-39, one thing is abundantly clear. Germany has always regarded the fostering of disunion between France and Great Britain as a necessary part of her plans for world domination. Germany's first reaction to the Anglo-French Entente was to attempt to split it, and the attempt was often renewed in the years before the last war. Hitler openly avowed his plan for using Great Britain against France, and, when this policy proved, in the main, unsuccessful, he tried, instead, to use France against Great Britain. If a justification of the Anglo-French Entente is needed, it is afforded by Germany's persistent attempts to divide the Western Allies. Only a profound community of interests could have held together two countries whose peoples have so little instinctive understanding of, and sympathy for, one another.[1]

"France has gone", General Smuts told the U.K. branch of the Inter-parliamentary Union in a speech reported in *The Times* of December 3rd, 1943, "and, if she ever returns, it will be a hard and long upward pull for her to emerge again." History teaches the unwisdom of such hasty verdicts. After the disaster of 1870, it was generally assumed that France had "gone", yet, within five years, Bismarck was debating the advisability of a preventive war designed to set a term to France's recovery. In 1918, it seemed that Turkey had been completely weakened, yet within five years she was strong enough to defy the Western Allies and compel them to revise the Treaty of Sèvres to her advantage.

[1] Cf. Harold Nicolson, *What France Means to England* (Foreign Affairs, January, 1939).

Because, after the 1914 war, France did not prove strong enough to contain Germany in the West and provide the nucleus for a barrier on the eastern frontiers of the Reich, it has become fashionable to write off France as a factor in the balance of European forces. Yet, if France had felt certain of British support for her policy of keeping the peace, she might well have held German ambitions in check until the missing factor of Russia had revived.

In the previous chapter it was suggested that the provisions of the Versailles Treaty failed to achieve their effect not necessarily because Versailles was a bad Treaty, but because it was not enforced. One may well pass a similar verdict upon French policy in the inter-war period. The events of the years 1933 to 1940 showed the essential rightness of the French analysis of the German danger. Looking back, it is clear that the French case for a system of security against a renewed danger of German aggressiveness was unanswerable. The case against the French policy is not that it was the wrong policy, but that France lacked the resolution to enforce it. A part, at least, of the blame for this failure must rest upon Great Britain, whose influence was, in general, used against the maintenance of the restrictions upon German military sovereignty whereby, alone, Germany's potential power for aggression could be offset.

It is clear that France cannot, again, aspire to the European position which she held after the 1914 war. In common with Great Britain, her strength will have shrunk in relation to that of the Soviet Union, of the United States, and probably at a later stage to that of China also. But precisely because France will be relatively weaker than she was, it will remain a British interest that she should be as strong as her own efforts can make her. For whereas after the 1914 war the barrier to the west of Germany was stronger than the barrier to the east, after the last war the position will be reversed. It will be Western and not Eastern Europe which will be first threatened by any revival in the strength of the Reich.

To say that a strong France will remain a necessity in terms of British security is not, of course, to suggest that it will be within the power of any outside country to create a strong France. Indeed, precisely because of her experience over the past five years, France will be extremely sensitive to any suggestion of patronage, to anything which seems like "dominion status". If, now the war is won, the British are inclined to feel that France "let Britain down", the French

public will be equally conscious that the short-sightedness of British policy was in part responsible for France's misfortunes. By the same token, the readiness of France to bear her share in the maintenance of European peace will depend, in some measure, upon whether the French public feels that Great Britain can be depended upon, or whether the French feel, as they did after 1918, that they may be called upon to bear a disproportionate share of the burden of sustaining policies upon which the security of Great Britain also depends.

Chapter Six

SOVIET RUSSIA AND THE WEST, 1917-39

RUSSIA was the missing link in the settlement of 1919. Sir Eyre Crowe formed the verdict, in 1907, that the defeat of Russia at the hands of the Japanese deprived France of the powerful support "which alone has hitherto enabled her to stand up to Germany in the political arena on terms of equality". Foch, too, appreciated the consequences for the Western Powers of the elimination of Russia from the balance of European forces. In the early years of the war, Russia had taken a great deal of the weight off the Western Allies. The Russian offensive in 1914, by compelling Germany to withdraw divisions from the West at a critical moment, had helped to turn the tide at the battle of the Marne and had thereby contributed to the saving of Paris. Russia had suffered, in the years 1914-17, as many casualties as the rest of the Allies combined. A disastrous war was followed by revolution, civil war, foreign intervention and famine. So long as Russia remained weak, the Reich was faced, in the East, by a group of small States, divided against each other by long-standing rivalries and conflicting territorial claims. So long as Germany, too, was weakened, Poland and the Little Entente Powers might provide a barrier of a sort, though Hungary, with her grievances against the Peace settlement, offered a potential tool for German revisionism. This barrier could be fortified by alliance with France. But, once Germany revived, the barrier of the new Eastern States was bound to prove inadequate, particularly if the Reich, by fortifying its Western frontier, was able to exclude France from effective influence in the East.

Before the 1914 war, Russia had been the neighbour both of the German and of the Austro-Hungarian Empires. As a result of the Peace settlement her frontiers had been moved back several hundred miles. Between the Baltic and the Black Sea, a solid block of Polish and Roumanian territory constituted a barrier to her intervention in the West. This barrier precluded direct contact between Russia and Czechoslovakia, a country which had been wholly under the sway of Austria-Hungary and had always looked to Russia for protection from

pan-Germanism. Roumania might be prepared to permit the passage of Russian troops across her territory if Czechoslovakia, her ally in the Little Entente, was threatened with attack from the West or the South. Poland, on the other hand, remembered Russia as the ruler, and oppressor, of the greater part of her territory during almost the whole of the nineteenth century. Fear of Bolshevism no doubt played its part in determining the attitude of the "Polish gentry" as did the hope of extending Poland's frontiers to the East at Russia's expense. But the course of the Polish-Russian war which ended in 1920 showed that these "gentry" could count on the support of the Polish "workers and peasants". Poland's attitude to Russia certainly owed as much to the three partitions of the eighteenth century, and to the misgovernment of the greater part of Poland by Czarist Russia in the nineteenth, as it did to anti-Bolshevism. In September, 1938, when Czechoslovakia was threatened with dismemberment by Germany, the physical isolation of Russia, and the Polish attitude to the Soviet Union, were to prove factors of the first importance.

It might have been expected that France, who appeared to recognise so clearly the implications of the weakening of Russia, would have been interested in establishing friendly relations with the Soviet Union as an insurance against the possible revival of German strength. But relations between the Soviet Union and the Western Powers had, from the first, been clouded by a variety of factors, of which fear of Communism was only one. At a critical stage in the Four Years' War, the Bolshevists had been prepared to negotiate peace with Germany and thereby deprive the Allies of their "Second Front" in Europe. To the hard-pressed Western Allies, the Bolshevik régime must have appeared, in 1917, in much the same light as the Vichy government in the summer of 1940. By contrast, the "Whites"—Denikin, Wrangel and Kolchak, who now appear as the representatives of a doomed and discredited régime—were the advocates of continued resistance to Germany.

Mr. George Bilainkin, whose biography of M. Maisky is, in effect, an attempt to represent Anglo-Soviet misunderstandings as being solely the result of British folly and prejudice, quotes a passage from a speech by Mr. Winston Churchill in which the then Minister for War reminded the House of Commons of an earlier speech by Mr. Lloyd George: [1]

"When the Treaty of Brest-Litowsk was signed, there were large

[1] House of Commons, July 29th, 1919.

territories and populations in Russia that had neither hand nor part in that shameful act, and they revolted against the government that had signed it. They raised armies at our instigation and largely, no doubt, at our expense. That was an absolutely sound military policy. Had it not been for these organisations, the Germans would have secured all the resources that would have enabled them to break the blockade. They would have got through to the grain of the Don, the minerals of the Urals and the oil of the Caucasus."

When once the war had ended, intervention could no longer be advocated as "an absolutely sound military policy". Mr. Lloyd George could, it is true, argue that the "White" leaders had a claim upon Allied assistance. "If we, as soon as they had served our purpose, and as soon as they had taken all the risks, had said: 'Thank you, we are exceedingly obliged to you, you have served our purpose; we need you no longer . . .' that would have been very mean".[1]

When once the war had ended, intervention served only to prolong civil war in Russia; from being a means of reviving a second front against Germany, it became an ideological crusade which, in the event, undoubtedly helped to unite Russian opinion behind the Soviet régime. It left a legacy of bitterness and suspicion in Russia against the Western democracies. But, since it has become fashionable to attribute intervention solely to a prejudice against the social and economic programme of the Bolshevik régime, it is as well to put it into its true historical setting. Lenin had, after all, been allowed to travel across Germany to Russia because the German High Command regarded his revolutionary activities as a contribution towards the defeat of the Allies. Intervention on behalf of the "Whites" was the Allied reply to this German move. At a later stage, fear of Bolshevism, fostered by the brutality which accompanied the overthrow of a brutal régime, led to the maintenance of a policy which had lost all justification.

If British Tories had their illusions about the prospects of the "White" generals, opinion in Moscow was no less wide of the mark in its estimates of probable future developments. In the number of the Review *Communist International* which appeared on May Day, 1919, Zinoviev, President of the Comintern, wrote:

"The Third International already has, as its foundation States, three Soviet republics—Russia, Hungary and Bavaria. But no one

[1] *Ibid.*

> will be surprised if, at the moment when these lines appear in print, we have, not three, but six, or nine, Soviet republics. Old Europe is dashing at mad speed towards the proletarian revolution . . . in a year, the whole of Europe will be Communist."

So long as this exuberant mood prevailed in Moscow, the Soviet Government was as little interested as the British Government in "Anglo-Soviet understanding", except in the sense that it hoped the "workers, peasants and intellectuals" of Great Britain might emulate the achievements of the Russian proletariat. Nor did it greatly matter whether the Government in Whitehall was Tory or Socialist. "A Labour Government", Zinoviev told the Third Congress of the Communist International, "is the most alluring and popular formula for enlisting the masses in favour of the dictatorship of the proletariat. We must make the most of opportunities afforded by such 'Labour' Governments as, for instance, MacDonald's. . . . The worker, peasant and railwayman will first do their revolutionary 'bit' and only afterwards realise that this actually is the dictatorship of the proletariat." [1]

So long as the Soviet leaders believed the world revolution to be imminent, whether in the near or the more remote future, there could be no true Anglo-Soviet understanding save between a Soviet Russia and a Soviet Britain. The pursuit of world peace could not provide a basis for such understanding, for, to the Soviet leaders, world peace would come only when every people had set up its own Soviet state. As recently as 1932 there was still to be found in the Park of Culture and Rest at Moscow a statue of an armed man, bearing in his hands armaments contracts and treaties of alliance against the Soviets. This statue, which was presumably spirited away before the Soviet Union joined the League of Nations in 1934, represented the Soviet conception of the League. So long as the Russians regarded the League of Nations as a "thieves' kitchen", whilst the Western democracies were committed to a "League policy", there was no basis for any far-reaching collaboration between Russia and the West.

Indeed, the failure, during the first fifteen years after the 1914 war, to evolve a working international system for keeping the peace, owed a good deal to the fact that two schools of internationalism were in conflict. With the rival brands of internationalism, the one looking to Geneva and the other to Moscow, in competition for the allegiance

[1] Speech to the Congress of the Third International, July, 1924.

of world opinion, the way was open for the triumphal progress of German, Japanese and Italian nationalism.

In the years which followed the First World War, Russian foreign policy was based on two assumptions, both of which appeared to be supported by the facts of the existing situation. The first was that there would be a succession of Communist revolutions, tending towards the Bolshevisation of Europe and the world—there were, in fact, two, in Bavaria and Hungary, as well as a very vigorous revolutionary movement in China.[1] And the second that the spread of revolution would lead the capitalist States to unite in a campaign to crush the Soviet Union, a forecast which seemed to be justified by Allied intervention on behalf of the "Whites".

By the middle of the nineteen-twenties it was becoming clear that neither of these things was likely to happen, at least in the near future. The world revolution had failed to materialise, and the improvement in economic conditions was producing a swing away from extremism among the working-class. The spectre of a united onslaught by the capitalist Powers was receding, and civil war in Russia itself had ended. The prospects of overthrowing the governments of the capitalist States was dwindling at a time when trade with the outside world was a very necessary condition of the economic development of Russia. The activities of the Comintern in support of a revolutionary movement, which had less and less chance of success, were becoming a positive handicap to Soviet diplomacy and an obstacle to securing foreign assistance in the industrialisation of Russia.

So long as there seemed no immediate prospect that the Soviet Union would be attacked, the fact of Russian isolation seemed no more than the natural fate of a Marxist country in an otherwise capitalist world. But the Japanese attack on China in the autumn of 1931, resulting in the seizure of Manchuria, and the Nazi revolution in Germany in 1933, brought home very forcibly to the Soviet Government the dangers of Russia's international position. Manchuria might easily become a springboard for a Japanese attack on the Far Eastern territories of the Soviets. The new Chancellor of the Reich had openly proclaimed in *Mein Kampf* his intention of seizing territory from the Soviet Union and colonising it with Germans.

This turn in the situation brought with it fresh dangers, but it also

[1] Although its mainspring was nationalist, Soviet agents and organisers showed considerable interest in the Kuomintang movement.

brought new opportunities. For Russia was not the only country threatened by the manifest ambitions of Germany and Japan. China was already being attacked. Hitler had announced, in *Mein Kampf*, his intention of "annihilating" France. Poland and Russia were menaced by the German "Drive to the East". Great Britain had always opposed the domination of the Continent by a single Power, and the overthrow of France would be a clear threat to her. Thus Russia might hope to escape from the new danger by associating herself with other nations equally imperilled.

On the other hand, the Soviet Government recognised that Germany and Japan would seek to bring about the alliance of all the capitalist States against Russia which Moscow had always feared. It also recognised that other countries, potentially threatened by German and Japanese ambitions, might not be sorry to see either, or both, of these countries directing their energies against the Soviet Union. There were two possible ways of dealing with this situation. The first was to create a grouping of Powers sufficiently strong to restrain the aggressors; the second was to come to terms with one or other of the aggressors and seek to deflect their energies elsewhere. In support of the second of these policies, it could be argued that "time was on Russia's side"; that the rapid development of the country's resources was bound steadily to enhance Russia's relative strength. There was some truth in this assumption, provided always that the countries which threatened the Soviet Union were not able to increase their own resources more rapidly by conquest, and so to harness the resources and man-power of territories which might fall under their sway. From 1933 to August, 1939, Russian diplomacy was, however, directed toward the creation of an anti-Fascist coalition—although the spectacular trial of a number of British engineers on a charge of "sabotage" was not calculated to predispose British opinion in favour of closer association with the Soviet Union.

When the attempt in the early nineteen-twenties to mobilise the forces of world revolution under the Communist banner had proved a dismal failure, the Soviet Union and the Comintern addressed their appeal to a wider audience. "Anti-Fascists" were everywhere to form "popular fronts", which were to work for an anti-Fascist coalition under Russian leadership. The choice of the Left wing, popular front, approach was unfortunate. For the inevitable result was to split opinion in all countries which Russia sought to unite against Germany.

Communist parties everywhere used the popular front alliance as a means of infiltration into other Left wing parties. Since the object of these popular front movements was to seize power, it was easy for German propaganda to represent the whole Soviet policy as a veiled attempt to interfere in the internal affairs of other States with the ultimate object of furthering world revolution. Significantly enough, the main success gained by Soviet diplomacy, the conclusion of the Franco-Soviet pact, was achieved despite the appeal to the left. For the pact was negotiated, not by a Left wing government, but by an administration headed by Right wing politicians.

It is an undoubted fact that Soviet Russia recognised the danger from Germany earlier than did the Western Powers. That was not, perhaps, surprising, since Hitler had placed in the forefront of his programme an attack upon the Soviets. It was, perhaps, inevitable that the Soviet Union, recognising the usefulness of the national Communist parties as an instrument for propagating its policy, should have failed to realise that the suspicions which those parties aroused far outweighed their usefulness as a channel of propaganda. By May, 1943, the Soviet Government had itself come to recognise that the Comintern, so far from being a valuable instrument for the furtherance of Russian foreign policy, was, in fact, a severe handicap to the diplomacy of the Soviet Union. "The dissolution of the Communist International", Stalin wrote on May 28th, 1943, in reply to a series of questions submitted to him by Reuter's Moscow correspondent, "is proper and timely because it facilitates the organisation of the common onslaught of the freedom-loving nations upon the common enemy—Hitlerite Germany. The dissolution of the Communist International is proper because it exposes the lie of the Hitlerites to the effect that 'Moscow' allegedly intends to intervene in the life of other nations and to 'Bolshevise' them".[1]

One has only to read the speeches of the leaders of the Comintern in its heyday to know that it was precisely for the purpose of "intervening in the internal affairs of other nations and bolshevising them" that the Communist International had originally been designed. By the middle of the nineteen-thirties, it had lost its original character, and most of its importance, but it remained an invaluable subject for German propaganda and a means for dividing Germany's intended victims. If the dissolution of the Comintern, which was in line with

[1] *Stalin on the Great Patriotic War of the Soviet Union*, p. 62.

the whole development of Russia, had come ten years earlier, the Soviet Union would have found it much easier to gain allies.

Germany recognised that the only effective barrier to her policy of expansion was a grouping of Powers directed against her "drive to the east". On the other hand, she recognised that Great Britain, and, to a less extent, France, were prepared to go to great lengths to achieve a lasting agreement with her. Therefore, Hitler always insisted that the price of an agreement with the Western Powers was the isolation of Russia. Germany had two alternative Russian policies which, though they appeared to be diametrically opposed to one another, had, in fact, a single aim. The aim was to harness the raw materials, the foodstuffs, the industrial potential and the man-power of Russia to Germany's plans of aggression. This could have been achieved either by coming to an agreement with Russia—the policy of August 23rd, 1939, the date of the German-Soviet Pact—or by an attack on Russia which was to result in the setting up of a "Vichy régime" subservient to German designs—the policy of June 22nd, 1941. Either policy, if it succeeded, would have made Germany mistress of Europe, with reserves of productive capacity so vast that Great Britain and France would have been powerless to resist German dictation. The starting-point of either policy was the isolation of Russia, and the Four-Power Pact of 1934 [1] was a first attempt to bring this about. Indeed, the French Government, when it concluded the Franco-Soviet Pact, 1935, recognised this danger and was prompted as much by the fear of a German-Russian agreement as by the desire for the alliance with Russia.

At Munich, Hitler did succeed in bringing about the isolation of Russia, and this diplomatic achievement was, perhaps, the most important consequence of the Munich surrender, even more important than the fact that it gave to Germany a present of the Skoda works, the factories at Brno in which the Bren gun had been invented, and the entire equipment of the Czechoslovak army. Munich prepared the way for the German-Russian agreement of August 23rd, 1939. Yet even the grievous rebuff of Munich did not bring to an end Russian attempts to arrive at an understanding with the West, which were renewed, and again rebuffed, after the German occupation of Prague.

Much play has been made with the fact that, when Great Britain

[1] Signed by Great Britain, France, Italy and Germany.

did, at last, attempt to arrive at agreement with Soviet Russia on a policy of common resistance to Germany, the British Government sent a foreign office official to Moscow instead of a cabinet minister. It is very quesionable whether the arrival of the entire Cabinet at the doors of the Kremlin in the summer of 1939 would have made an agreement more likely. Miss Barbara Ward has pointed out [1] that, by first guaranteeing Poland, we had lost all bargaining power, since Russia was thereby automatically protected. Whereas the Germans only asked the Russians to be neutral, Great Britain demanded their actual intervention. It is often forgotten that the point over which the negotiations broke down was the question of the Baltic States. Should we have been right to give to Soviet Russia a free hand in dealing with the Baltic States as the price of her intervention—that is to say, to gain her alliance by concessions at the expense of three small countries? To have done so would have made nonsense of our claim to be forging a coalition for the protection of small States against aggression.

By the summer of 1939, Russia had, understandably, lost all faith in the possibility of agreement with the Western Powers. She knew that there were plenty of politicians in France, and, perhaps, some in Great Britain, who would have been glad to see the Germans weakening themselves, and destroying the Soviet régime, by an attack on Russia. The Soviet leaders can, perhaps, be excused for replying by an attempt to deflect the Germans westward. In the event, the Soviet-German pact of 1939 worked much more advantageously for Germany than for Russia. If Russia had fought Germany in 1939, there would have been a second front in being from the first day of war. As it was, Germany was strengthened, rather than weakened, by the campaigns of 1939, 1940 and the first half of 1941.

With the knowledge which we now have of the immense strength and military efficiency of Russia and of the stability of the Soviet régime, it is plain that an agreement between the Western democracies and the Soviet Union was the only effective means of forestalling German aggression, or of bringing about the rapid defeat of Germany if she insisted upon going to war. Contemporaries can, perhaps, be forgiven for failing to recognise, in the Russia of the purges, seemingly so much divided against herself, the stable and powerful country which withstood Hitler's attack in 1941 and contributed so much to his

[1] *Russian Foreign Policy*, Barbara Ward. Oxford University pamphlet.

defeat. Although Russia's earlier record as a self-confessed advocate of a world-wide class war hampered Soviet attempts to forge a coalition against the threat from Germany, the Soviet Union can claim with justice to have recognised the German danger at a time when it was still possible to prevent war. If the prejudices which prevented Anglo-Russian collaboration were not all on the British side, the disastrous consequences of the failure to overcome them are manifest.

Chapter Seven

BRITISH OPINION AND POLICY BETWEEN THE WARS

IT was very apparent to British public opinion, looking back at the experiences of the Four Years and examining their consequences, that the war had been a calamity both for victors and vanquished. Even in the victorious countries, it had resulted in dislocation of trade, had led to mass unemployment, and all this had been bought at the cost of ten million men killed on the battlefield, and of an even greater number who had perished in the epidemics which followed the war. From realisation of the cost of victory it was but a short step to the assertion that "wars never pay", and to the even larger assumption that this statement, if true, would be accepted as true by nations less fundamentally pacific than the British. Memories of the horrors of war were expected to be an effective deterrent to future aggression. The possibility was overlooked that the future aggressor might, in fact, be able to profit by these very fears, since he would be able to offer his intended victims the alternative of submitting to his blackmail or fighting to restrain him from fresh acts of aggression.

Because the folly of war seemed so apparent, the difficulties in the way of the peace-maker—and of the peace-keeper—were under-estimated, or even dismissed altogether. It was argued that war had been possible only because the politicians had been able to ignore the wishes of the peoples, who were called upon to "fight the politicians' wars". It was commonly said that "We can't do worse than the Foreign Office", and the "Old Diplomacy" was denied any credit for the achievement of having prevented a general war for a century. German and British soldiers had endured the same hardships, and faced the same perils, in the trenches, and it came to be believed that the two peoples were equally the victims of "the politicians" and "the diplomats". In this charitable mood, it escaped the notice of many people that, in Germany, a very different theory was being propounded. Reacting from the "War Guilt Clause", German apologists were not content to argue that the war had been a calamity for which all the Great Powers had been responsible. They were arguing that Germany

had been blameless, that she had been the victim of French lust for revenge and of British envy of the new-found greatness and commercial success of the German Empire.

Indeed, in the mood which developed after the 1914 war, the Germans were, from the very fact of being ex-enemies, at a positive advantage with British opinion. For an ability to "see the Germans' point of view"—even if that meant failing to see the point of view of Britain's war-time allies—appeared as gratifying evidence of a generosity of spirit and a broad-mindedness which was not shared by Frenchmen and other benighted Continentals. It was a source of irritation that Frenchmen and Belgians, whose countries had been devastated and, in part, occupied by the Germans, were less ready to "forgive and forget". French warnings of clandestine German rearmament, which the Germans themselves were later to admit in their more expansive moments, were easily dismissed as the product of mean and timorous minds. It was shocking to discover that Frenchmen and Belgians still felt bitterness towards Germany—a Germany in which, even at the beginning of the nineteen-thirties, Hitler's supporters were singing songs about future victories over the French.[1] When, in Germany, the visiting Englishman was assured of a most friendly and hospitable welcome.

In part, of course, this frame of mind was due to disappointment over the failure to elaborate at Versailles a peace treaty which would be equally acceptable to victors and vanquished. We have suggested in an earlier chapter the reasons for this failure: that an objectively "just" peace would not have been accepted as just by all the parties to it. A peace which would have been accepted as "just" by the Germans would have appeared unjust to Germany's neighbours. To the Germans, the only peace which would have appeared just was a peace which would have permitted them to resume, at an appropriate moment, their designs of world conquest.

This failure to understand the difficulties facing the Peace makers of Versailles, like the failure to understand the feelings of Germany's Continental enemies and victims, resulted in part from the geographical factor of Britain's insular position, and in part from the fortunate history of the British Isles. Being an island, Great Britain has no experience of the problems of the disputed frontier, of areas of mixed

[1] A popular Nazi song included the line "Siegreich werden wir Frankreich schlagen"—"Victorious, we shall defeat France".

population, or of situations in which ethnic and strategic factors militate against one another in the determination of frontiers. Or perhaps it would be truer to say that the only instance in which such problems have directly affected Great Britain, the issue of "Partition" in Ireland, has been consistently left out of account. Here Great Britain faces a frontier problem which has a great deal in common with the frontier problems of the Continent. There is the conflict between the national aspirations of the Irish and those of the Ulster Scots. There is the strategic factor of Great Britain's need for a base in Ireland as a protection of the Western Approaches. But this solitary case of a frontier question directly affecting Great Britain has never claimed much attention among the British public.

Again, Great Britain has been fortunate in escaping the ordeal of successful invasion for close on a thousand years. Thus the British public has not itself experienced, or it would be truer to say had not experienced before 1940, anxieties on the score of threatened invasion which are the lot of Continental peoples, and particularly of those directly exposed to the threat from Germany. France had been invaded in 1870, and again in 1914, and in each case her territory had been turned into a battlefield, and her people, or a part of them, had known enemy occupation. Poland had been occupied, in whole or in part, by Germans, Austrians and Russians, for nearly a century and a half. Czechoslovakia had been robbed of independence for a much longer period. Countries with such a history cannot be expected to achieve the detachment and the impartiality which is possible for a people so fortunately placed as the British. They are compelled, by their history, to think in strategic terms and to weigh what seem to them to be strategic necessities against the claims of abstract justice. They know that, if war comes, there is a very real danger that it will be fought out on their territory, that it will result in the destruction of their cities and that it may involve at least the temporary occupation of areas inhabited by their citizens. If this is a reason for avoiding war, it is also a reason for taking measures attempting to ensure that, if war comes, it will not result in initial reverses. Thus they have a most pressing reason for wishing to retain a substantial margin of security over a possible attacker. For them, defeat is only one of the dangers, if the greatest, which is liable to flow from inadequate armed strength.

Nor has British thinking been influenced by the fear of defeat, since

we have known final defeat in war only once in modern times, and then only on the other side of the Atlantic. If the Continental countries were anxious to avoid war, they were even more anxious to avoid defeat in war. In assessing the merits of different policies, diplomatic and military, British opinion subconsciously ruled out both the danger of invasion and the danger of defeat. As a result, the British public was much readier to accept the risks resulting from disarmament, than was France, which had experienced, within living memory, the disastrous consequences of armed inferiority.

Whilst the French, and the other Continental peoples, tended to see the problems of international relations through the eyes of their soldiers, the British, in the years following the Four Years' War, showed no such inclination. The French, if they felt obliged to choose between a "just peace", and a peace which might be expected to endure on the basis of military preponderance, inclined to a peace based upon permanent security. To British opinion, on the other hand, it seemed that the only peace which was likely to endure was a "just peace".

Whilst the French emphasised the need for denying to Germany any further opportunity for aggression, believing that, in the long run, the Germans would not be content even with the justest of territorial arrangements, the British insisted that a fresh war was inevitable if, by refusing Germany's "just claims", the Allies left the Reich with a strong incentive to achieve treaty revision by force.

If the British aim was attainable, it obviously had more to commend it than the strictly limited French aim of preventing the military revival of Germany. A European settlement which was sincerely supported by Germany, as well as by France, Great Britain and the smaller Powers, had more chance of survival than a settlement which forced Germany, still potentially the strongest European Power, into opposition. But was such an agreed settlement possible? Was it possible to reconcile German grievances with Polish valid claims? Was the German claim for "equality of status" compatible with the French demand for security from fresh German attacks?

Indeed, a recent verdict by *The Times* Washington Correspondent upon a section of American opinion could equally be applied to the dominant trend of British opinion between the wars. On December 12th, 1944, he wrote: "What, in fact, most sadly needs correction in the thinking of large groups of Americans is the idea that there are

no problems which cannot be solved by the drafting of some perfect constitutional system." The Covenant of the League of Nations commended itself to great numbers of people in Great Britain as being a perfect, or nearly perfect, constitutional system. It had, of course, certain defects. There was a "gap" in the Covenant, arising from the fact that, in certain circumstances, a resort to war was still allowed to be admissible. Therefore, the object of progressive endeavour, in the popular view, was to close this "gap in the Covenant". This aim, it was felt, could be achieved by adopting the more far-reaching provisions of the Geneva Protocol.

The League Covenant was based upon the essentially sound principle that any State which attacked another should automatically be regarded as the enemy of every League member. The essential rightness of the collective security thesis has again been proved during the Second World War, when in its absence a "one by one" technique nearly gained complete victory. But the collective security thesis contained the paradox that restraint of an aggressor implied willingness of peace-loving countries to be ready at any time to go to war. This was well brought out by the title given to an American blue-print for the League entitled, "The League to enforce Peace". Collective security was widely advocated as meaning the elimination of "force" from international affairs. It meant, in fact, the harnessing of force to the frustration of the war-monger. War might be renounced "as an instrument of national policy"; but it had to be kept in reserve as an instrument of international policy so long as there were States, like Japan, Italy and Germany, ready to make war for selfish ends.

The weakness of the League experiment lay in the fact that, precisely in the most peace-loving countries, it was most difficult to induce the public to sanction the use of armed force, which, in simpler terms, meant going to war. You might dress up a League war as "military sanctions", as "international police action"; but, in the winter of 1935 and the spring of 1936, the British public awoke to the alarming realisation that, call it what you will, collective action against the aggressor boiled down to a readiness, on the part of Great Britain and other countries, to go to war with Mussolini's Italy. Collective security had been widely advertised as an insurance policy against war. But, whilst a lot had been said about the benefits which would result from taking out the policy, very little had been heard about the premium. When, in 1935-36, the first premium fell due, it looked

alarmingly like the very thing from which subscribers to the policy had expected to be preserved. Two years later, the French public was to make a very similar discovery when their own, less ambitious, security system was on trial. The French system of alliances had been advocated as ensuring that, if France was attacked, she would not have to fight alone. But an alliance system, like a more general system of collective security, works both ways. You cannot expect to take security out of the pool unless you are prepared, in given circumstances, to make a contribution of your own. When the French discovered that the Franco-Czech alliance worked both ways, it was not difficult for M. Flandin to persuade many people that France would be wrong to fight for Czechoslovakia.

Nor was the cause of collective security assisted by the fact that it was supported by a mass of false, or over-strained, analogy. Talk about "policemen" and "burglars" was highly misleading, particularly in a country where policemen are unarmed and burglars rarely have recourse to tommy-guns. "Police action" suggests that the policeman has behind him overwhelming strength. Yet, when the first serious act of aggression occurred, in Manchuria, it turned out that the burglar stood a very good chance of beating up the available policemen. Indeed, if the existing members of the League had tried to "restrain" Japan, it is more than possible that Singapore would have fallen ten years earlier than it did. It is very possible that, in 1935, the "burglar" was "bluffing", but it might easily have happened that, whilst the "police" were engaged with Mussolini, a far more formidable "burglar", Hitler, would have seized the opportunity for profitable crime.

Here, then, lay the main difficulty in the path of those who wished to see peace enforced by the collective might of the peace-loving nations. It was not difficult to demonstrate the folly of war; but, having harped upon the horrors of war, it became difficult to persuade opinion to accept the challenge of the dictators, if that meant war. British opinion considered the existence of a one-sided French security system as an obstacle to the general settlement, since it offered an alternative to collective security. These suspicions of French policy lingered on after Hitler's assumption of power, when, in the absence of an effective League security system, the French system of alliances had become the only breakwater in the path of the German torrent. The advantage of a hard and fast system of alliances over the graduated

sanctions of Article XVI of the League Covenant was that, if implemented, it could bring immediately effective relief to the victim of attack. Sanctions, on the other hand, were applied against Italy only after her attack on Abyssinia had been in progress for nearly six weeks, a period somewhat longer than that which Hitler needed for subduing Poland in 1939 and again for defeating France in May and June, 1940. Even if financial and economic sanctions had been applied at once, they could have only a gradual and partial effect. The lesson both of the First and of the Second World War is that blockade, whilst a valuable adjunct of military operations, can have little effect by itself, particularly if employed against a country which has shaped its economic life in advance to meet the possibility of economic isolation.

Sanctions of any sort were, however, conceived as being only the last line of defence against a new threat of war. If aggression was immediately threatened, it might be necessary to take collective action. But the problem was to be tackled first by preventive action in an attempt to forestall a drastic cure at a later stage. It was felt too that it would be difficult to induce opinion to sanction even a "League war", and that the argument that collective action against an aggressor was designed to maintain an "unjust *status quo*" would have to be met in advance. The League Covenant, which provided for collective action against an aggressor under Article XVI, also provided for "peaceful change" under Article XIX. On the surface, these two complementary Articles of the Covenant appeared to envisage every possible threat to peace. If there was injustice, it could be eliminated by Article XIX. If, despite the existence of this Article, a State resorted to war, it would run up against Article XVI. In practice, however, there was never much chance that Article XIX would be applied.

To take two examples: it might be "unjust" that 3,250,000 Sudeten Germans should live under Czechoslovak rule. It was quite as unjust that, by transferring them to Germany, Czechoslovakia should be reduced to an economic absurdity, with frontiers cutting lines of communications, and with the certainty that, at any moment, the Germans could rob seven million Czechs of their independence. Again, it might be unjust to leave a considerable Hungarian minority under Roumanian rule in Transylvania. It would have been equally unjust to transfer the province to Hungary, giving to her an even larger Roumanian minority. To divide the province would be no solution, since the two races are hopelessly intermingled; when

Hitler divided Transylvania in accordance with the "Vienna Award" of 1940, more Roumanians than Hungarians were transferred to Hungarian rule. A vast transfer of populations, with all its accompanying misery, might have segregated the two peoples, but, once again, the solution would have been very far from perfect. For it would have meant splitting up the geographical and economic unit of Transylvania. An impartial arbitrator might have pronounced this "solution" objectively just, but it would not, for that reason, have been accepted as just by either party to the dispute.

The British illusion that a "just" arrangement was possible, and that, once attained, it would result in enduring peace, greatly smoothed Hitler's path. The most cursory reading of *Mein Kampf* should have made it plain that Hitler was not interested in a just peace, that his object was to replace the "injustices of Versailles" by a series of far graver injustices, to be inflicted upon Germany's victims by the Third Reich. But Hitler, despite the frankness of his political testament, went to great pains to persuade British opinion that he shared its desire for a "just" settlement, and that he wished only to remove those "injustices" which offended the British sense of fair play. He was assisted by the sense of moral guilt which the Versailles Treaty had left in many British minds. Since many British critics of Versailles were prepared to sanction the return of the former German colonies, so invaluable as submarine and air bases, it cannot be said that the British public was solely concerned to appease Germany at the expense of others. But it remained true that, if Versailles went by default, others would be more immediately, and more adversely, affected than Great Britain. This fact was apparent to many people on the Continent whose countries were threatened by German plans for aggression, and it did not enhance the popularity or moral authority of Great Britain. The British public watched each fresh violation of the Versailles Treaty with mixed feelings. It was true that Hitler's methods were abrupt and even brutal, and that they did not seem to augur well for the prospects of a "general agreement". But as each German grievance was rectified—by the revival of conscription, or by the remilitarisation of the Rhineland—it seemed that a further approach had been made to a state of affairs in which Germany would be content with her lot. When this happy consummation had been achieved, it was hoped that the Reich might be associated with the other European Powers in maintaining the peace.

As Hitler administered each new pill, he was careful to sugar it. When the Rhineland was reoccupied, in violation of a freely negotiated treaty and of a pledge recently given by Hitler himself, the German Government was careful to explain that the "restoration of German sovereignty" would now permit of Germany's return to the League of Nations. This offer was seized upon gleefully, and *The Times* headed its leading article on March 8th, 1936, "A Chance to Rebuild". Hitler, like an earlier German diplomat, Count Bernstorff, had detected a weak spot in Great Britain's armour. Mr. Harold Nicolson has quoted[1] a most revealing passage in a letter written by Count Bernstorff to Prince Bülow in 1904:

> "In my humble opinion, an improvement in the relations between the two countries might well be initiated by the conclusion of a treaty of arbitration with England. In the form which is customary nowadays, such treaties are quite harmless, and *de facto* of no importance. At the same time, it is surprising to note the extent to which, in political matters, our 'practical Englishmen' are dominated by phrases. If we were to agree to a treaty of arbitration, a very large number of people in England would believe that the Germans had put off their desire for conquest and had become peaceable individuals. In exchange, we could afford to build a few more battleships, especially if they were not given too much publicity."

Hitler may or may not have been aware of Count Bernstorff's advice, but he certainly followed the Count's precept most exactly. The offer of a treaty of arbitration was matched by the offer to return to the League. In place of "a few more battleships", Germany won a diplomatic and military success which brought the Reich within reach of the military domination of Europe.

Hitler's decision to send his troops into the Rhineland, so recovering his freedom to fortify Germany's western frontier, was a military development with certain quite definite military consequences. Almost alone among the commentators in the British press, the diplomatic correspondent of the *Manchester Guardian* pointed to the effects of Hitler's action:

> "Germany, by reoccupying the Rhineland, achieved the double aim of making herself impregnable in the West and of achieving her maximum offensive power in the West also. She, therefore,

[1] *Diplomacy*, by Harold Nicolson, p. 141.

achieved a free hand against the Central and Eastern European Powers."[1]

Seventeen years earlier, Marshal Foch had pointed out the consequences of German mastery of the Rhine. The Reich was now able to cut Europe in two, and to eliminate British and French influence from Eastern Europe. Thus, the reoccupation of the Rhineland and the construction of the Siegfried Line confronted Great Britain and France, both in September, 1938, and in September, 1939, with the insoluble military problem of bringing help to the Czechs before they were overwhelmed by Germany. But the *Manchester Guardian* was alone at that time in perceiving the significance of Hitler's action. The *Spectator* correctly interpreted the views of the general public when it wrote: "That the Rhineland should no longer be demilitarised is a small thing in itself".[2] British opinion, even "informed" British opinion, was so busy demonstrating Hitler's moral shortcomings in violating a freely negotiated agreement that it quite failed to notice the consequences of his action. At this critical moment, the decisive turning-point in the history of the inter-war years, British opinion was preoccupied with the need to restore respect for international obligations. It was hoped that Germany would make a symbolic gesture so as to recreate the comfortable illusion that Hitler could be trusted.

Shortly after the reoccupation of the Rhineland, the Royal Institute of International Affairs (Chatham House) arranged a series of three discussions on the significance of Germany's action. These discussions were attended by a number of Members of both Houses of Parliament, journalists, writers and other recognised authorities. The published record of these three discussions [3] makes revealing reading. The overwhelming majority of those who took part were very much alive to the German menace, but only one speaker pointed to the consequences of Hitler's action. In fact, the whole diplomatic and military situation in Europe had been revolutionised. The French security system was shattered, and ceased to be the determining factor in European affairs. As Mr. Churchill put it to the House of Commons on March 26th: "When there is a line of fortifications (along Germany's Western

[1] *Manchester Guardian*, March 9th, 1936.

[2] *Spectator*, March 13th, 1936.

[3] *Germany and the Rhineland*, published by the Royal Institute of International Affairs.

frontier), as I suppose there will be in a very short time, it will produce reactions on the European situation. It will be a barrier across Germany's front door, which will leave her free to sally out eastwards, and southward, by the other doors." [1]

Throughout the Continent of Europe, the consequences of March 7th were immediately understood even though, in France, recognition of the danger was not matched by a readiness to counter Hitler's latest move. Continental countries are compelled by their own experience to think strategically. They cannot allow themselves the luxury of seeing events solely, or mainly, in moral terms. To a Frenchman, a Pole, a Czech or a Russian, Germany's fresh opportunities for aggression mattered considerably more than the fact that Hitler had "undermined respect for treaties".

If the British public can be excused for failing to recognise the significance of Hitler's military success, the Government of the day cannot so readily be exonerated for its failure to warn opinion of the gravity of the latest development. Having at its disposal the reports of its diplomatic representatives and military attachés in foreign capitals, the Government cannot have been unaware of the seriousness with which every threatened country regarded the transformation of the military and diplomatic situation in Europe.

There is a striking parallel between the period of appeasement preceding the Four Years' War and the appeasement period before 1939. Eyre Crowe, in his despatch on the relations between Great Britain, France and Germany, dated January 1st, 1907,[2] describes how the Germans constantly insisted upon their desire for an understanding with Great Britain, explaining that a concession by the British upon some outstanding issue would create the basis for such an understanding. But, as soon as the concession had been made, a fresh "obstacle" was produced, and a fresh concession demanded. In Crowe's day, the concessions upon which Germany insisted were mainly in the colonial field, and British compliance, though it encouraged the Germans, did not greatly affect the general strategic situation. But in each case, British readiness to "appease" the Germans was based upon a complete failure to understand the objectives of German policy.

[1] *Arms and the Covenant*, p. 299. Speeches by the Right Hon. Winston Churchill, House of Commons, March 26th, 1936.

[2] Gooch and Temperley, *Documents on the Origin of the War*, vol. iii. pp. 397 *seq*.

This was most noticeable in the repeated efforts of Great Britain to wean Germany from her projects of conquest by the offer of economic advantages. Of these, the unofficial suggestion of a £1,000,000,000 loan was the most striking. But Lord Runciman attempted to handle the Sudeten question along the same lines. It is true that the friction in the Sudeten area was increased by economic distress. But the grievances of the Sudetens were, of course, exploited in Berlin for the sole purpose of destroying the Czechoslovak State.

British opinion was further handicapped, in its approach to the problem of relations with Germany, by the illusion that time was on our side. In Great Britain and France, opinion failed to allow for the strength Germany gained from the new territories which she conquered. By his conquest of Austria, Hitler provided the German army with twelve new divisions. When Czechoslovakia was destroyed, the *Wehrmacht* was relieved of the necessity for dealing with the Czech army which, in Mr. Churchill's opinion, would have required the attention of thirty German divisions. Meanwhile in Great Britain, to quote Mr. Churchill in the debate on the Munich agreement: "We are in process, I believe, of adding, in four years, four new battalions to the British army. No fewer than two have already been completed".[1]

The most intelligent defence of Munich, indeed the only possible defence when it had become apparent that the agreement had not brought "peace in our time", has rested on the argument that Munich "gained time" for British rearmament. This is certainly true. Great Britain was stronger, at least in terms of defensive power, in September, 1939, than she had been a year earlier. British factories were turning out the Spitfires and Hurricanes which won the Battle of Britain. But, if the defensive strength of Great Britain had grown during this year, the defensive and offensive strength of Germany had grown also, and, in the West, the Siegfried Line had been completed. If it was impossible to assist the Czechs in September, 1938, it was equally impossible to assist the Poles in September, 1939. Czechoslovakia had, at least, a powerful and heavily fortified mountain frontier. By September, 1939, the far less powerful frontier of Poland had been turned by the German occupation of Bohemia, Moravia and Slovakia, and it was possible for the Germans to carry out a pincer movement

[1] *Into Battle*, pp. 49-50. Speech of October 5th, 1938.

against Warsaw from East Prussia in the North and from Czechoslovak territory in the South.

Even more important than the improvement in Germany's strategic position as a result of Munich was the acquisition, by the Reich, of the entire equipment of the Czechoslovak army and of the most important arsenal of Central Europe. In his speech of April 28th, 1939, Hitler listed the booty captured when German troops occupied the "rump" of Czechoslovakia. It included 1,582 aircraft, 501 anti-aircraft guns, 2,175 light and heavy guns, 785 mortars, 469 tanks, 43,876 machine-guns and a vast quantity of small arms and ammunition of every kind. More important, perhaps, than the actual booty was the fact that Germany had gained control of the mighty arsenals which had produced this abundance of war material, and that they were taken over in full working order. Germany had close on six months in which to integrate Czech armament production into the general armaments programme of the Reich. In the last year for which complete figures are available, 1935, Czechoslovak arms exports represented 24·6 per cent. of total world arms exports.[1] The armaments captured in Czechoslovakia, together with the production of Czech arsenals working under German control in the months March-September, 1939, must have greatly exceeded total British output in many categories during the period September, 1938-September, 1939. All this was, of course, additional to the arms production of the Reich proper and Austria.

If it is objected that Munich was justified by the reluctance of the British public to contemplate war, and by its failure to recognise the threat from Germany, it can only be replied that it was the clear duty of the British Government to keep the public informed, and to make available some of the knowledge which must have reached it from the many sources of information at its disposal. It is true that the public preferred the "soothing syrup", administered so generously by the ministers of the Crown and by the Press, to the warnings which Mr. Churchill never ceased to address to it. It is true that, with characteristic optimism, many people believed, even after the war began, that Germany would in some way "collapse", that the German people was not behind the Nazi Government. But, if Mr. Churchill's warnings had come from the responsible head of the Government, and

[1] *League of Nations Statistical Year Book for the Trade in Arms and Ammunition*, 1935.

not from a private member in the political "wilderness", they could hardly have been ignored. If Hitler's occupation of Prague was the final demonstration of Nazi perfidy, there had been abundant proof beforehand.

It is difficult to believe that the Government can have been left in ignorance by its diplomatic representatives abroad, and in particular by the British Ambassador in Moscow, of the inevitable diplomatic consequences of Munich, which were, in a way, even graver than its military consequences. For the four-power agreement of Munich, concluded between Great Britain, France, Germany and Italy, resulted, as no doubt Hitler intended it to result, in the diplomatic isolation of Russia. With Russia isolated, Germany was free either to offer Russia a separate arrangement, as she did in August, 1939, or to attack her, as she did on June 22nd, 1941. The isolation of Russia was no doubt regarded by the German Foreign Office as one of the most important and favourable results of the Munich agreement. Although, eleven months later, Russia was duly to conclude a "Munich" agreement of her own, this time at the expense of Poland, and, like its predecessor, of great profit to Germany, the legacy of Munich, in the shape of Russian suspicion of the West, is still with us to-day.

One lesson emerges very clearly from the tragic series of errors which brought Hitler so near to establishing Germany as the master of Europe. When dealing with a totalitarian dictatorship, it is wise to assume that every action of its government is prompted by a strategic motive. Behind all the talk of "regaining equality of status", "restoring Germany's full sovereignty", "removing the injustices of Versailles" and "protecting German minorities abroad", Germany's object was always the same, to place herself in an ever more favourable strategic position.

Inevitably, Great Britain was at a disadvantage in combating German plans. A dictator can mould, and, if necessary, ignore the public opinion of his country—though there is no evidence that Hitler did not, in fact, enjoy the support of his subjects. By contrast, there will always be, in a democracy, a minority opposed to any given course of action. For that very reason, no democratic government can afford to leave its subjects in ignorance of the facts of the existing situation. To say that public opinion was not prepared to sanction the measures necessary for the restraint of Germany, at a time when the Reich was still far from the pinnacle of strength which it reached

in the years 1939 and 1940, is no defence for the governments of the time.

There is little to choose between the records of the two main political parties during the nineteen-thirties. The Conservative Party which, with adherents from other groups, ruled the country from 1931 to 1940, broadly favoured rearmament, but failed to restrain aggression. The Labour Party wished to resist the onward march of Hitler and Mussolini, but consistently opposed the thorough-going rearmament which alone could give its own policy any chance of success. The Labour Party's irresponsibility in opposing conscription, even after the German seizure of Prague, seems scarcely credible. Nor is it a convincing defence to say that Socialists had no confidence in the policy of the Government which was asking for conscription. For, if the Labour Party had succeeded the Conservatives in power, they would themselves have needed the trained men and the military equipment which they had sought to deny to their predecessors.

The British people's experience of twenty years' crisis and five years of war, has, no doubt, left opinion in a more chastened mood than that of 1919. This grim ordeal may have taught a much needed lesson in realism. It may have taught us that goodwill is not enough, and that high moral principles do not become effective unless backed by sound judgment and the necessary physical strength. If we have been cured of the illusion that fear of war is a guarantee of peace; if we realise that international organisations will not work by themselves, future British intervention in international affairs may contribute more powerfully to the maintenance of peace than it did between 1919 and 1939.

Chapter Eight

BALANCE OF POWER

IF a student of international affairs in London, Berlin, Paris, Moscow or New York were asked to define the traditional foreign policy of Great Britain in a single phrase, he would unhesitatingly declare that it had ordinarily been dominated by the pursuit of the Balance of Power. He might even point to the fact that, from 1815 to 1867, the aim of maintaining the Balance of Power had been officially avowed in the annual Army Act. He might use the phrase approvingly, as implying that Great Britain had consistently used her influence to support the independence of small nations against the threat of alien domination; or he might use it disapprovingly, as implying that England had, in pursuit of her selfish interests, sought to keep others at loggerheads. In the words of Sir Eyre Crowe[1]: "It has become almost a historical truism to identify England's secular policy with the maintenance of this balance, by throwing her weight now in this scale, and now in that, but ever on the side opposed to the political dictatorship of the strongest single state or group at a single time".

There have, of course, always been subsidiary motives determining the course of British policy: concern for the security of the Low Countries which, in unfriendly hands, might constitute a threat to British safety; the anxiety which England has always shown to create the most favourable conditions for her foreign trade. The student might point to British concern for the safety of the route to India and the East and to the determination never to allow British security to be jeopardised, and the British Isles to be laid open to the danger of blockade, through loss of naval supremacy to a hostile, or potentially hostile, Power. But he would argue that these subsidiary aims have, in general, only reinforced Great Britain in the pursuit of the Balance of Power.

It is, however, very much easier to define British policy in terms of the "Balance of Power" than to say what exactly is meant by the "policy of the Balance of Power". Does it imply that Great Britain will automatically come into conflict with the strongest European

[1] Gooch and Temperley, vol. iii. p. 403.

Power, or only that conflict is inevitable between Great Britain and a Power which is both strong and aggressive? Has the policy of the Balance of Power, however we may define it, resulted from a deliberate British initiative, or has it been forced upon Great Britain by circumstances, and by the policy, of others? Has it, in fact, been consistently pursued in the past, and is it likely to be pursued in the future?

We must ask these questions, and attempt to answer them, for two reasons. In the first place, the policy of the Balance of Power, as it has been understood, and perhaps misunderstood, on the Continent, has led to much suspicion of Great Britain. Naturally, the "Balance of Power" policy has always been criticised by would-be conquerors of Europe, who believed it to be their destiny to unite the Continent by subjecting it to their rule. Hitler inveighed against this policy in his speech of January 30th, 1941: "What Britain called the Balance of Power was nothing but the disintegration and disorganisation of the Continent". But criticism of the "Balance of Power" policy has not come only from Great Britain's enemies. In a speech of February 11th, 1918, President Woodrow Wilson declared: "Peoples and provinces are not to be bartered about from sovereignty to sovereignty as if they were mere chattels and pawns in a game, even in the great game, now for ever discredited, of the Balance of Power".[1] Recently, M. Leontiev, a Soviet journalist, was quoted by *The Times* [2] as attributing the failure of Versailles in part to Great Britain's desire to uphold Germany "in accordance with the Balance of Power theory". Between the wars, many Frenchmen attributed Great Britain's apparent *penchant* for Germany and her reluctance to maintain the provisions of the Versailles Treaty to the traditional Balance of Power policy, allegedly directed against France as the strongest European Power.

There is, however, a more practical reason why we must re-examine the policy of the Balance of Power. Since the war, Soviet Russia is by far the strongest Power in Europe and perhaps in the world. If, inevitably, Great Britain is destined to drift, or move consciously, into opposition to the strongest European Power, then Anglo-Russian conflict is inevitable. Indeed, if we followed the precepts of the late Professor Sykeman, and argued that American and British policy ought to seek to reassert the Balance of Power against Soviet Russia, even to the extent of resuscitating Germany, a gloomy prospect

[1] *The Times*, February 12th, 1918.
[2] *Ibid.*, 1945.

indeed would open itself up before us. We should have fought Germany as the ally of Russia. Thereafter, in order to restore the balance against Russia, we should revive Germany. The picture which this theory conjures up is one of recurrent, almost of perpetual, war. If this is, in fact, what the Balance of Power means, then every criticism of it is justified, and no British government which depended upon popular support could dream of pursuing it.

The classic definition of the Balance of Power is to be found in a Foreign Office memorandum by Sir Eyre Crowe dated January 1st, 1907.[1] Crowe starts by asking why it is that Great Britain, as the strongest naval power of the world, had not, by the very fact of its naval preponderance, aroused against itself a hostile combination so strong that it could not be resisted by a "small island kingdom not possessed of the military strength of a people trained in arms, and dependent for its food supplies upon overseas commerce". He argues that England will only escape this fate if its policy is in harmony with "the primary and vital interests of a majority, or as many as possible, of the other nations". "Now the first interest of all countries is the preservation of national independence. It follows that England . . . has a direct and positive interest in the maintenance of the independence of nations, and therefore must be the natural enemy of any country threatening the independence of others, and the natural protector of the weaker communities." A threat to the independence of States arises from the momentary preponderance of a neighbouring State at once militarily powerful, economically efficient and ambitious to extend its frontiers or spread its influence. "The only check to the abuse of political predominance . . . has always consisted in the opposition of an equally formidable rival, or of a combination of several countries forming leagues of defence. The equilibrium formed by such a grouping of forces is technically known as the Balance of Power. England's secular policy has been identified with the maintenance of this balance. If this view of British policy is correct, the opposition into which England must inevitably be drawn to any country aspiring to such a dictatorship assumes almost the form of a natural law."

Crowe's analysis may be read in conjunction with a passage from Lord Grey of Fallodon's memoirs.[2] Lord Grey is discussing why it

[1] Gooch and Temperley, vol. iii. p. 397 *seq.*

[2] *Twenty-Five Years*, Lord Grey of Fallodon (People's Library Edition), vol. i. pp. 48-52.

was that, under Lord Salisbury, Great Britain sided, not with the weaker group against the stronger, but with the Triple Alliance, which "was indisputably the strongest combination . . . in Europe". He came to this conclusion: "There was, I think, a belief that the power of the Triple Alliance made for stability, and therefore peace in Europe, that France and Russia, though militarily the weaker, were the restless Powers, while the Triple Alliance was, on the whole, contented. The conclusion I would draw is that Great Britain has not in theory been adverse to the dominance of a strong group in Europe when it seemed to make for stability and peace. To support such a combination has generally been her first choice; it is only when the dominant power becomes aggressive, and she feels her own interests to be threatened, that she, by an instinct of self-defence, if not by deliberate policy, gravitates to anything that can fairly be described as a Balance of Power."

If this interpretation is correct, two things emerge very clearly. In the first place, the policy of the Balance of Power is not so much an aim deliberately pursued, as the inevitable reaction of Great Britain to the attempts of others to dominate their neighbours and establish a "dictatorship" in international relations. Secondly, the object is not to create a permanent "equilibrium", but only to deal with a temporary state of disequilibrium which threatens the independence of the "weaker communities" and, less directly, the independence of Great Britain herself. This may, of course, be a very idealised version of a very selfish policy; but, if it is a faithful account of it, then the policy of the Balance of Power represents a kind of rudimentary "collective security". If it is not sufficiently effective to prevent or forestall wars, at least it can be argued that it has, hitherto, achieved the more limited aim of preventing Napoleon, William II or Hitler from achieving a world "dictatorship" and depriving the peoples of Europe permanently of their independence.

Indeed, some admirers of the Balance of Power have gone even further. Thus, Sir James Mackintosh, a contemporary critic of Castlereagh's policy at the Congress of Vienna, goes so far as to argue that the independence of the "feebler communities" can be maintained only by the operation of the Balance of Power, and that it is actively endangered by too much agreement between the Great Powers. Professor A. F. Pollard quotes him as saying: "In the new system, States are annihilated by a combination of the Great; in the

old, small States were secured by the mutual jealousy of the Great. . . When the Noble Lord represents small States as incapable of existence, he in truth avows that he is returned in triumph from the destruction of that system of the Balance of Power of which, indeed, great Empires were the guardians, but of which the perfect action was indicated by the security of the feebler communities." "The Congress of Vienna", Mackintosh argued, in words which might have been used of more recent gatherings, "seems, indeed, to have adopted every part of the French system, except that they have transferred the dictatorship of Europe from one individual to a triumvirate."[1] At Vienna, the greater part of Poland had been handed over to Russia, under a fiction of independence. Norway, yielding to the pressure of a British naval squadron, had accepted the suzerainty of Sweden. Belgium had been conveyed to Holland, and Venice to Austria. All this had been accomplished in the name of Allied unity, and Mackintosh, seeing so many small countries deprived of independence, felt that too much unanimity might be unhealthy. But Castlereagh could himself claim that he was following the dictates of the Balance of Power. For he defended his policy with the assertion that: "My real and only object was to create a permanent counterpoise to the power of France, in peace as well as in war."[2] For Mackintosh, the Balance of Power was only a means to an end, the end being to maintain the independence of small nations. To sacrifice the independence of nations to the maintenance of the Balance of Power was to sacrifice the end to the means.

If you regard the Balance of Power as an end in itself, it is not difficult to build up a case against it, and Professor Pollard built up a very powerful case in an address to the Institute of International Affairs in February, 1923.[3] He pointed out that the phrase "balance of power" could be interpreted in many different ways. It could be taken to mean an exact equilibrium between two groups of Powers, or, alternatively, the word balance could be used, like the expression "bank balance", as meaning "something in hand". He quotes an eighteenth-century biographer of Wolsey as writing of "that grand rule, whereby the counsels of England should always be governed, of

[1] Quoted by A. F. Pollard, "The Balance of Power" in the *Journal of the Royal Institute of International Affairs*, March, 1923.

[2] "Castlereagh" by Prof. C. K. Webster. Quoted by A. F. Pollard, "The Balance of Power," *Journal of the Royal Institute of International Affairs*, March, 1923, p. 62.

[3] *Op. cit.*

possessing the balance of power in her hands".[1] But, as Pollard pointed out, if two Powers, or groups of Powers, attempt to keep a margin of security against one another, the result is a race in armaments, and, ultimately, war.

We have, then, two contrasting interpretations of the Balance of Power as pursued by Great Britain. The first suggests that it was, broadly speaking, an idealist policy, although it also fitted in with British interests. Great Britain could only maintain her position in the world by making herself the guardian of the independence of peoples, and thereby ensuring herself of the support of "a majority, or as many as possible, of the other nations". The second considers the policy to have been wholly selfish, a policy aimed at dividing the world, or the European Continent, into opposing groups, roughly equal in strength, so that Great Britain could keep the Balance of Power "in her hands". Which of these is the right interpretation?

If the second view is the right one, we shall have to ask ourselves a further question: how was it possible for Great Britain to manipulate foreign countries in such a way that they would fall in with her plans for keeping the Balance of Power "in her hands"? Foreign critics of Great Britain have found no difficulty in answering this question. They have attributed England's diplomatic success to the diabolical cunning which people so often attribute to foreign diplomats, whilst representing their own as inept, gullible people, always at the mercy of superior intelligence and guile. But, in practice, Great Britain had few inducements to offer other nations to encourage them to fall in with her plans. She could offer them subsidies, and, when subsidies fell out of fashion, she could grant them loans. Her naval power was a very important asset, though it was a long-term weapon, unlikely to exercise any very rapid influence on the course of a war. She could not offer the kind of support which a Continental nation so urgently needs in time of war, the support of a large army. To a Continental people, with land frontiers to defend, loans, subsidies, economic aid and naval support have never appeared as a substitute for the help which a powerful land army can give. Whenever Continental countries have fought as the allies of Great Britain, they have always known that the support which they could expect from the small British Army would, in the first instance, and probably for a considerable time, be very slight indeed. They must have known

[1] Fiddes, *Life of Wolsey*, vol. i. p. 274.

how often Britain's allies had complained of the insufficiency of the British military contribution. Yet, whenever Great Britain has fought a war, she has always fought as a member of a great coalition; she has never wanted for allies. How is this fact to be explained?

Only one explanation is possible. Great Britain's Continental allies have always recognised that Great Britain's interest in preventing the establishment of a "dictatorship" over Europe was also their primary interest. Or, to put it differently, the great coalitions, which British diplomacy has forged, have resulted from a threat of Continental domination. They have been brought into existence, not so much by the diplomacy of Great Britain, as by the fact that a Continental Power was seeking to dominate and enslave other European countries.

Twice, in the past half-century, Great Britain has fought Germany as a member of a great coalition. In each instance, she has done so with the greatest reluctance—and the same is true of the United States. In 1904, Great Britain brought about the *entente cordiale* with France only after the rejection by Germany of Joseph Chamberlain's offer of an Anglo-German alliance. The *entente* resulted from the German attempt to unite with the greatest European army a fleet which could compete with the British navy. In 1939, Great Britain set herself to build up an anti-German coalition only after the failure of another policy, that of Munich. If, in 1904, and again in 1939, Great Britain reacted in accordance with the dictates of the Balance of Power, the reason is to be sought, not so much in deliberate and conscious British policies, as in the threat to Great Britain, and to the Continental countries, which resulted from the policies of William II and Tirpitz, of Hitler and Field-Marshal Göring. In each instance, Germany, by calling the Balance of Power into operation against herself, brought about her own encirclement, which was rendered complete, in 1941, when the Reich, already at war with Great Britain, made the Soviet Union Britain's ally by the attack on Russia.

There is, however, another reason why, in modern times at any rate, Great Britain can follow a policy based on the Balance of Power only if a Continental Power is seeking to dominate its neighbours. No British Government can make war, or pledge itself to make war in certain circumstances, unless it is assured of popular support. It could not make the Balance of Power the objective of its policy unless the British recognised that the policy of a Continental aggressor made war the only alternative to submission. This is all the more true because of

the reluctance of any British Government to enter a war in which it will not be willingly supported by the overseas Dominions. The price which must be paid for the invaluable support of the Dominions is to fight only when it is clear that the responsibility for the outbreak of war lies, unmistakably, with Great Britain's enemy.

The pursuit of a Balance of Power policy implies, of course, the existence of two hostile groups, and the probability that these two groups will eventually fight one another. That is another reason why it will be followed with reluctance, and only when war is seen as the only alternative to the establishment of an international dictatorship. In 1914, as Grey shows in his *Twenty-Five Years*, the British cabinet was reluctant to commit Great Britain to the support of France. In fact, it never did so, because, although the dictates of the Balance of Power so clearly indicated the need for supporting France, British opinion would not have sanctioned any course which seemed to make more difficult the maintenance of peaceful relations between the Central Powers and the *Entente*. Again, in 1938, the British Government failed to react as it would have reacted had its policy been based solely upon the Balance of Power. The Chamberlain Government felt that the British public must first be persuaded that the alternative, an agreement with Germany, had been given a full trial.

It has been suggested that the Balance of Power, in the sense of resistance to any attempt to achieve a position of dictatorship by robbing weak countries of their independence, was a rudimentary form of collective security. If this is so, then collective security should have been recognised as the perfect form of the Balance of Power, in the sense that an aggressor would be opposed by an overwhelming combination, strong enough to deter him from attacking. In that case, why was the British public so slow to recognise that a League policy was in line with, and, indeed, was an improvement upon, its traditional policy of resisting a Power with ambitions to dominate other Powers? Why was it that Great Britain seemed, at any rate, to be directing its policy against France, which, if it was superficially the strongest Power of the Continent, was also manifestly a contented Power?

For it is possible to argue that, after 1919, British policy was directed to thwarting France, because France appeared to be the strongest Continental Power. Ramsay MacDonald, in a letter which he addressed to Poincaré on February 21st, 1924, wrote that the people of

Great Britain "regard with anxiety what appears to them to be the determination of France to ruin Germany and to dominate the Continent without consideration of our reasonable interests and future consequences to European settlement". He went on to refer to the apprehension which is felt over the "large military and aerial establishments maintained not only in Eastern, but in Western France". Here, one may argue, is irrefutable evidence that Great Britain was opposing France simply because she was the strongest European Power; that Britain was anxious to preserve Germany from the "ruin", which France seemed to be promoting, to be a rival factor in the European balance. One can argue that, whilst France was seeking no more than the margin of security which was the only alternative to German ascendancy, MacDonald's reference to France's aim of "dominating" the Continent proves that British policy was prompted by considerations of the Balance of Power. One may go on to instance the Anglo-German naval treaty as evidence in the same sense.

Yet the sequel to MacDonald's note puts the British attitude to France in its proper perspective, for the sequel was the Locarno Treaty, whereby both France and Germany were guaranteed against attack by the other. Here was the Balance of Power in the sense of a policy designed to frustrate aggression, to hold in check, not the strongest Power, but the Power which might attack. If the policy of balance had been followed in the sense in which Professor Pollard understood it, Great Britain might have reacted in one of two ways. She might have gravitated into opposition to France, as the strongest European Power, or to Germany as being potentially the strongest European Power. But, in fact, Great Britain was reluctant to accept the necessity for opposing either. She directed her policy to the attempt to reconcile Germany with her neighbours and to gain her willing co-operation in the maintenance of an agreed settlement. In practice, this meant seeking to reconcile irreconcilables. But, in pursuit of this policy, Great Britain concluded the naval treaty with Germany, in the hope that the Reich would thereby be persuaded to avoid the course of action which, before 1914, had made the conflict with Germany unavoidable. When it became clear, even to Chamberlain, that German ambitions were unlimited and that agreement was impossible, Great Britain reacted to a threat of European dictatorship as she was bound to react.

It was unfortunate that the League of Nations, and the policy of

collective security for which it stood, was not recognised by British public opinion as the logical development of Britain's secular policy of opposing the domination of the Continent by an aggressive Power. If collective security had been recognised as being nothing more than a development of a well-recognised policy, it might not have appeared doctrinaire and unrealistic to so many people in Great Britain.

Part Two
The Ascendancy of Russia

Chapter Nine

THE RUSSIAN SECURITY SYSTEM

MUCH contemporary Anglo-Saxon thought on international affairs conceives of the relations between States in terms of "problems" which, like problems of mathematics or chess, can be "solved". Governments are called upon for a "solution" of the "problem of Germany" or the "problem of aggression". The failure to produce a final "solution" breeds a sense of grievance and resentment. Measures which might combat, at least partially, a given danger, are rejected because they do not offer a complete answer. The belief that the Covenant of the League of Nations provided a complete, or almost complete, answer to the "problem of keeping the peace" was, as has been suggested in Chapter Seven, characteristic of this approach. So was the short-lived vogue of Federal Union.

In fact, problems in international affairs are seldom, if ever, soluble. Friction arises between States, or groups of States, because their territorial, economic or strategic aims bring them into conflict with one another. A threat to the security of individual States or to the peace of the world grows with the growth in the power of a given country and with the growth of an aggressive spirit among a dominating element of its people. Thus, from the accession to the throne of Germany of William II in 1890, if not earlier, the peace and security of Europe have been threatened by the combination of German strength and German aggressiveness. The defeat of Germany in 1918 brought the German danger, temporarily at least, within manageable proportions. France, at the conference of Versailles and by her subsequent policy of alliances, sought to keep Germany under control. Great Britain, failing to recognise that the "artificial" restrictions placed upon Germany by the Treaty were the only alternative to German domination of Europe, held aloof from France. Anglo-French suspicions, fostered by German propaganda and policy, made possible the rise of a German Reich far stronger than that of William II. Soviet Russia, isolated in Europe, actually co-operated, diplomatically

and militarily, with Weimar Germany. German officers helped to train the Red Army, and, in the process, the Reich was able to escape from some of the military restrictions placed upon it by the Treaty.

Fortunately for the peoples of Europe, Hitler's outspokenness and ineptitude prevented Germany from profiting by her opportunity. The German seizure of Czechoslovakia brought about a reversal of British policy, and Great Britain, having refused for nearly twenty years to contemplate commitments in Eastern Europe, entered into alliances with Poland and Turkey and gave guarantees to Roumania and Greece. Although, profiting by Munich, Germany succeeded in concluding a non-aggression treaty with the Soviet Union, the fruits of this diplomatic triumph were thrown away when German troops invaded Russia on June 22nd, 1941. Assisted by the short-sighted Japanese invasion of Malaya and the Philippines, Germany brought into being, for the second time within a generation, a coalition so strong that her ultimate defeat was certain. Hitler deserves the principal credit for this remarkable diplomatic achievement.

In modern Europe, the threat from a given Power has only been removed when that Power has been superseded by another. Thus, the "Spanish problem" gave place to the "French problem". With the growth of Germany, there ceased to be a "French problem", and the "German problem" took its place. The threat from Germany survived after the defeat of the Reich in 1918. Indeed, the consequent weakening of Germany was, in fact, more than offset by the disintegration of Austria-Hungary and the weakening of Russia. In 1940, it seemed to many Frenchmen that the defeat of the Third Reich would bring no solution. Since Soviet Russia had actually collaborated with Germany in destroying Poland, there seemed no reason to expect that Russia would again emerge as a counter-weight to the strength of Germany, as she had been before 1917. It seemed to many Frenchmen, in 1940, that, even if Hitler were to be defeated, the German problem would still persist as it had done after 1918. This fear helps to explain the half-hearted resistance of the French in the campaign of May and June, 1940.

We now know that there will, in fact, be no return to the state of affairs which existed in 1919. For, even before the outbreak of the Second World War, the strength of Soviet Russia was progressively overhauling that of the German Reich. The strength of the Soviet

Union is the guarantee that the German problem will not again arise in the form in which we knew it between the two wars. Russia always enjoyed certain latent advantages over Germany. Her population, before the war, was more than twice that of the Greater Reich. Her resources of raw materials were incomparably greater than those of Germany. But these advantages were latent, rather than actual, because the industrial revolution occurred in Russia many decades later than in Germany. Russia never suffered from any lack of men for her armies; nor did she lack most of the raw materials from which military equipment could be provided. She lacked the factories and the mines for the production of military equipment and the trained and skilled men to operate and staff these factories.

The industrialisation of Russia had, it is true, begun before the revolution of October, 1917. It had not, however, reached the stage at which Russia was capable of equipping her great armies on the scale of the other European Great Powers. In the years 1914-17, the lack of military equipment—which Mr. Churchill sought to rectify by forcing the Dardanelles and opening the Straits for the despatch of Allied munitions to the Czar's armies—was the decisive factor in bringing about the collapse of 1917.

The October Revolution, then, found Russia already embarked upon the process of industrialisation which had already occurred in Great Britain, Germany, France and the United States. Thereafter, the industrial revolution continued under the aegis of a planned economy. The immense strides in production, with which Soviet propagandists sought to advertise the achievements of Communism, could be matched by very similar statistics from Great Britain in the first half, and Germany and the United States in the second half, of the nineteenth century. Indeed, if Communism had come in Russia when the industrial revolution was already largely completed, there is no reason to suppose that it would have called forth any comparable increase in production. But, whereas in other countries the industrial revolution had come about under the incentive of private property, in the Soviet Union it was harnessed to the achievement of definite aims. Since Russia always expected to be attacked, the first of these aims was the achievement of military strength. In pursuit of this objective, care was taken to industrialise areas which would be well outside the reach of an aggressor, whether he came from the West or from the East. In Soviet Russia, as in other countries passing through

the process of industrialisation, foreign experts were called in to train native technicians and to organise the building of factories. It was significant that, by the middle of the nineteen-thirties, the Soviet Union no longer felt the need to rely upon foreign experts. There was already a sufficiency of trained Russians, although there was still a very great deal to be done in the way of erecting plant and tapping new sources of raw material.[1]

By 1939, the strength of Soviet Russia was, no doubt, expanding faster than the strength of the German Reich, and that fact probably led Stalin, as it has led others before him, to the belief that time was on his side. This belief, coupled with distrust of the Western Powers, may have prompted him to conclude the pact of non-aggression and consultation signed by Ribbentrop and Molotov on August 23rd, 1939. This pact, which was the Soviet counterpart of the Munich agreement, abruptly reversed the process by which Soviet strength was overhauling the strength of the Third Reich.

This becomes clear if the relative positions of Germany and Russia in August, 1939, and in June, 1941—when Hitler attacked the Soviet Union—are compared. This comparison shows that the Soviet "Munich", like its Anglo-French predecessor, tipped the scales powerfully in Germany's favour. It is true that, during these twenty-two months, Russia gained control of the Baltic republics, of a part of Finland, of a stretch of territory taken from Poland, and of Bessarabia, recovered from Roumania. Against these acquisitions of territory, which were largely forfeited during the first month or six weeks of the Soviet-German war, Hitler had destroyed the French army, driven the B.E.F. from the Continent, gained control of Roumania and Bulgaria, and defeated Greece and Jugoslavia. In the process, the Germans had guarded themselves from the immediate danger of attack in the rear, or from the southern flank, by gaining the protection of powerful water obstacles, the English Channel and the Mediterranean. When Russia was attacked, Germany had already conquered practically all the Continental countries which might have been Russia's allies. More important still, the entire productive capacity of France, Belgium,

[1] When the author was in Russia in 1932, he was assured that peasants brought in to man the Moscow factories were apt to belabour their machines with hammers if they refused to work. They had always found this method very effective when dealing with their donkeys, and it did not, at first, occur to them that donkey engines might respond differently.

Holland, Denmark, Norway and the Balkans had been placed at the disposal of the German war machine. The *Wehrmacht* could draw its equipment and supplies, not only from the Krupp and Skoda works, but from the Schneider-Creusot, Renault and Citroen factories as well, to mention only the best known of the captured plants. Vast armies of slave labour had been pressed into Germany's service. With unimportant exceptions, all the raw materials, the coal, the oil, the iron and the bauxite, of the European Continent west of the Russian border, were at the enemy's disposal.

All this had been achieved at a certain cost. There had been casualties in the German army, and the *Luftwaffe* had been heavily defeated over the skies of Britain. But the German army was battle-hardened, and it was sustained by the confidence which it had acquired during a series of victorious campaigns. It is also true that, in June, 1941, Soviet Russia was considerably stronger than she had been in August, 1939. She had built new factories. She had continued the development of new industrial areas in the Urals and Western Siberia, protected by vast distances from the danger of attack. But if Russia was stronger in 1941, as a result of her "Munich"—just as Britain was stronger in 1939 as a result of hers—Germany had, in each instance, profited far more than her intended victim from the lapse of time.

To say all this is, of course, to emphasise once again the truly astonishing achievement of Soviet Russia in holding the German army when it had at its back the entire human and material resources of an enslaved Continent, and was supported by fifty satellite divisions. But it remains true that Soviet Russia, like Great Britain and France, had to pay the price of its essay in "appeasement". Great Britain had to wait until June, 1941, for the opening of an enduring "second front" in Europe. Soviet Russia did not get her second front until June, 1944. Thanks to the errors committed by all three major European Allies, Hitler was notably assisted in his policy of dealing with his victims "one by one". The successes which this method brought made it possible for the aggressors to spin out the Second World War for nearly six years.

It is also worth noting, even if it seems to involve something of a digression, that the Russian "Munich" was, from a moral point of view, quite as reprehensible as the Anglo-French "Munich". The point deserves to be made, because Soviet writers, who never weary of reproaching the Western Powers for concluding the Munich Agree-

ment, pass over in silence the fact that the Soviet "Munich" went a good deal further along the path of appeasement than its Anglo-French prototype. Indeed, it is perhaps fortunate for the future of Anglo-Soviet collaboration that neither side can legitimately reproach the other for its part in facilitating Hitler's aggression, since each had so large a share in making German aggression possible. The Russians could, it is true, point to the first "Munich" as the justification for the second. But the use to which Hitler put Chamberlain's attempt at appeasement should have warned the Soviet leaders against following Chamberlain's example.

Reference to the published text of the German-Soviet treaty of August 23rd, 1939, will show that the description of it as a "second Munich" is in no way unfair. Article II of the agreement reads: "If one of the contracting parties should *become the object of war-like action* on the part of a third power, the other contracting party will in no way assist the third power." Article IV reads: "Neither of the two contracting parties will join any group of powers which, directly or indirectly, is aimed against one of the two." [1]

Now, in diplomatic parlance, a country "becomes the object of war-like action" on the part of another country even if it is itself the attacker. Stripped of its diplomatic jargon, Article II of the treaty meant this: If Germany attacks any country other than the Soviet Union, Russia will stand aside. It is not surprising that, nine days after the signature of the treaty, Hitler attacked Poland. Article IV was a specific pledge on the part of the Soviet Union not to join any group of peace-loving powers aimed at the restraint of Fascist Germany. In both these respects, the Soviet "Munich" went very much further than its Anglo-French model.

It is true that powerful arguments can be marshalled in support of Russia's refusal of the Anglo-French offer of an alliance against Germany, though the *carte blanche* given to Hitler, and the self-denying ordinance by which Russia bound herself not to join a league of peace-loving States, is less easy to defend. It must be admitted that Russia, the first country to warn the world of the danger from Nazi Germany, had been consistently rebuffed by the British and French, even after the entry of the Germans into Prague. The Russians, admittedly, gained time, and they made better use of the respite than did either

[1] For the full text, see the *Bulletin of International News* for August, 1939 (published by the Royal Institute of International Affairs).

Great Britain or France. Yet it remains true of the Soviet "Munich" as it does of the British and French "Munich", that it was the Germans, and not the Allied appeasers, who profited most from the postponement of the struggle.

Thus, Hitler attacked Russia in June, 1941, in circumstances which could hardly have been more unfavourable to the Soviet Union. Russia had Allies, it is true, but, in the first critical months, the help which the Germans received from fifty satellite divisions was considerably greater than that which Russia received from the West. If German forces were tied down in the West, Russia could not afford to ignore the threat to her Far Eastern provinces from Japan. One may criticise Soviet diplomacy for placing Russia in such a disadvantageous position. The achievement of the Red Army in resisting Germany, at first with the minimum of help from the West, does, of course, demonstrate Soviet Russia's immense inherent strength.

With the ending of the war, and quite apart from the measures of restraint which will be imposed on Germany, the relative power of the Soviet Union must be expected to increase. In 1941, Russia, unlike Germany, was still far from having achieved her maximum strength. Germany could hope to rival the strength of Russia only if, once again, she succeeded in possessing herself of the industrial regions which lie just across her frontiers. Needless to say, the armed preponderance of Russia over Germany will be increased if important German industrial areas are separated from the Reich, or withdrawn from its effective control. We may assume, therefore, that Russia will not again tolerate an expansion of Germany, as she did between 1939 and 1941.

If population, natural resources and productive capacity determine the military power of a State, Soviet Russia will, in future, be as much stronger than Germany as Germany was stronger than France before the war. This will be true even if the formidable losses suffered by the Soviet Union are taken into account. Before the war, the population of the Soviet Union was increasing by between two and three millions a year. If this rate is maintained, even the loss of twenty million killed could be made good in less than ten years.

There is, therefore, this fundamental difference between the situation in 1918 and that resulting from the Second World War. After Versailles, France was stronger than Germany only for so long as Germany was unable to rearm and only so long as the Rhineland was demilitarised.

Whilst this state of affairs persisted, France was able to bring effective pressure to bear against Germany, as she proved when she occupied the Ruhr. Russia, on the other hand, will have the necessary strength to deal even with a rearmed Germany, and to do so, if need be, single-handed. In fact, it seems reasonable to suppose that she will not be ready to tolerate the rearmament of Germany, and that she would not, in fact, have to intervene against Germany single-handed.

For, with the conclusion of the third Franco-Russian alliance in December, 1944, a new European security system has taken shape. Great Britain had in 1942 signed a twenty years' treaty of alliance with the Soviet Union, and Russia has also concluded alliances with Czechoslovakia, Poland and Jugoslavia. Generalissimo Stalin suggested that the Poles might enter into a similar relationship with Great Britain and France. Belgium and Holland may well seek to ally themselves with France, and possibly with Great Britain also. When Mr. Churchill visited Paris in November, 1944, both he and General de Gaulle spoke of the "alliance" between Great Britain and France, from which it may be inferred that the forty-year-old *entente* between them is to be given a more precise form. The other European Allies may well seek to fortify themselves by concluding alliances with Soviet Russia, with Great Britain, or with both.

Despite the superficial similarity between the new security system and the French alliance system of the period between the two wars, there are very important differences between the two. In the first place, Great Britain is an "original member" and has accepted obligations which are not restricted to Western Europe, as were those of Locarno. Secondly, the Soviet Union, which adhered to the French security system only for the brief duration of the first Franco-Soviet Pact,[1] is a party to all the precise agreements so far concluded. Thirdly, whilst the French security system was directed against a Germany which was still the strongest European Power by a number of States each of which was inherently weaker than the Reich, Soviet Russia, the prime mover of the new security system, will, unquestionably, be the strongest military power of the European Continent.

Thus the new security system will not suffer from the weakness which proved so fatal to its predecessor. The French system was effective only for so long as Germany was kept disarmed, and France,

[1] This pact, concluded in 1935 and ratified in 1936, became a dead letter with the signature of the Munich agreement, and the isolation of Russia.

largely influenced by the British attitude, was unwilling to take the necessary steps, and run the necessary risks, to achieve this end. This time, although we can take it that the rearmament of Germany will not be tolerated, the new security system would be capable of surviving even if German rearmament were permitted. Another weakness of the French security system will be eliminated by the territorial settlement resulting from the war. Even when Soviet Russia had allied herself with France and Czechoslovakia, Russian intervention was rendered more difficult by the belt of Polish and Roumanian territory, stretching from the Baltic to the Black Sea, physically separating the territory of Russia and her Czechoslovak ally. The Russian demand for Lwów and the mixed Polish-Ukrainian territory which was in dispute between the Polish Government and the Soviet Union, is prompted by Russian determination to create a common frontier with Czechoslovakia.

It may be objected that, after her sacrifices and losses during the war, Russia would be too exhausted to contemplate action against Germany, particularly if, once again, Great Britain were opposed to such action. France, with her Allies, was in a position to arrest the development of German armed strength, at least when German rearmament was still in its early stages. But, weakened both morally and physically by the casualties of the 1914 war, the French were unwilling to accept the necessary sacrifices and risks. It can be argued that Russia, having suffered casualties incomparably greater than those which France sustained between 1914 and 1918, might react in the same way. It has even been suggested that, if she was not assured of British support, Russia might prefer an accommodation with Germany to the effort necessary for the restraint of the Reich. But, in France's case, special factors were at work which are not to be expected in Russia. France was obsessed with the fear of national extinction, a fear engendered quite as much by her declining birth-rate as by her casualties in the 1914 war. The memory of her defeat in 1870, and the consciousness that she had escaped defeat in 1914 only because she had fought as a member of a great coalition, weighed upon her. Pétain explained, and sought to excuse, the capitulation of 1940 with the words: "We had too few Allies". The French knew that, in a single-handed struggle with a rearmed Germany, there could be but one outcome. Furthermore, public opinion played in France a rôle which it cannot be expected to play in Soviet Russia. In March, 1936, the first reaction of the Sarraut

Government to the remilitarisation of the Rhineland was to declare that German guns could not be allowed to dominate Strasbourg. But the Government was deterred from taking forcible action by the manifest reluctance of the French public to sanction any step which might lead to war.

We can assume that, with the defeat of Germany, some ten or fifteen years will elapse before there is any fresh danger of aggression by the Reich. For, although there was much evasion of the Treaty before 1933, and clandestine rearmament was always on a scale sufficient to justify the French in their refusal to disarm to Germany's level, it was not until 1933, at the earliest, that German rearmament assumed really dangerous proportions. How strong will Soviet Russia be, say, in 1960? If the progress made between 1917 and 1941 is any guide, she will by then be enormously strong. Despite all the devastation, despite all the casualties of the years 1941-45, the increase in Russian power during the next fifteen years may well be as great as it was in the years 1917-41. There is, as Mr. Churchill has pointed out, no possible comparison between the achievements of the Russian army in the two wars—although it must be conceded that the fathers of the present Red Army men fought with astonishing patriotism and self-sacrifice for the Russia of Nicholas II and Rasputin. If the expansion of Soviet strength continues with the same rapidity as between the wars, unhampered, this time, by revolution, civil war and famine, we may count upon Russia to form the nucleus of a security system which will be well able to restrain Germany.

This fact must be taken into account in shaping our opinions upon the form of the peace settlement. Last time, the will to enforce the settlement was lacking, and this was due in great measure to the feeling that the physical force necessary for its maintenance was not sufficient. All the available indications suggest that this will not be so in the future.

Chapter Ten

GERMANY AFTER HITLER

UNTIL her defeat at the hands of the United Nations, Germany constituted a threat to the peace of Europe on account of her military and economic preponderance, and of the ideas which moulded her policy; ideas which, though they found their most extreme expression in National Socialism, were current long before the appearance of Adolf Hitler upon the political scene. There now appear to be good reasons for expecting that, quite apart from the measures of restraint which will be imposed upon the Reich by the peace settlement, Germany's physical capacity for mischief will not be as great as it was before.

In part, Germany's will to aggression itself flowed from the consciousness of strength, and of the opportunities for conquest which have led successive generations of Germans to consider rearmament, and even war itself, as an investment yielding dividends, which could, in their turn, be "ploughed back" into the business. The very fact that, by the war, Germany's physical capacity for aggression has been reduced, may be expected to react upon the German will to aggression. In 1914, and again in 1939, Germany went to war in the belief that victory could be won comparatively cheaply, and that the dividends resulting from victory, or rather from a series of victories, bloodless and otherwise, would more than justify the expenditure of blood and treasure which war would entail.

Can we, then, assume that Germany, after her defeat, and after the formidable ordeal through which she has passed, will be less prone to temptation, recognising how greatly her chances of successful conquest have been reduced by the reduction in the strength, relative and absolute, of the Reich? Is it justifiable to hope that, in this mood, the Germans will be amenable to a process of "re-education" from without? After the 1914 war, Lloyd George believed that the memory of the war would be sufficient to keep the peace until "those who have had personal experience of what war means have passed away".

Yet, in spite of the disappointment of the hopes which Lloyd George shared, in 1919, with so many of his countrymen, it is not, perhaps,

fanciful to suggest that Germany may react to her ordeal in the years 1939-45 as France reacted to the losses which she suffered during the Four Years' War. Between the two wars, French opinion was obsessed with the memory of casualties, and with the disparity between the population, and still more the birth-rate, in France and Germany. We may expect, after this war, an equal disparity, both in actual population and in population trends, between Germany and Russia. The Germans may perhaps feel, after this war, as the French felt after the last, that a new war would result in national extinction, and that the only course for Germany is to husband her remaining man-power. We cannot rule out the possibility of such a long-term development; even though we cannot assume that it will come about.

Much nonsense, and a certain amount of sense, has been written upon the subject of the "re-education of the German people". Mr. Leopold Schwarzschild has pointed, in his *Primer of the Coming World*,[1] to one practical difficulty. Since Russia and the Western Powers have widely differing views upon the sort of ideology which should replace National Socialism, it is difficult for them to agree upon the alternative to be instilled. But this does not necessarily preclude the process which the French describe by the word *désintoxiquer*, which can be translated "render sober", "disinfect", or, more vulgarly, "delouse". "Re-education" implies a double process, negative in the sense that the Germans are disabused of their favourite heresies, positive in the sense that they are induced to accept an alternative set of beliefs. Even if the Allies cannot agree upon the positive doctrines which they wish the Germans to accept—or alternatively, even if rival doctrines are propounded in the Russian and the Anglo-American zones of occupation—the three major Allies can at least agree upon a minimum programme. They can agree in combating the idea that the Germans are a "chosen race" destined to rule over lesser breeds; they can agree in seeking to root out anti-Semitism and racial Fascism. It will, admittedly, be less easy to correct the false teaching of history, for it is of little use to demonstrate the falsehood of certain historical interpretations unless others are put in their place. To put it differently, the major Allies may be in agreement about the books which are to be eliminated from German libraries, but they may not find it so easy to decide what is to be done with the vacant shelf-space. But if Mr. Schwarzschild goes too far when he argues that failure to agree upon

[1] pp. 113-18.

an alternative set of beliefs rules out all hope of "re-education" by the Allies, he does indicate certain very definite limitations to the process. Any project of re-education must surely set itself a higher aim than the mere creation of a vacuum in the minds of the Germans. Indeed, since the Germans may have been disabused of some of their beliefs by the fact of their defeat, there may be a vacuum already. But there is, at the very least, one point upon which the major Allies can agree, namely upon the need for persuading the Germans that, this time at any rate, they have, in fact, been defeated. Nor will it be sufficient to persuade the Germans of their final defeat, for it will still be possible for them to argue, with some justice, that they could be overwhelmed only by a vast coalition, infinitely more powerful than the Reich. It will be necessary to draw their attention to the fact that, in the Battle of Britain, they suffered a decisive defeat in 1940, when all the advantages of numbers and long preparation were on their side.

It is perhaps salutary, when considering the possibilities of "re-education", to ask oneself how the British public would react to re-education by a band of enthusiastic and well-intentioned foreigners. It is a healthy corrective to recall one's own reactions to the French or German master at school, with their odd accents and habits. Educating people, even when it is only a matter of teaching them a normal school subject, always calls for a great deal of understanding. All too often the teacher comes to be regarded as someone to be outwitted and thwarted. But, when the "educator" is a foreigner, seeking to replace one set of beliefs by another, the need becomes even greater.

Projects whereby non-German "educators" in their hundreds, and even in their thousands, would travel to Germany, and seek to instil into the rising generation a democratic approach to life, respect for treaties and abhorrence of everything for which Hitlerism stood, may then be ruled out. To their intended converts, such an incursion would, one suspects, appear frankly ridiculous. The Anglo-Saxon, in his rôle of preacher and missionary, has always appeared to the Continental peoples a highly irritating phenomenon. The returned German *émigré* would be equally suspect, and he would, in any case, have been out of touch with developments within the Reich for a considerable period. In the words of a thoughtful study of the question prepared by a committee of non-official British and Allied experts, and published under the title *Education and the United Nations*: "To

have any chance of success, positive reform must not come at the dictation of foreign conquerors. It must be a movement supported, or at least tolerated, by German opinion".

Does this mean, then, that we can re-educate the Germans only if they are already prepared to re-educate themselves, in which case our efforts seem hardly necessary? Is it true that, if the Germans are unwilling to be re-educated, no power on earth can compel them to alter their views? Or, on a third, and more likely hypothesis, namely that some Germans wish for "re-education" whilst others are opposed to it, would foreign interference only strengthen the hands of those who wish to sabotage the process of "re-education"? Put in these terms, the case against any attempt at re-education from without seems wellnigh unanswerable. If there is a genuine desire to root out Nazi teachings and Nazi text-books, and to drive Nazi teachers from the schools, then there is a very real danger of discrediting just those tendencies which we wish to foster. For it will be easy to represent our efforts as designed solely to weaken the will of the German people, and assist the task of keeping them in bondage. On the other hand, if the great majority of Germans end the war in an impenitent mood, no amount of interference or guidance from without will make the Germans into good democrats. Provide the most unexceptionable text-books—which will also, in all probability, seem exceedingly dull to their readers—and it will remain impossible to ensure that the teachers, if they are still Nazi at heart, will not continue to teach Hitler's doctrines. As the Germans have discovered to their chagrin in the occupied countries, no amount of external interference can alter the opinions of a people whose convictions are firmly held. But the really alarming hypothesis—and also the most probable—is the third, namely the situation in which the Germans themselves are divided, and foreign interference makes the sincere democrats, supposing them to exist in any substantial numbers, appear as quislings in the pay of Germany's conquerors.

Perhaps, however, the word "re-education" is itself misleading. For teachers and text-books, universities and professors, are by no means the only influences which form the opinions of a people, although they are very powerful influences. Although the rising generation may be considered the most important target for conversion, the ideas of children are influenced, sometimes positively and sometimes in the sense of a reaction, by the ideas of their parents.

Books, newspapers and wireless programmes have, perhaps, a greater influence than education in a strict sense. German opinion might have developed differently between the wars if the Press had not, to so large an extent, been controlled by men with the views of Hugenberg, a leader of the German Nationalist Party and a very important figure in the world of films. The broadcasts of the B.B.C., which, by all reports, have been very widely heard in Germany, may exercise an influence in the future, when their arguments are remembered against the background of defeat. One may even go as far as Mr. D. W. Brogan, who has written:[1] "If, in 1936, the Führer had not got away with the occupation of the Rhineland; if France, with British backing, had used her still existing, but fast dwindling, military superiority to call Hitler's bluff, the German people would have been politically educated in the wickedness of Nazism far more effectively than by an eternity of sermons, pamphlets, speeches and hurt reproaches for breach of faith".

It may well prove that the lessons of bitter experience—the lesson that Hitler has brought upon the Germans only misery, destruction, mass slaughter and defeat—will this time teach the Germans more than any plan for re-education. During the past twelve years, millions of Germans have been taught that war was a fine and noble thing, that Hitler was infallible, and that the Germans were destined to win any war in which they chose to engage. No amount of argument and instruction will disabuse them of these ideas half so effectively as the practical demonstration that they are not to be true. On this theory, the work of re-education was well and truly begun by the experience of four Russian winters and by the dropping upon Germany of some hundreds of thousands of tons of bombs. Defeat will continue the process, if, this time, it is recognised as such, and is not attributed, for example, to a "stab in the back" by the officers who planned Hitler's assassination on July 20th, 1944, or to the unwarrantable interference by Hitler in the conduct of strategy by the supreme command.

It will, of course, be objected that, between 1914 and 1918, Germany experienced the horrors of war—though not, of course, war on her own soil for any but the briefest period—and that war culminated in defeat, without the Germans being disabused of their favourite beliefs. By the same token, the defeat of Napoleon in 1814 did not prevent his triumphant return from Elba. The militarist element which had

[1] *Is Innocence Enough?* pp. 55-6.

begun the war, without encountering any opposition from the "moderates", were able to shift on to the shoulders of the Catholic Erzberger and the Socialist Scheidemann the responsibility for signing the armistice, which Ludendorff and the High Command had so insistently demanded, thereby laying the foundations for the "stab in the back" theory. German propagandists succeeded in persuading the Germans that their sufferings in the post-war period, although these were matched by the widespread unemployment in victorious Britain, were the product, not of the war, but of defeat and of the *Diktat* resulting from defeat. Although the sums paid in reparation by Germany were less than the sums received by her in the form of foreign credits, reparation payments were blamed for the economic distress which was, in fact, the direct consequence of the war.

It will be less easy, after a second catastrophe, for the Germans to persuade themselves that their defeat was the exception proving the rule of German invincibility. One of the chief aims of re-education propaganda should be to bring home to the Germans that the "overwhelming coalition", which brought about the defeat of Germany for the second time within a generation, was the inevitable consequence of German policy. If Bismarck's successors had been equally obsessed with his "nightmare of coalition", Germany's fate might have been very different. It is, perhaps, fortunate, for the prospects of a "change of heart" in Germany, that Hitler, by his extremely effective and ruthless suppression of opposition, has prevented any danger of the "fighting front" being "stabbed in the back" by the home front. If, as so many people confidently hoped at the beginning of the war, our political warfare had brought about an anti-Nazi revolution, the "stab in the back" theory would actually have been true.

After the 1914 war, the Germans appeared, for a time at least, to have learned something from the experience of their disaster. It is very significant that the Hohenzollern dynasty, which had seemed so firmly rooted in the hearts of the people that it had made the strongest European Power, lost, after 1918, practically its entire support among the German public. In 1939, the Germans began the war in a mood very different from that of 1914. The series of "peace offers", with which Hitler sought to obscure the plans of aggression which he had avowed in *Mein Kampf* a little too frankly even for some of his fellow-countrymen, was not intended solely for the outside world. Hitler has himself testified that the experience of the war years had had a

certain effect upon the German people, at least in the years immediately following 1918. He wrote in *Mein Kampf*:[1] "In the very first sentence which contained a criticism of Versailles, one was met by the stereotyped interruption: 'And Brest-Litowsk? Brest-Litowsk?' The crowd went on bellowing this again and again, until they grew hoarse, or the speaker finally gave up the attempt to persuade them. They would not hear or understand that Versailles was a shame and an outrage, or even that it meant an unheard-of robbery of our people." This "change of heart" lasted roughly twelve years, not thirty, as Lloyd George had prophesied. It is perhaps too much to attribute the rise of National Socialism to the evacuation of the Rhineland in 1930, although it is a fact that the first major Nazi success at the polls, when the number of deputies which the party returned leapt from 12 to 107, followed within a few months the withdrawal of Allied troops from German soil. But it can be argued that the effects of re-education by experience lasted just as long as it was apparent that the Allies were ready and able effectively to oppose any return by Germany to her former policies.

Furthermore, the "change of heart" was qualified by the steadfast refusal of the Germans, or most of them, to accept for their fallen rulers any share of responsibility for the First World War. This refusal may be attributed in part to the clause of the Versailles Treaty by which the German Government was compelled to place on record its acceptance of responsibility for the outbreak of the war. In view of this clause, and of the fact that the claim to reparation was based upon it, the Germans set themselves to prove, not simply that others were also responsible, but that Germany alone was guiltless of a war which had resulted from Allied jealousy of the new German Reich, and from the British policy of "encirclement". Once the Germans had persuaded themselves of their own innocence, the resulting explanation of the First World War was to prove of immense value to Göbbels in preparing German opinion for the second. For, when German aggressiveness, and the fears which it had aroused, had, once again, brought about encirclement, German propaganda could proclaim that "History was repeating itself"; that, once more, Great Britain was seeking to "keep Germany down" by the shameless policy of *Einkreisung*.

For a time at least, the 1914 war certainly released forces opposed to

[1] p. 519.

the dominant militarist trend in Germany. The vogue of *Sergeant Grischa* and of *All Quiet on the Western Front* is evidence of that. But the whole force of officialdom favoured the maintenance of the traditional pre-1914 ideas. The schoolmaster of Remarque's novel remained at his post—indeed, if he is still alive, it will not be easy to find a substitute for him after this war, in view of the acute shortage of teachers. Nor, for that matter, will it be easy as some suppose to "purge" the Nazi Ministry of Education, for you cannot improvise a civil service in a day, and, if you make the attempt, the results are likely to be so disastrous that the former civil service will, by comparison with the inefficiency of its successor, appear in a most favourable light.

Nor were the causes for the short duration of the partial "change of heart" to be found solely within Germany. It became plain to the Germans that the activities of the "Stahlhelm" and the "Black Reichswehr", and the veiled rearmament which began long before Hitler seized power, were unhampered by Allied intervention. Dissensions between the victors gave good grounds for hoping that a second attempt at conquest might fare better than the first. The process of "re-education" requires that the Germans be brought to recognise that they will not again have a chance of making war. Its prospects will mainly depend upon whether the Allies contrive to remain united, thereby forcing the Germans to seek a solution of their problems less catastrophic to themselves and to other peoples. They also depend very largely upon how the removal of National Socialism affects the individual lives of the Germans.

In no circumstances can the environment facing Germany after the war be a happy one. Hitler's successors will inherit from him a legacy of debt, destruction, impoverishment, and the hatred of the Continental peoples. Whatever its form, the peace will be a hard peace, for the good and sufficient reason that no peace is conceivable which would be acceptable both to Germany and to her neighbours. Indeed, it would certainly be unwise to allow the Germans to feel that they can go to war with the assurance that, if they win, the world is theirs, whereas, if they lose, they will be treated with maximum consideration. No future will seem to the Germans so attractive as the vision of European domination which Hitler offered them. They will not readily reconcile themselves to a position of equality with the "inferior" peoples of the East and the "decadent" peoples of the

West. Hitler offered the German people the position of "master race". To the professional classes, he offered the posts of colonial administrators in a vast European empire, with its "Protectorates" and "General-Governments". The German workers were to do the skilled, well-paid jobs. For the German peasant, there was to be abundant land in Poland, Czechoslovakia, Alsace-Lorraine and Russia. Furthermore, these promises were, to a large extent, fulfilled. Men of twenty-five have been holding jobs to which they could never have aspired, in the normal course of events, at fifty. As more and more steel concerns were taken over by the Hermann-Göring Works, more and more brilliant careers unfolded themselves before German eyes. The reversal of this process, the expulsion of the settlers, cannot please the Germans, who never thought it in any sense inappropriate that they should be the *Herrenvolk*. The Allies cannot, and will not wish to, give the Germans a future which seems in any way as appetising as this half-realised vision of the Promised Land.

The Allies may expect, therefore, to find a good many sulky, disappointed and disgruntled people, torn from careers of brilliant promise, among their pupils. There may be other trends as well, not all of them so unfavourable to the prospects of re-education. Certain tendencies were discernible before the war, and some of them may have become more marked in the interim. There was, for example, a certain tendency to react against the intrusion of politics into every sphere of activity. Even among the younger generation of Germans, who had grown up largely under Nazi influences, the progressive extension of the sphere of politics appeared, in some instances at least, to be becoming irksome. Work had been Nazified, sport had been Nazified, leisure had been Nazified, science had been Nazified, literature had been Nazified, National Socialism had been set up as an alternative religion. There was even a meeting, announced on a Munich hoarding, on the subject of "The rôle of the hairdresser [1] in the Third Reich". One may perhaps expect, therefore, a reaction, not merely against National Socialist politics, but against politics as such, a desire to recover for the individual successive spheres of activity into which Party and State have encroached during the past twelve years. Against this must be set the fact that, for the same period, the Germans have been discouraged from making up their own minds—a process which they have never much enjoyed—and

[1] The word used was *Haarkünstler* or "Hair artist".

have been urged to believe in the duty of blind obedience. The dominance of politics is often resented, and yet the ending of the dictatorship may leave a vacuum beyond the power of the individual to fill.

Twelve years of Goebbels' propaganda have left many Germans sceptical, disbelieving the written and the spoken word, whether it came from the Propaganda Ministry or from Allied wireless stations. Twelve years of "pep-talks" and grandiloquent pseudo-idealism may be expected to have bred a good deal of cynicism. Even amongst the most indoctrinated Nazis, whose illusions remain, and who constituted a high proportion of the prisoners taken, there was found a curious blend of fanaticism and cynicism. Side by side with this attitude is a state of complete detachment, a feeling that politics are other peoples' business, and a matter with which the individual has no concern. It is to be hoped that, in a great many cases, the fanaticism of the ardent Nazi will not survive the demonstration of Hitler's dismal failure. But even after the 1914 war, when the process of indoctrination had not gone so far, there were plenty of recruits for the various *Freikorps*, which divided their time between fighting on Germany's frontiers and in the Baltic and the assassination of political opponents such as the moderates, Erzberger and Rathenau, and Communists like Karl Liebknecht and Rosa Luxemburg. Cynicism, suspicion of every ideal and every faith, must be expected to persist, as will the physical exhaustion resulting from six years of war and nearly six years of feverish rearmament.

The authors of *Education and the United Nations* have pointed to some of the practical difficulties in the way of re-education. The shortage of teachers will be greater in Germany than in this country, because casualties have been higher. Every library will be stocked with books reflecting the Nazi *Weltanschauung*. A very thorough attempt has been made to eliminate all books which do not conform to Hitler's tenets. Universities in the liberated countries have a first claim upon the printing presses and the stocks of books which the free world is in a position to provide. Many universities in occupied territory were closed, and those which have remained open were cut off from books and publications in the outside world.

There will still be opportunities for steering education into channels more conducive to the development of a civilised outlook. Through the broadcasts of the B.B.C. we are able to bring before the Germans

an alternative approach to world problems. A beginning has already been made with the collection of text-books, already in use before 1933, to be reissued to the German schools. The Allied control commission is in a position to prevent the re-emergence of para-military organisations and of youth movements which seek to inculcate a Nazi and militarist outlook. They are able to report upon the tendencies prevalent in German education and in the German press and wireless. The publication of such reports, which would carry a greater weight than press despatches, would assist opinion in the Allied countries to follow the trends of German opinion. Yet it is still necessary to avoid the impression of a permanent, foreign-organised heresy hunt, which would popularise just those doctrines which we seek to eradicate. In the mood engendered by defeat, German opinion may accept, and even welcome, a short-term policy of drastic interference. But, as this mood wears off, too much interference would only act as an irritant. For a comparatively brief period, we may be wise to install our own broadcasters in the building of the German Broadcasting Company. It is certainly necessary to dispossess Nazis and Nationalists of their newspapers and of their holdings in the German film industry. But, having tried to ensure that the means of influencing opinion are in the most suitable hands, our interference will have to be reduced to a minimum if there is to be any chance of a genuine "change of heart", which goes further than the rather obvious discovery that Hitler and his associates have mismanaged the affairs of their country.

In the mood resulting from their defeat, the Germans may be prepared for a time to consider anything preferable to the continuation of the war. For a time, German opinion may be malleable, and the German public receptive to new ideas. Then the Germans will begin to be influenced by the conditions resulting from defeat. They will be dissatisfied with their lot, and with the settlement resulting from the policies which Hitler pursued, and which they whole-heartedly approved so long as those policies seemed to promise success. They have drawn upon themselves the resentment of the whole European continent. Because it is impossible to reconcile their own territorial claims with the claims of their neighbours, to the satisfaction of all parties, they will resent the settlement. Indeed, they would very probably come to resent it even if the Allies went to great lengths to meet every conceivable German claim, even at the cost of Germany's

neighbours. One of the first tasks of the Allied re-educators will be to bring home to the Germans the fact that their inevitable hardships result from the policies pursued by their leaders with their enthusiastic approval. It will be the task of the Allies to demonstrate to the Germans that aggressive war has inevitable consequences for the defeated aggressor, and that they cannot, this time, salve their consciences by laying at the door of the victorious Allies conditions which are, in fact, the result of the war which they themselves began.

In attempting to re-educate the Germans, the Allies will face three distinct tasks. They will have to root out Nazi faith and practice; they will have to drive home the lesson that Hitlerism brought defeat in war; and, equally important, they will have to make the German people recognise that it also gave rise to the hardships and privations of to-day and to-morrow. There is every reason to suppose that it may not be so very difficult to secure at least lip service in support of the first two propositions. But the essential lesson is the last one. The aftermath of the war will be hard in every country. In many of the United Nations, cruelly overrun and devastated by the German armies, recovery will be slow and painful. If the Germans are to live peacefully with their neighbours, they must learn the right lesson from the hard experience of the peace as much as from the experience of defeat: that the bitter aftermath of war is the inescapable result of aggression.

Chapter Eleven

A JUST AND ENDURING PEACE?

PUBLIC discussion in Great Britain of the settlement with Germany has crystallised into two opposing schools of thought. Each school seeks to draw upon the experience of the years 1919-39. The first believes that, now the Germans have been delivered from the Nazi tyranny, they can be brought to co-operate with the other European peoples, and favours a moderate peace. It argues that it is possible to "kill German nationalism by kindness". It warns the public against imposing upon the Reich peace terms which would inevitably drive even moderate Germans into opposition to the rest of Europe. The same point of view had been pressed at the Paris Peace Conference by Lloyd George.[1]

Inevitably, this line of argument finds a great deal of support in the Anglo-Saxon countries, and it will find even more as the memories of the war are blurred by the passage of time. If the victors could bring about the genuine collaboration of the Germans in the pursuit of peace and of a higher standard of living for the European peoples, a settlement based upon real consent would be infinitely preferable to a peace which depends upon the forcible restraint of the Germans for an indefinite period. Nothing could be so disastrous as to impose a stern peace if we lack the will or the means to enforce it. The Versailles settlement failed to endure because the Anglo-Saxon countries, regarding it as unjust, were unwilling to enforce it. If this happened the Germans might, once again, be able to re-emerge as a military power.

But against this risk must be set another: the danger that, by renouncing physical guarantees, by seeking to give the Germans the maximum opportunity for peaceful development and to deprive them of any legitimate grievance, we should, in fact, leave them free to prepare fresh crimes against their neighbours.

At Versailles, Clemenceau indicated the lengths to which the Allies would have to go if they wished to "appease" Germany. The minor frontier rectifications which Lloyd George advocated would not suffice. To-day the United Nations are faced with the same dilemma

[1] Cf. p. 38.

that arose at Versailles. They would have to renounce all security arrangements, such as frontier modification and unilateral disarmament, if they sought the willing and permanent consent of German opinion.

If one thing emerges clearly from the study of the inter-war period, it is the folly of seeking to compromise between a "peace of appeasement" and a "peace of security". The Versailles settlement, a compromise between the views of Lloyd George and of Clemenceau, in fact failed to achieve the objectives of either. It failed to give to the victors the physical security which France demanded, but neither did it leave the Germans in a co-operative mood. Yet, surprisingly enough, it is just such a compromise between a peace of security and a peace aiming at appeasement which the advocates of a moderate settlement are to-day demanding. If the aim of the peace is to be the winning of German co-operation, then the justice of Clemenceau's standpoint must be accepted. It would be logical, if we seek to appease Germany, to reject any form of unilateral disarmament. Germany should be left free to rebuild her army, her navy and her air force, to develop submarines, flying-bombs, rockets and any other destructive devices which German ingenuity can invent. For, in fact, very few peace treaties have contained disarmament provisions, and where such clauses have been imposed, they have never yet been enforced for any length of time. Prussia was disarmed after Jena, but Scharnhorst and Gneisenau succeeded in evading the restrictions which Napoleon had imposed upon their country. The demilitarisation of the Black Sea, imposed "in perpetuity" on Russia by the victors in the Crimean War, in fact only endured from 1856 till 1870. By 1933, the Germans had given up even the pretence of observing the disarmament clauses of the Versailles Treaty, which they had, in fact, begun to violate long before. We shall certainly be disappointed if we imagine that the Germans could even be consoled for the denial of full military sovereignty by the prospect of economic well-being. No people will, in the long run, voluntarily accept a prohibition upon rearmament in a world in which others are free to arm. Disarmament would obviously be resented by the militarists; but it would be equally unacceptable to moderate opinion, since it would imply a refusal to accept the *bona fides* of the moderates.

If we bank upon the prospect of a satisfied and co-operative Germany, we should, of course, have to leave untouched the fabric of the "Greater Reich" which resulted from the *Anschluss* with Austria.

We should have to leave the Sudeten area within the frontier of an armed Germany, even if this meant the risk of a fresh occupation of Prague. We should, of course, have to leave East Prussia within Germany, even at the risk that it might again provide a springboard for an attack on Poland. But, even then, there would be no certainty of conciliating German opinion. In 1914, the Germans had Poznán (Posen) and Strasbourg as well, and yet even this state of affairs did not dissuade them from launching the First World War.

In practice, there are, even amongst the advocates of a moderate peace in this country, few, if any, who would be prepared to go to these lengths, that is to say, to the only lengths which would offer a reasonable prospect of conciliating German opinion. Very few of the supporters of a moderate peace are prepared to go further than the Atlantic Charter, with its provision that the aggressors shall be disarmed, whilst the peace-loving States will keep the means of enforcing the settlement. The reason for this is obvious; whilst there are many who hope for a change of heart in Germany, and who wish the peace to rest upon the willing co-operation of victors and vanquished, very few are prepared to gamble everything upon this hope. Yet, if there is to be any chance of achieving success in this way, we must be prepared to gamble everything—to renounce every physical safeguard—in the hope that German co-operation can be won. There are, it is true, some who would support physical guarantees for a limited period, but it generally turns out that they wish to relax their physical guarantees at the very time when the exhaustion resulting from the war, and the recent memory of its terrors, would be wearing off in Germany—say ten or fifteen years after the conclusion of peace.

We must, therefore, rule out any attempt to combine physical safeguards against Germany with an attempt to conciliate her. The attempt to conciliate Germany would mean a weakening of the safeguards. The insistence upon safeguards would render the attempt at conciliation ineffective. Either we must make a peace which will be accepted by the Germans as just, in which case we must sacrifice to German conceptions of justice the rightful claims of our European Allies, or else we must devote our whole efforts to the attempt to give them physical security. This also means seeking security for ourselves, since past experience has shown that every successful aggression by Germany against a European country enhances her ability eventually to attack Great Britain.

It might seem superfluous to insist that the choice between a peace of conciliation and a peace of security will depend quite as much upon Continental as upon British opinion. But this point must be insisted upon, for, in the British press, the form of the settlement is very frequently discussed as though the sole aim was to make a peace which British opinion will be prepared to support and enforce. This consideration was, it is true, of the first importance in 1918. After the 1914 war, the French felt that the prospects of permanent enforcement depended very largely upon whether British and American opinion would be behind the peace. They sacrificed measures of security which seemed to them vital because they hoped that Great Britain would be prepared to work with them for the enforcement of a peace shaped with due regard to British wishes. The Russians, on the other hand, will feel that there is every prospect of enforcing the peace even if Great Britain stands aside. They will feel this, not only because they will be conscious of their own great strength, but because they will know that they can reckon on the assistance, at the least, of their Continental Allies.

There have been abundant indications of the views of the other Continental peoples on the sort of treaty which should be imposed upon Germany. General de Gaulle has insisted upon France's right to garrison the Rhineland, in perpetuity "from end to end". France may, in addition, lay claim to the Saar, as a means of augmenting her own industrial potential and weakening that of Germany. In the East, the Poles require as a minimum the surrender of East Prussia, whilst the Warsaw Government, evincing a curious blend of chauvinism and of readiness to appease elsewhere, has demanded the Oder-Neisse line. M. van Kleffens has advanced, on behalf of Holland, a claim for German territory to provide a livelihood for the very large numbers of Dutch farmers whose land has been wilfully inundated by the Germans with salt water, robbing it of its fertility for many years to come. The Belgians may be expected to support the French claim to military control of the Rhine. There is no reason to doubt that these demands advanced by various Continental governments enjoy the support of their peoples. On these matters Communists and men of the Right—in so far as the Right has survived in Europe—are in agreement. If there is opposition to a hard or extreme peace, it comes only from an element among the Socialists.

Against this background, the argument that the only enduring peace

will be one which, in twenty or thirty years' time, continues to command the broad approval of British opinion must be re-examined. According to this argument, a harsh peace would eventually force Germany into dangerous opposition. At the same time, it is argued that the British public, though it might sanction such a peace under the influence of "war psychosis", would react against it when war-time passions cooled. In view of the British attitude, it is claimed that the Allies would once more tolerate the abrogation of the Treaty provisions until the point was reached where Germany could be restrained only at the price of a third world war. According to this argument, a "strong peace" would endure only for so long as the major Allies were in agreement. But it is assumed that British and American opinion would eventually react against the enforcement of a treaty held to be unjust.

This is, of course, precisely what happened after the last war. American opinion, as reflected in the Senate, refused to follow President Wilson in underwriting Article X of the League Covenant, with its undertaking that League members would "respect and preserve as against external aggression the territorial integrity and existing political independence of all members of the League". Great Britain, although it subscribed to the League Covenant, was not, in fact, prepared to support France in guaranteeing the territorial *status quo* in Eastern Europe. Since the United States and, to a lesser extent, Great Britain, had contracted out of the obligation to maintain the Peace settlement, France was left to enforce it with such help as she could obtain from her Continental Allies. Her physical and moral strength did not prove equal to this task.

In one sense, of course, it is true that greater risks could be taken this time than last in the hope of achieving a settlement which the Germans would consider just. Since Germany's relative strength has declined after this war, her capacity for mischief has declined also, even if her will to aggression persists, or revives after the lapse of years. But unhappily for the Germans, they have given the peoples of Continental Europe such an opportunity of observing the vices to which the *Herrenvolk* is prone that few people in the territories which have been occupied by the Germans are prepared to gamble on a permanent change of heart.

To many people, perhaps to most people, in Great Britain, the only peace which is likely to endure is a just peace. It may prove exceed-

ingly difficult to arrive at a just peace, and even more difficult to arrive at a peace which the Germans consider just. But, in the long run, the only peace worth enforcing is a peace which seeks to achieve justice within the measure of the humanly possible. This belief is not shared by the Continental peoples, and, though this may be distressing to British opinion, it is wise to recognise this fact. For, in the opinion of most people on the Continent, the Germans do not share our anxiety to achieve a just peace. They proclaim their concern for justice, and even for a "higher justice" when they feel that they are themselves being treated unfairly. But, when the Czechs suffer injustice, and the Germans inflict it, their concern for justice abruptly ceases. You will search in vain for any parallel, in German history, to the championship of the Boers by British Liberals during the South African War, or to the sympathy felt for the aspirations of the Irish Nationalists at a time when there seemed no reason to expect that the Irish would be able to get for themselves by their own efforts what they were demanding from the British. Hitler's policy was approved quite as enthusiastically when he was enslaving the Czechs as when he was removing the real, or supposed, injustices of Versailles. To the Continental peoples, there is an analogy between the problem of a Fascist party in a democratic state and the problem of Germany in Europe. When it is in opposition, a Fascist party demands all the rights accorded to a minority in a parliamentary country. But its object is to eliminate these very rights so soon as it has achieved power. Precisely the same appears to the European peoples to be true of Germany.

In the course of the past five and a half years, the peoples of the Continent have had plenty of opportunity for forming their own estimate of the Germans. It may be the right estimate, or it may be the wrong estimate, but the opinions formed during the occupation will prove to be firmly held. If the Continental peoples have to choose between a peace which is objectively "just" and a peace which promises to endure because it denies to the Germans the means of upsetting it, they will opt for the latter. If they are told that "you can't keep eighty million Germans down", they will reply that, in that case, eighty million Germans may very probably seek, once again, to hold down twice or three times that number of Europeans. Had the Germans succeeded, it is probable that their domination over Europe would have lasted for many generations, even if it did not endure for a "thousand years".

British opposition to such a peace, either during the negotiations or subsequently, will be attributed to our good fortune in escaping the ordeal of invasion and occupation. Alternatively, a more sinister interpretation may be placed upon our attitude. It may be assumed that our attitude, defended on the highest moral principles, is, in fact, prompted by a desire to keep Germany strong as a counter-weight to the Soviet Union.

Continental opinion, like British opinion, has formed the verdict that the Treaty of Versailles was an unworkable compromise between the wish to gain German compliance and the resolve to keep Germany weak. The choice, therefore, is between a treaty which is harder than Versailles and a treaty which is softer than Versailles. There is no doubt what the choice will be. Furthermore, whereas, for British opinion, the harder the treaty the less likely that it will be enforced, Continental opinion will be readier to enforce a hard treaty than a lenient treaty. Before the war, British opinion was only ready to resist Germany when it became apparent that the Germans did not share our views of justice, and this discovery was only made when the Reich had already freed itself from all the disabilities imposed upon it at Versailles. But French readiness to enforce the Treaty waned with the sacrifice of each successive guarantee of security. For the French, who had never shared the belief that Hitler's aim was to bring about just relationships between the European peoples, were increasingly deterred from resistance by the recognition that the cost of opposition was steadily rising.

After the First World War, even the French doubted their ability to enforce the Versailles settlement without the additional guarantees which Great Britain was unwilling to sanction. But, after the defeat of Hitler, the Russians, the French and the other Continental peoples do not doubt their ability to restrain a weakened Germany, or even a rearmed Germany, though they are determined to see that Germany will not again be permitted to rearm. Thus, for Great Britain, the choice is not between a treaty which will be enforced with British aid, and one which will be abandoned if British aid is not forthcoming. The question is whether the Treaty will be enforced with British aid and support, or without it. The withholding of British support would not mean that the Treaty would go the way of Versailles. It would only mean that Great Britain had isolated herself from her European Allies.

Chapter Twelve

THE SETTLEMENT WITH GERMANY

THE first criterion, in assessing the Peace settlement, must be to decide whether it provides a basis for the security of Europe, offering to Germany's neighbours protection against the danger of renewed attack. A peace treaty which fails to fulfil these conditions will be unacceptable both to Germany's immediate neighbours and to those more distant countries which would be threatened if the Reich, by subjugating its neighbours and gaining control of their war potential, were to re-emerge as a strong military power. No peace treaty can, of itself, guarantee the security of Europe and the world. The Versailles Treaty disarmed Germany, and yet, within twenty years, the Reich was stronger than it had been in 1914. Germany could be broken up by the Treaty into a number of small States, but dismemberment would be effective only for so long as it was enforced. Germany can be de-industrialised, but she will remain weak only for so long as she is prevented from rebuilding her industries. If the Versailles Treaty had been enforced, and, in accordance with its provisions, Germany had been prevented from rearming and from reoccupying the Rhineland, there would have been no second German War. The enforcement of the settlement is as important as the settlement itself, and enforcement requires that the provisions of the Treaty shall be understood and the need for their maintenance accepted.

Security against Germany must be the first aim of the settlement, and, in the conditions resulting from the Second World War, security arrangements for Western Europe will require closer attention than similar arrangements in the East. It has already been suggested that, in contrast to the situation which resulted from the Four Years' War, the barrier to the East of Germany will be stronger than the barrier in the West. In the East, Poland and Czechoslovakia will be able to draw upon the immense power of the Soviet Union, and their combined strength should be sufficient to dissuade the Germans from again striking eastwards. In the West, a weakened France will be a standing

temptation to Germany. Any threat to France would immediately endanger Great Britain and, less directly, the United States and Russia also. In the age of rockets and flying-bombs, Great Britain cannot afford to allow any part of the West European coastline or its hinterland to fall into the hands of a hostile Power. Spain, dominated by an enemy Power, would endanger British communications with the Far East, India, Africa and Latin America. But the lesson to be drawn from the successful forcing of the Channel on June 6th, 1944, is even more important. Between the Norman Conquest and the invasion of Normandy, the obstacle of the Channel was never forced, in either direction, against opposition. The fact that this operation proved technically possible in 1944 underlines the danger that Great Britain herself might be successfully invaded across the Channel.

"T. 124", the anonymous author of a book entitled *Sea Power*, has suggested that, because France gave up the struggle in 1940, Great Britain should, in future, place no reliance upon France and should abandon the whole policy of alliance with her which was the mainstay of British diplomacy from 1904 until 1940. But the very fact that France has been weakened makes it all the more necessary that her reduced strength should be reinforced. The weakness of French policy between the wars was attributable, in no small measure, to doubts of British support. In 1940, Great Britain shared with France the consequences of the French failure to maintain the military position which she had won in 1919. That failure was due, at least in part, to the knowledge that British support would not be forthcoming. Experience has shown that the effective mastery of the Rhine by a friendly France, which Great Britain was unwilling to concede in 1919, is an essential condition of British security. Security against Germany requires, in the last resort, that Germany's neighbours shall be in a position to intervene effectively if there is evidence of German rearmament. Effective French control of the Rhine, approved and backed by Great Britain, should provide a guarantee that the Ruhr and the whole Rhenish-Westphalian industrial area will not again be used for the preparation of aggressive war.

In view of Germany's aggressive policies, other measures, rejected in 1919, will be necessary in the paramount interests of security. At Versailles, the idea of transferring East Prussia to Polish sovereignty was rejected on grounds of self-determination. The creation of the Polish corridor, for which there was historical precedent, was accepted

as the fairest compromise between German and Polish claims. A genuine attempt was made to render tolerable to the Germans this severance of East Prussia from the rest of the Reich, and a traveller who passed through the Corridor by train was hardly aware that he had ever left German territory. If there was any ground for hoping that the Germans would genuinely accept as a final settlement a restoration of the 1919 frontiers between East Prussia and Poland, there would be a strong case for a return to them. But neither the German Government nor the German people have ever, at any time, accepted the principle that frontiers in this region should correspond to the racial composition of the disputed territory. They have always considered that the only acceptable solution is one which would ignore the legitimate claims of the Poles. Furthermore, it became plain in 1939 that German control of East Prussia made Poland a strategic absurdity; it made it possible for the Germans to cut off Poland from access to the Baltic seaboard.

Poland will be required, by the terms of the settlement, to surrender large tracts of territory, which were formerly Polish, to the Soviet Union. Even if we agree that the Curzon line is a fairer frontier than that which was set up after the last war, considerable numbers of Poles, in the cities of Lwów, Vilna and elsewhere, will be left on the wrong side of the frontier. They have a valid claim to territory taken from Germany. In the future, the rapid upward trend of the Polish population, temporarily interrupted by war-time losses, will, in all probability, be resumed. Germany, on the other hand, will have suffered a considerable net loss of population, even when the repatriation of Germans from the South Tirol and the Baltic States is taken into account, and there seems no reason for expecting that the artificially fostered rise in the population of Germany will be maintained indefinitely.

There is a strong case, on economic and strategic grounds, for the surrender by Germany of the German part of the Silesian industrial area and of East Prussia. There is no case for the surrender of German Pomerania into the bargain, least of all if the population is to be expelled. The loss by the Germans of Pomerania, including the harbour of Stettin, cannot be defended on racial, strategic or economic grounds. The unnecessary herding together of great numbers of Germans within the Reich, particularly at a time when German industrial areas have been so largely destroyed by air bombard-

ment and ground fighting, would create economic conditions from which the whole of Europe, and not Germany alone, would suffer.

It is Germany's misfortune, but it is also Germany's responsibility, that Nazi policy, enthusiastically supported by the people of Germany when it seemed to promise success, has brought into the field of discussion treaty proposals which, a quarter of a century ago, would have appeared fantastic. In 1919, the suggestion that the German-speaking population of the Sudetenland might be evicted wholesale would never for a moment have been considered; but, by using this population as a fifth column, and as an instrument for the dismemberment of Czechoslovakia, Hitler has created the demand for its ejection. In 1919, the "de-industrialisation" or "pastoralisation" of Germany was unthinkable; but, by bringing home to Europe the dangers inherent in Germany's industrial strength, Hitler has created the demand for the destruction of Germany's "industrial potential", which is also her "war potential". So there has arisen the demand that the size of Germany should be reduced by the loss of the territory east of the Oder, and perhaps also of the Saar and the lands west of the Rhine. Because Germany's neighbours have been compelled to think of German minorities as potential fifth columns, there has come the further demand that millions of additional Germans should be crammed into this smaller Reich.

The attaining of a sufficient margin of security against Germany must clearly be the overriding criterion in judging such proposals. But it cannot be the only consideration. The security of Europe would unquestionably be enhanced if the Ruhr were totally destroyed as an industrial area, and if the Germans were prevented from rebuilding it. But the cost to Europe would be the loss of a great source of natural wealth, and the standard of living, not only of the Germans, but of Europe as a whole, would suffer in consequence. The security of Czechoslovakia will be enhanced if the entire Sudeten German minority are driven across the frontier into Germany—although the existence of that minority is a danger only if Germany is strong enough to exploit it. But the cost to the Czechs of expelling the Sudetens must be the loss of skilled workers whom they can ill spare. In the light of their experience at the time of Munich, the Czechs cannot be blamed for demanding the expulsion of their potential fifth column. But the added security which they thereby gain will have to be bought at a price.

A more far-reaching proposal for the weakening of Germany, the splitting-up of the Reich into a number of small or medium-sized States, deserves to be considered carefully.

Inevitably, many people on the Continent hanker after a return to the divided Germany of 1866. Forty million Frenchmen would no longer be threatened by nearly twice as many Germans, united in a single State. The Roman Catholic South and West of Germany might—one cannot say more than "might"—be prepared to act as a counterbalancing force to the Protestant North and East. An independent, neutralised Rhineland would no longer provide the Reich with "the most powerful offensive military base the world has ever seen".[1] If the German Reich were spontaneously to disintegrate into the patchwork of small States which existed before the unification of 1870, there would undoubtedly be many people, in this country and elsewhere, who would feel that a major cause of European conflict had disappeared. The multiplication of frontiers, the "Balkanisation" of Germany, would, it is true, find little favour with the economists. But pre-Bismarck Germany, with the courts of Munich and Dresden vying with one another in the splendour of their palaces and the excellence of their art collections and of their operas, was undoubtedly more civilised than the unified Reich which Bismarck bequeathed to Europe. Even if the Germans are not prepared voluntarily to dissolve the Reich, ought the victors to break it up by force and prevent any future unification?

Many people in France favour such a solution, but it was also a Frenchman, M. André Géraud (Pertinax),[2] who pointed out the folly of supposing that, because France has suffered three wars since the unification of Germany, it would be wise to "recreate a patchwork of secondary States". "I have always been struck", he said, "in reading the diplomatic correspondence relating to the origins of the war of 1870, by the warnings which, in the months and weeks preceding Sedan, our diplomatic agents in Germany addressed to Napoleon III, to put him on his guard against too much confidence in South Germany, in Austria, in the coalition which, it was said, was forming to resist Prussia." If separatism was on the wane in 1870, nothing which has happened since suggests any revival of it. Mr. F. A. Voigt has

[1] Cf. Chapter Five.

[2] In an address delivered to the Centre d'Etudes de Politique Etrangère on January 18th, 1940, published in *Politique Etrangère*, March, 1940.

pointed out [1] how the dethronement of the Hohenzollerns contributed to the centralisation of Germany. For it was followed by the disappearance of the Bavarian, Saxon and other dynasties, which had always represented a centrifugal force in the Reich. The dethronement of the Habsburgs in Austria had the same effect.

Even in Austria, where separatism was most to be expected, there was little evidence of it between the wars. It is true that Austria's experience of the consequences of union with Germany may now have made independence seem more attractive than it did between 1918 and 1933. But Socialist Austria voted overwhelmingly for union with the predominantly Socialist German Reich, and the Catholic Austria of Seipel concluded the abortive customs union of 1931 with the Catholic Centre Government of Brüning. To-day, many Austrians may reflect that, within eighteen months of the *Anschluss* of March 11th, 1938, Austria had been dragged into war as a result of an essentially North German quarrel with the Poles. Even the Austrian Nazis, some of whom contemplated a sort of "National-Socialist Home Rule" rather than complete *Gleichschaltung*, may have been disagreeably surprised by the form which the *Anschluss* took. But in Austria, as in Bavaria, separatism was, to a large extent, identified with support for the Habsburg dynasty whose rule has been interrupted for more than twenty-five years, and which is, in consequence, unlikely to recover its former prestige, even if a restoration were practical politics. Whenever, during the inter-war years, there were, in Germany and Austria, régimes of roughly the same political outlook, there was among the Austrians a desire for union with Germany. They regarded their separate existence as being mainly the result of a historical accident. The independence movement, which developed between 1933 and 1939, was directed against the Nazi régime, and against Hitler's anti-Catholic policy, rather than against the idea of union as such. Even a common opposition against National Socialism was not sufficient to bridge the gap between Socialists and Catholics in Austria.

If there was little sign of separatism in Austria—at least before the Austrians had experienced the reality of the *Anschluss*—there was even less sign in Bavaria. It is true that the Bavarian sometimes addresses the Berliner as "*Du Sau Preuss*", "You swine of a Prussian". It is also true that even the Nazi hierarchy in Bavaria has often reacted strongly against what it considered unwarrantable interference from the Prussian

[1] Cf. F. A. Voigt, *Unto Caesar*.

capital. Up to 1933, the position of the Catholic-Monarchist "Bavarian People's Party" (*Bayerische Volkspartei*) was still strong. But the party was regionalist rather than separatist, being little more than the Bavarian branch of the Catholic Centre Party. Munich was, after all, the birthplace of the Nazi movement, and the scene of Hitler's earliest successes—if also of his most catastrophic failure in the field of home politics.[1] Such local patriotism as remains is little more than a sentimental hankering after the "good old days" and the pageantry of the Wittelsbach court. To these feelings, the personal popularity of Prince Rupprecht of Bavaria may have added something.

In the Rhineland, from which the French hoped so much after the 1914 war, there is not even a local dynasty to provide a focus for anti-Prussian and separatist feelings. The Rhineland has, of course, its separate individuality, as Yorkshire has. It is, furthermore, a preponderantly Catholic region in a preponderantly Protestant Prussia. At the Versailles Conference, the French expressed, in their memoranda to the British and American Governments, their belief that the Rhineland could be detached from the Reich by the offer of economic advantages and of relief from its share of German reparation payments. But the short and unsavoury history of the "independent Rhineland republic" does not augur well for the future of Rhenish separatism. In 1935, the Catholic working-class population of the Saar had the chance to retain their democratic liberties and the German character of their territory if they voted for the *status quo*, but they preferred to vote, by a ninety per cent. majority, for inclusion in the Fascist, neo-pagan Reich.

It seems, therefore, that any voluntary dissolution of the Reich, at least of pre-1938 Germany, can be ruled out, whatever inducements are offered to the territory on the fringes of the Reich in the hope of stimulating centrifugal tendencies. There may be a desire for some measure of decentralisation, but the wish to remain united must be taken for granted. There is particularism in some parts of Germany, just as there is particularism in Wales and Brittany. This is, in general, directed against Prussia. In Austria's case, particularism may have grown as a result of the *Anschluss*, of the invasion of Austria by a horde of officials from the "Old Reich" and of the experience of having to fight Germany's war. But, at any rate, as far as the pre-1938 territories of the Reich are concerned, any attempt to base our policy upon

[1] The Munich *putsch* of November 9th, 1923.

voluntary separatism would be as futile as the German attempt to foster "Breton Nationalism". Separatism, unsupported from without, would have no prospect of success. If it had Allied support, its prospects would be no better, for separatist leaders would inevitably be branded as quislings, pledged to the furtherance of Allied aims. The dissolution of Germany can only be brought about by force, and, once achieved, it would have to be maintained by force.

Nor is anything to be gained by the reconstruction of the Reich on a "federal basis". This project, advanced, amongst others, by the ex-Nazi, Otto Strasser, may look attractive on paper, but it does not stand up to closer examination. The fact that Imperial Germany was in form a federal State was certainly a source of inconvenience to the Kaiser's Government. But there is no reason to suppose that it was a source of real weakness. The United States of America have a federal structure, but, though this may, on occasion, hamper the execution of justice and lead to certain administrative anomalies, there is no reason for supposing that it impairs the military strength of the American Union. It is even possible that, by reshaping Germany as a federation, the relative strength of Prussia would be enhanced, as the relative strength of Germany was enhanced by the break-up of the Russian and Austro-Hungarian Empires. Again, it is an illusion to suppose that the character of German policy would be greatly affected by making the peace "against Prussia", that is to say by separating from Prussia some of the territories which she acquired during the nineteenth century. It is true that, historically, it was the Prussian spirit, accepted by Germany as a whole, which set the Reich on the path of aggression. It is also true that the military caste which has been the backbone of the German army is Prussian. But the National-Socialist movement was, in origin, a South German movement, and very few of Germany's Nazi leaders were Prussians. If it is true that the Junkers are a Prussian caste, it is also true that the citadel of German Social Democracy was Prussia. When German democracy, such as it was, was overthrown by Papen, one of his first acts was to dissolve the Social Democratic Government of the Prussian State.

There is, therefore, a clear choice between the maintenance of a single State, with or without Austria, and subject, of course, to necessary measures of frontier revision, and the forcible dismemberment of the Reich, backed by readiness to prevent, by force if necessary, and for an indefinite period, the reunion of the fragments into a single German

State. The advocates of dismemberment argue, with some force, that the measures of restraint to be imposed upon Germany will, in any case, drive the Germans into opposition to the settlement. Therefore, they argue, we should avoid "half-measures" and destroy the German menace by destroying Germany. As a "mosaic of secondary States", Germany would never again threaten the peace of Europe.

Sir William Beveridge has provided the answer to these projects of forcible dismemberment. "If we split Germany into three States, and if the three States can each have arms separately, they will unite them at the moment they want to unite them. If, on the other hand, none of the three States can have arms separately, why are we to insist upon their having separate railway systems, post offices and banks?"[1] If, by preventing all armament manufacture in the Reich, we are able to prevent German aggression, nothing is to be gained by reproducing in Germany the economic conditions which resulted from the break-up of Austria-Hungary.

On the other hand, those who argue that Austria must be detached from the "Old Reich" and must be kept independent, if necessary by force and against the wishes of the population, are on strong ground. If Austria remained part of Germany, Hitler would be remembered as the leader who, in spite of his other failures, "brought Austria home into the Reich". The Czechs will not readily forget that the German occupation of Austria made possible the encirclement of Bohemia, and left Czechoslovakia indefensible against attack from Germany. The case for the inclusion of Austria within the borders of the Reich rests on the assertion that an independent Austria is an economic absurdity—though it is very doubtful whether the economic problems of Austria, and in particular of Vienna, can be solved by union with Germany. The problem of Austria boils down to the problem of Vienna, a city of two million inhabitants which lost its *raison d'être* with the dissolution of the Austro-Hungarian Empire. It is very doubtful whether there would be any more *raison d'être* for a Vienna on the extreme fringe of Germany. Hitler partly solved the economic problem of Vienna, as he solved the economic problem of Germany, by making it into a great arms-producing centre. He also attempted to develop it as the main inland port for a German-controlled South-East Europe.

In the economic field, the defeat of Germany confronts the Allies

[1] Hansard, Commons, February 27th, 1945.

with three problems, the one immediate and the other two long-term. The immediate problem is to restore production and meet the immense demand for capital goods and civilian supplies. In the field of long-term policy, it will be necessary for Germany to make reparation to the Allies, and it will also be necessary to adjust the economic balance in Europe so that the Continent is no longer dominated by Germany. Economic policy must serve these three objectives.

It might seem superfluous, in view of the formidable destruction inflicted upon Europe by the Germans, to argue the case for reparation by Germany. In Russia, France, Poland and the other countries overrun by the *Wehrmacht*, and to a lesser extent in Great Britain, cities have been laid waste, houses destroyed and land rendered uncultivable. In many of the Allied countries which the Germans occupied, they passed on a part at least of the expenses of their conduct of the war in the shape of "occupation charges". The war has led to a formidable lowering of living standards in all the countries overrun by the Germans, and it seems only fair that the Germans should be required to make good the devastation and impoverishment which they caused, even if the price is a drastic lowering of German living standards.

Yet the case for reparation has to be argued, because, after the 1914 war, propaganda against reparations played a most important part in fostering opposition to the Peace settlement as a whole. Even to-day voices are heard proclaiming that it would be wrong to lower the standard of living in Germany because, if we do so, we shall be persuading the Germans of the advantages which they derived from Nazi rule. National Socialism, it is argued, will seem attractive by comparison with the state of affairs which succeeded it. To argue in this way is to insist that the Germans, alone amongst European peoples, must be sheltered from the consequences of the war conducted by their rulers with their enthusiastic support. The war which Hitler launched, and which the German people sustained, has left, throughout Europe, desperate shortages of every kind. In allocating available goods, raw materials and foodstuffs, the Germans ought to receive the lowest priority. Göring promised his compatriots that, if any people had to go short in Europe, it would not be the Germans. When the war ended, the German standard of living, sustained by requisitioning in the occupied countries, was substantially higher than that of the rest of Europe. The Germans have no cause for complaint if this state

of affairs is corrected, and if they themselves are required to make their contribution to the necessary readjustment.

Thanks to the war, Europe is short of coal, short of locomotives, short of houses, short of factory equipment. These shortages must be met, and the Germans, though they also suffer from shortages, will properly be required to make their contribution to filling the needs of others, needs which they have themselves created. It will be the task of the re-educating propaganda undertaken by the Allies to make plain to the Germans that they are themselves responsible for this state of affairs.

One of the assets upon which the Allies could draw is German labour. If they do so, they will be wholly within their rights. For the Germans considered it appropriate that millions of non-German labourers should be deported to the Reich in order to sustain their war. Germany could now contribute to physical reconstruction by sending German labourers to rebuild the cities shattered by German bombs and shells.

It is clearly the task of the economists to estimate Germany's "capacity to pay", and they can do so only on the basis of a detailed survey of German industry, made in the light of the territorial settlement to be imposed upon the Reich. In all probability, for example, Germany will have lost outright the Silesian industrial area, which will have been handed over to Poland.[1] "Capacity to pay" is, in any case, a relative term, for the amount which Germany is compelled to place at the Allies' disposal depends upon what provision is made for the basic requirements of the German population, and so upon the standard of living permitted to the Germans.

One basic decision requires to be made. In the collection of reparations, emphasis can be laid either upon the fruits of current production or upon the delivery of a proportion of German capital equipment. It is technically easier to remove factory equipment than to allow the same factories to remain in production, since such production may, in part, require the despatch to Germany of the necessary raw materials.

[1] By the 1919 settlement, Silesia, already divided between Germany and Austria-Hungary, was further subdivided between Poland, Czechoslovakia and the Reich. If German and Polish Silesia are now formed into a single unit, and if Poland and Czechoslovakia form a customs union, a single Silesian area will result. Such a development would have an altogether salutary effect upon the economic balance of Europe, and would reduce, to an important extent, Germany's physical capacity for aggression.

There is a moral case for the removal of plant, in view of the heavy destruction of factories in Allied countries, both through German bombing and shelling and through the aerial bombardment which the Allies were compelled to undertake. On the other hand, the contribution which Germany can make to the reconstruction of Europe may be greater if some factories are left *in situ*. Those who argue in support of the removal of plant can claim that it achieves a dual purpose. Allied countries are recouped for their losses, and, at the same time, German capacity to make war is drastically reduced. This is, of course, only true on the assumption that, once the factory equipment has been removed, the Germans will be prevented from replacing it.

It will be objected that, in the light of past experience, it will be impossible to keep Germany disarmed. It is now an accepted fact that Germany rearmed secretly long before Hitler came to power, and that the Germans managed to conceal from Allied Control Commissions arms which they were required to surrender under the Versailles Treaty. Sir Geoffrey Knox has pointed out that even "Big Bertha" was never discovered, and, if a giant gun could be hidden away, there must have been considerable evasion.[1] We may agree with Mr. Leopold Schwarzschild [2] that total disarmament is more easy to enforce than partial disarmament, because, if Germany is allowed a certain number of weapons, it will never be possible to ascertain precise numbers, whilst the total prohibition of armaments—subject to small quantities of specified weapons for police use—makes detection of rearmament much easier. But, though it is very difficult to enforce total disarmament, it is equally difficult to conceal rearmament on a scale which would make Germany dangerous. Before 1933, the Allies were well aware that Germany was consistently evading the provisions of the Treaty. The French even published some of the details, although British opinion, not wishing to face unpleasant facts, preferred to ignore the evidence which was provided.

Discussion of the disarmament of Germany has largely concentrated upon the technical difficulty of detecting clandestine manufacture and stocks of weapons. But the problem is not, in the main, a technical one. It is perfectly true that any country can, to a certain extent, rearm secretly, and that it is very difficult to unearth all its hidden stocks of

[1] Cf. *The Last Peace and the Next*, by Sir Geoffrey Knox.

[2] *Primer of the Coming World.*

weapons. It is possible, for instance, to manufacture machinery necessary for a rearmament programme without this process necessarily being detected. But rearmament, in a world of armed States, cannot become dangerous without at the same time becoming obvious. If Germany is not permitted an air force or commercial air lines, it will clearly not be possible for her to train pilots and try out aircraft types without other countries being aware that she is doing so. It may be difficult to prevent all German armament manufacture; but so long as the other European States keep their armed forces at a sufficient strength, it will be impossible for German rearmament to reach dangerous proportions. It will, equally, be impossible for Germany to train an army without other countries realising that she is doing so. In fact, the organisation of the *Stahlhelm*, the German ex-servicemen's organisation, which provided its members with military training throughout the nineteen-thirties, was perfectly open. As Sir Geoffrey Knox has shown, this military training, which was received both by ex-servicemen and by men too young to have fought in the Four Years' War, was an important preparation for restoring conscription. Even without occupation or control commissions, the military attachés and intelligence services of the other Great Powers should know, at any time, whether Germany were rearming or not.

It will, however, be possible to provide additional safeguards. If, for example, Germany was compelled to import all her machine-tools, it would be very difficult for her to switch any important section of her industry from peace to war production without other countries becoming aware that she was doing so. Actual management of the principal industries of the Ruhr by Allied nationals, who would thereby be in a position to know far more about German industry than the members of a Control Commission, would provide an added safeguard.

The problem of enforcing disarmament is no different from the problem of enforcing any other section of the Peace Treaty. The ultimate security for the victorious Allies lies in the awareness that the provisions of the Peace Treaty are necessary and that their enforcement is the first collective duty of the post-war world.

Chapter Thirteen

SOVIET RUSSIA AND THE FUTURE

WITH the end of the war, Soviet Russia will enjoy a power and prestige which have rarely been the lot of any European or world Power. Germany and Japan, the countries most likely to threaten her security, are defeated and disarmed. Russia becomes the strongest Power both of the European and of the Asiatic continents. Indeed, she is so much stronger than either France or China that she is, in fact, the only Great Power of either continent. Since she has survived attack from Germany, securely based on the European mainland and disposing of practically the entire resources of Europe west of the Soviet border, she will feel that no extra-European Power can attack her with any prospect of success.

In his "Memorandum on the Deliverance and Security of Europe", which bears the date of January 19th, 1805, the Younger Pitt noted that: "The insular Situation and extensive Resources of Great Britain aided by her military Exertions and Naval Supremacy, and the immense Power and established Continental Ascendancy and remote distance of Russia, already give to the Territories of the two Sovereigns a security against the Attacks of France—even after all her Acquisitions of Influence, power and Dominion—which cannot be the lot of any other Country".[1] Mr. Pitt's words were to be proved right seven years later, when Napoleon, baffled in his attempt to subdue England, turned his attention to the East. Substitute "Germany" for "France" and they were again proved right in 1941. Hitler, like Napoleon, had made great acquisitions of "Influence, power and Dominion"; but, once again, the "immense power" and "remote distance" of Russia, aided by the resources and naval ascendancy of Great Britain, proved decisive.

Pitt's reference to "remote distance" is interesting. Very probably he had in mind the fate of Charles XII's Swedish army which penetrated to Pultava and was there defeated by the Russians. Russia's "remote distance" provides the clue to the defeat both of Napoleon and of Hitler. Napoleon assumed that the capture of Moscow would

[1] Temperley and Penson, *Documents on British Foreign Policy*, pp. 12-13.

inevitably bring about the defeat of the Czar Alexander. Hitler believed that Russia could be defeated if the German army captured Moscow, Leningrad and the Ukraine. No other country in Europe could have suffered the immense losses of territory which Russia suffered, and yet retain its capacity to fight on. By progressively moving the industrial centre of gravity of the Soviet Union eastwards, from the Ukraine to the Urals and Western Siberia, Stalin had prudently exploited this factor of distance. The eastward movement has been carried an important stage further by the forced evacuation of industrial plant from areas threatened by the German advance.

For the twenty-five years which followed the revolution, Russian policy was dominated by the fear of attack, first by the Powers which had intervened in support of the "Whites", and later by Germany and Japan. If such an attack had come during the period of chaos resulting from the revolution and the civil war, Russia could hardly have survived. She was, in fact, saved from disaster by the survival of Great Britain and by the fact that Japan's attention was, at the critical period, fully occupied elsewhere. But for the continued control of the seas by the British, and later the British and United States navies, Germany, and not the Soviet Union, would have had access to sea-borne supplies. Germany and Japan could then have made good the deficiencies in one another's war economy, exchanging German machine-tools for the oil, rubber and tin which Japan acquired by her Pacific conquests. If Great Britain had been defeated in 1940, Japan, and not Great Britain, would, in all probability, have opened a "second front". Both Germany and Japan would have been free to turn against Russia all the energy which went into the war against the Western Powers. They would have joined hands across Asia, and Russia would have been attacked in the south, as well as in the east and the west. All the energy which went into air defence, active and passive, and into the U-boat war, would have been set free. The whole of Western Europe, including the British Isles, would have been a German "safe area", free from the danger of air attack. It would have been unnecessary for Germany to man the western coastline of Europe in any strength, or to fight in Africa or in Southern Europe. Indeed, one may well ask how Soviet Russia would have fared if, in 1939 and 1940, the working classes of Great Britain had been more responsive to the Communist "party line", with

its slogan that "an hour lost to production is an hour gained to revolution".[1]

In 1941, then, Soviet Russia escaped defeat, or at best, stalemate, because she had Allies strong enough to prevent the opening of a second front by Japan and, ultimately, to open a second front of their own. Having failed to deliver a knock-out blow against Russia in 1941, Germany has in the future only one chance of delivering a successful attack. Her sole hope lies in fostering suspicion between Russia and the Western Allies. If a struggle for power developed between Russia and the West, the Germans might hope to sell their support to one of the conflicting parties at the price of military revival. It is this fact which makes relations of confidence between Russia and the West so essential.

If it were "inevitable" for Great Britain to drift into opposition to the strongest European Power, Anglo-Russian conflict would be a certainty. But, as has already been suggested,[2] there is no reason for assuming conflict between Great Britain and the Power which is temporarily the strongest in Europe. Pitt's reference to the "established Continental Ascendancy" of Russia occurs in a despatch which was, in fact, a plea for close association between the two countries. The strength of Russia would call the balance of power into play only if it seemed to British opinion that Russian policy threatened the independence of other nations and compelled Great Britain to choose between "appeasement" and conflict. In that event, if the lessons of history are any guide, Great Britain might, for a time, follow a policy of appeasement, but, in the end, conflict would be inescapable.

It is, unfortunately, necessary to examine with some frankness the question of relations with Russia, unless we are to content ourselves with the fashionable platitudes about the need for Anglo-Russian co-operation. One of the main functions of this book has been to show the disastrous consequences of the failure of Great Britain and Russia to work together in the past, and to underline the need for such co-operation in the future. But it is unhappily true that, since the war approached its end, suspicion between the Allies has grown. This suspicion can be brushed aside as the work of Dr. Göbbels, but if there

[1] This slogan had a considerable effect in France, and, in a sense, it was proved correct. But the revolution, when it came, proved to be the "National Revolution" of Pétain and Laval.

[2] Chapter Eight above.

had been a robust relationship of confidence between the great Allies, it would have been beyond the power of Göbbels to create suspicion. Equally, if real confidence is established between the major Allied countries, it will be beyond the power of Germany to start a third world war, and the world can look forward to a very long period of peace.

It is unfortunately true that, in the past, alliances concluded in time of war have seldom outlived the danger which called them into existence. Either during, or after, each of the great wars fought during the past century and a half the victorious side has concluded alliances whose object was to prevent any reversal of the verdict by the defeated Power. At Chaumont, in 1814, England, Russia, Austria and Prussia signed an alliance against France which was to last twenty years. It had become a dead letter within a year of Waterloo. After the Franco-Prussian War, Bismarck built up a network of alliances aimed at preventing a French "war of revenge". Germany allied herself with Austria-Hungary, with Russia, with Italy and with Roumania. By 1914, all that remained of this diplomatic achievement was the alliance with Austria-Hungary. The Anglo-Japanese alliance was terminated by Great Britain within four years of the defeat of Germany in 1918. After the 1914 war, France allied herself with Poland, Czechoslovakia, Jugoslavia, Roumania, and, for a time, Russia. By 1939, all that remained was the Franco-Polish alliance, and even that had become more or less a dead letter until it was revived after the German occupation of Prague.

These alliances broke down for a variety of reasons. Talleyrand wrecked the Treaty of Chaumont, assisted by British suspicion of the anti-Liberal policies of the Eastern autocracies. William II, ignoring the danger of a Franco-Russian alliance, refused to prolong Bismarck's "re-insurance treaty" with Russia. The Anglo-Japanese alliance was terminated at the request of the United States, which suspected Japan's intentions in China. Hitler destroyed the French alliance system by refortifying the Rhineland, and thereby making it ineffective. One cannot generalise about the reasons why these alliances broke up. For, whilst it was true in most cases that the Allies came to suspect one another more than they suspected the country against which the alliance had originally been directed, this was not true of the French alliance system after the last war. This broke up, not because the Allies suspected one another, but because France's Allies no longer believed

that the French were willing and able to give the help which they had promised.

Any alliance is liable to dissolve when the conditions which called it into being have changed. This is particularly true of war-time alliances, for the very fact that the common enemy has been defeated and rendered powerless robs the alliance of its original *raison d'être*. During a war, a polite fiction of "complete unanimity" is maintained. Every meeting between Allied leaders ends with a communiqué recording their "complete agreement". This fiction of perfect harmony only throws into relief any subsequent differences, particularly differences over the Peace settlement. But the very fact of fighting a war in common inevitably produces friction. Each Ally feels that its own contribution is not receiving the credit which it deserves. Each is apt to feel that it is bearing more than its share of the burden, and that the help which it is receiving is insufficient. A land power measures its casualties against the much lower casualties of a power whose contribution is primarily naval. A naval power feels that the efforts required to retain command of the sea are not sufficiently appreciated by the Ally which benefits from them. Each Ally is apt to feel that its own front is more important than other fronts, and should be given a higher priority than it is actually receiving.

All these influences have been at work during the war. Russia, with a great part of her territory occupied between 1941 and 1944, had, perhaps, a greater sense of urgency than the Western Allies. She had to weigh the losses to be expected from a bold offensive strategy against the sufferings of her citizens who were awaiting liberation. Indeed, the Soviets can still argue that, if the Western Allies had been prepared to risk casualties on the scale of the Eastern battlefields, the "second front" might have been launched earlier than it was. Great Britain has felt that the Soviet Union took for granted the efforts necessary to keep open communications across the seas and oceans. Similarly, the Chinese felt that the Allies should have made greater efforts to reopen the Burma road and provide supplies for the unequal struggle against Japan. Nothing, in fact, could be more misleading than the belief that a war, fought in common, lays the foundations for co-operation after victory. Never, in time of peace, did American criticism of Great Britain reach the volume to which it has attained whilst they have been fighting as Allies.

Yet, during the war, these suspicions and misunderstandings could be kept within bounds by the common aim of victory. The Allies recognised how much the enemy stood to gain from conflicts between them. With the return of peace the need for agreement becomes less obvious, and the problems of settlement provide fresh reasons for dispute. Thus it can easily happen that, at the peace conference, the Allies may divide into opposing groups. At the Congress of Vienna, Talleyrand, the representative of defeated France, even succeeded in joining one of these groups, and working with Austria and Britain against Russia and Prussia. Fortunately for the prospects of future Allied unity, the Germans have, by their conduct during the war, ruled out any prospect of a repetition of Talleyrand's diplomatic achievement at Vienna.

It is, therefore, of very little use to repeat the current platitudes about the need for agreement between the Great Powers, unless one discusses the prospects of agreement and the obstacles to it. It is obviously true that, if Great Britain, the United States and Russia can agree, with the other United Nations, to follow common policies, the world can look forward to a long period of peace which it will be beyond the power of the Germans to disturb. It is also true that, if the Allies can agree, they will have a margin of strength more than sufficient for the restraint of Germany and Japan. But it is none the less true that, before the war, even the threat from Germany was not sufficient to overcome Russian suspicion of Great Britain and British suspicion of Russia. For over four years, German propaganda has been working overtime to foster these suspicions. It has been telling the Russians that Great Britain was only too happy to see the Germans and the Russians weakening themselves on the Eastern front. It has been telling the British that Russia plans to Bolshevise and control the Continent, and, ultimately, the world. It has been working upon Russia's belief that Munich was an attempt to embroil the Soviet Union with the Reich. It has been working upon British memories of the Comintern's rôle.

People often speak and write of Anglo-Russian co-operation as though it depended mainly, or even solely, upon the attitude of Great Britain. Now, obviously, if Great Britain were to oppose every legitimate Russian policy and aspiration, conflict would be inevitable. But a study of history suggests that the course of European history is determined primarily by the policy of the strongest European Power.

Others may support or oppose that policy. But, in the relations between two Powers, one of which is markedly stronger than the other, it is, in general, the policy of the stronger which decides whether relations shall be friendly or hostile. This is obvious, because the weaker of the two has more reason to fear a clash of interests than the stronger. The end of the war leaves Russia very much the strongest European Power. Indeed, even if, for the time being at least, the United States are inherently stronger than Russia, both in Europe and in Asia,[1] Russia is stronger than the United States.

We may take it that the first aim of Russian policy is, and will remain, the pursuit of security. "Security" means something more than the certainty of not being defeated in war. It means the assurance that Russia will not again be invaded, that her territory will not again become a battlefield. The lines on which Russia conceives of her security are already becoming plain. She is insisting on territorial arrangements which will permit her to intervene effectively if there are signs of fresh German preparations for war. She has built up, and may extend, a system of alliances directed against the threat from Germany. In all this, she is following very closely the policy of France between the wars; a policy that was very little understood in Great Britain, where many people assumed that it was prompted by ideas of European domination.

It is a British interest that Soviet Russia should feel secure, and it is a British interest that there should be an effective security system for common defence against Germany. Equally, it was a British interest that France should feel secure, and that there should be an effective security system for defence against Germany after the 1914 war, although, to our great misfortune, we failed to recognise the fact. There is another reason why it is a British interest that Soviet Russia should feel safe from the threat of attack. It was Russia's feeling of

[1] "Japan is stronger than America for a war in Northern Asia, but weaker for a war in the Caribbean. England is stronger than America for a war in the Indian Ocean, but weaker for one on the coasts of the Pacific. Any of the military States of the Continent is stronger than America, England or Japan for a war on the Continent. Is there not reason to suggest that many of our present troubles arise from . . . each trying to make itself stronger than the other in the area in which one possesses all the advantages of position." Admiral Sir Herbert Richmond, *Sea Power in the Modern World*.

insecurity which prompted the Soviet attacks against Poland, the Baltic Republics and Finland in the autumn and winter of 1939. It can, of course, be argued with some force that the attack on Finland increased the threat to Leningrad, by making Germany a present of the Finnish army and of a base in Finland. But it is none the less true that a Great Power, which feels itself threatened, is always on the lookout for opportunities of improving its strategic position. Inevitably, the measures which it takes to meet a real or supposed threat arouse the suspicion of others. Thus the more secure Russia feels the less will her search for security alarm others and breed suspicion between herself and other Great Powers.

Equally, a Power which is constantly on the lookout for economic advantages outside its frontiers is liable to forfeit confidence. The struggle for spheres of economic influence is hardly less dangerous than the struggle for military and diplomatic spheres of influence. Hitler aimed at bringing under his control areas from which Germany could draw all the raw materials needed by the Reich. But Russia's immense resources justify the assertion that the Soviet Union is, in an economic sense, a "satisfied" Power. Russia is the world's greatest producer of wheat, barley, oats and sugar beet. She produces more manganese than any other country, and her iron ore production may be expected to overhaul that of the United States. She is second only to the United States as a source of oil. As regards coal, it has been estimated that the Kuznetsk and Krasnoyarsk coal basins are each capable of supplying the needs of the entire world for three hundred years.[1] Except for rubber, the Soviet Union is capable of producing everything it needs. Thus, before the war, Soviet foreign trade was smaller than the foreign trade of Denmark.

The needs of reconstruction may temporarily alter this state of affairs. Russian requests for loans from Great Britain and America show that the Soviet Union foresees the need for very large imports in the immediate post-war years. But, though the invasion and devastation of the Ukraine may have temporarily upset the balance of Russia's self-sufficient economy, we may expect this state of affairs to be rectified within a comparatively short period. One must, however, add a *caveat*. The Soviet demand for oil concessions in Persia, coupled with the familiar assertion that the Persian Government, by refusing this demand, had shown itself to be "Fascist", suggests

[1] N. Mikhaylov, *Soviet Geography*.

that even a Socialist country is not above joining in the scramble for concessions.[1]

There are good reasons for hoping that neither economic rivalries nor the requirements of Russian security will lead to conflict between Russia and the other Great Powers. This does not, however, exhaust the possibilities of trouble. If the Soviet Union sought to establish, throughout Europe and the world, Communist dictatorships, as Hitler sought to establish Fascist dictatorships subservient to Berlin, conflict between Russia and the Anglo-Saxon countries would be inevitable. If, a quarter of a century ago, in the first exuberance resulting from the November revolution, Soviet Russia had possessed the physical strength to back her revolutionary policy, there would certainly have been war between the Soviets and the other world Powers.

It can, of course, be argued that it is perfectly legitimate for Russia to further the spread of Communism, as legitimate as it is for Great Britain and the United States to work for the spread of Liberal democracy. In a sense, this is true. If, in a given country, the majority of the population genuinely desired to set up a Communist régime, the Western Powers could hardly complain were Soviet policy to prevent a minority from thwarting the will of the people.

There is, however, this fundamental difference between a Communist régime and a genuinely democratic régime. Under Communism, the people forfeits its right of appeal. A single party controls all the means whereby opinion can be influenced. Even if the "right of secession" is theoretically conceded, as is the case within the Soviet Federation, the right is meaningless unless there is also the right to make propaganda for secession. Attempts by the Soviet Union to set up wholly, or preponderantly, Communist systems outside the borders of the Soviet Union will always look to the other Great Powers dangerously like attempts to install quislings, pledged to subordinate the interests of their countries to the requirements of the Soviet Union. Even if the abolition of the Comintern is perfectly genuine, Com-

[1] The opinion is often heard that the United States, if she continues to use up her reserves of oil at current rates, will have exhausted them in a matter of seven or eight years. Competent oil experts point out that this fear has been expressed, off and on, for the past forty years, but that deeper boring and the discovery of new fields have, in the past, always proved it groundless. It would not be surprising, however, if the Soviet Union was also looking many years ahead in its oil policy, and if the Russian desire for concessions in Persia was prompted by similar fears.

munist parties continue to follow slavishly the guidance which they can discover in the public pronouncements of Soviet leaders and the Soviet press. Communist parties outside Russia who wish to subordinate their policy to the requirements of the Soviet Union, can discover directives in the articles of *Pravda* and *Izvestia*, if none are forthcoming from the Kremlin.

Non-Communists will believe in the genuine independence of national Communist parties only when they discover the first breath of criticism of the Soviet Union in their articles and speeches. One reason why the Communist parties in Great Britain and America failed to make any noticeable headway, even when economic conditions were favourable to their propaganda, was the fact that they subordinated themselves slavishly to the requirements of the Soviet Union. A case can be made for Russia's "appeasement" of Germany during the first two years of the war. But when the British Communist Party took over the advocacy of appeasement from Neville Chamberlain, it was clearly following the supposed interests of Soviet Russia even when they conflicted with the interests of the British working class.

The case for taking the dissolution of the Comintern at its face value rests upon the fact that, under the guidance of Stalin, the character and aims of the Soviet system have undergone a profound change. Russia has been rediscovering her history—her literature, her religion, her ancient military tradition. When Germany attacked the Soviet Union, the Russians deliberately chose to fight the "Second Patriotic War" under the slogans of traditional patriotism rather than under those of the world revolution and the class struggle. The State Church of the Czars has been reinstalled, and has duly summoned the faithful to fight in defence of Holy Russia. The "Soviet millionaires" have made their appearance. The incentive of personal gain has once more been permitted. In the process, the Soviet system has become somewhat less dissimilar from the régimes prevailing in other lands. After the violent break in 1917 with all her traditional values, Russia appears to be reverting to type. In the process, the rôle of the Communist Party outside Russia has changed. To the early Bolsheviks, it appeared quite fortuitous that the revolution had come first in Russia, and Russia was regarded as the base from which world revolution was to be organised. To-day, the Communist Party outside the Soviet Union has become an instrument for the furthering of specifically Russian

aims. The question whether this instrument is wielded and centrally controlled from Moscow, or whether it voluntarily places itself in the service of Russia, is immaterial.

It is unfortunate that certain aspects of Soviet policy should have aroused among the British public a suspicion of Soviet aims which would have been unthinkable at the time of the defence of Stalingrad. This anxiety is probably all the deeper for the fact that the greater part of the British press has, in the interests of Allied unity, consistently refrained from discussing controversial aspects of Soviet policy. The main reason for British suspicions of Soviet policy has been the Russian handling of relations with Poland, the first country to offer armed resistance to Hitlerite Germany.

Many reasons have been offered by the Russians for their policy towards Poland. The Polish Government in London was dubbed "Fascist", and its members described as "Hitlerite lackeys". It has been asserted that the Ukrainians of Galicia, formerly subjects of the Polish Republic, wished to "return" to their "Soviet Ukrainian Fatherland". But very little has been said about the true reason for Soviet policy towards Poland, namely the strategic reason. The policy of pre-war Poland made of that country a *cordon sanitaire* precluding Soviet intervention against Germany. At the time of Munich, a belt of Polish territory barred the way to any Soviet forces which might have been sent to the help of Russia's Czechoslovak ally. There were, it is true, reasons for this Polish attitude which cannot be ignored. The Poles felt that, once Soviet troops had been permitted to enter Polish territory, there was no sort of guarantee that they would ever evacuate it. In view of what has happened since, these fears can hardly be dismissed as groundless. But it is understandable that the Soviet Union should wish to assure to itself the possibility of intervening against any future German preparations for war.

It is, of course, perfectly true that many Poles, indeed most Poles, are instinctively anti-Russian. This is not only true of the "Polish gentry". When Russian armies were approaching Warsaw in 1920 they discovered, to their cost, that the "Polish gentry" could count upon the "Polish workers and peasants" to defend Polish soil. Poland has four times been partitioned, the last occasion being 1939. Each time, the Russians have taken a considerable part of the territory of the Polish State, including land inhabited by Polish majorities. For the whole of the nineteenth century Poland's struggle for national

independence was directed principally against Russia. In such circumstances, it was inevitable that the Poles, "gentry", workers and peasants alike, should instinctively fear the Russians. Such memories are not eradicated in a day, and Russia's action, whatever its justification, in sending troops into Poland when the Polish army was fighting almost single-handed against the Germans, was not calculated to improve relations.

One of the chief complaints of Soviet propaganda against the "Polish Government in exile" was that there had been no general rising in Poland against the Germans. There had, equally, been no general rising in Czechoslovakia, but the absence of such a rising had occasioned no unfavourable comment from Moscow. On July 29th, 1944, as the armies of Marshal Rokossowsky were approaching the Warsaw suburb of Praga, Moscow radio broadcast in Polish, at 8.15 P.M., an appeal for a rising by the Warsaw citizens. "For Warsaw, which did not yield, but fought on, the hour of action has already arrived", this appeal stated, and it went on to say that "direct, active struggle in the streets of Warsaw, in its houses, factories and stores, will not only hasten the moment of final liberation, but also save the nation's property and the lives of our brethren". This broadcast was monitored by the B.B.C., and its authenticity has never been questioned. The only defence of it which has come from Russia has been that it was "only a routine broadcast", which apparently means that the Poles were foolish to assume that it really meant what it quite clearly said.

The London Polish Government never claimed that this broadcast absolved its commander on the spot, General Bor-Komorowski, from responsibility for launching the rising three days later, on August 1st. Nor did it blame the Soviet Government for the fact that a German counter-attack halted the Russians before they could reach the Polish capital. But General Bor-Komorowski was entitled to believe that, in giving the signal for the rising, he would receive such support as the Red Army was in a position to give. If there had been no Warsaw rising, the Soviet authorities would no doubt have argued that the Polish failure to rise against the Germans was fresh proof of their "Fascist sympathies". As it was, Soviet and Lublin propagandists have not ceased to vilify the London Poles for a feat of arms which deserves to rank with Stalingrad and the defence of Arnhem. This tragic episode, which cost the lives of tens of thousands of Poles and

the total destruction of Warsaw, was also not calculated to improve relations between the Soviet Union and the Polish people.

The tragic fate meted out to the population of Warsaw can be directly attributed to the absence of democratic safeguards in Russia. Let us suppose that a British Government had called upon the population of Paris to rise against the Germans, and had then withheld all support from the insurgents. Inevitably, such a government, however large its parliamentary majority, would have been overthrown by a storm of popular protest. Democratic safeguards are a protection, not only to a people which enjoys them, but to every other people with which a genuine democracy has relations.

All this has led, in Great Britain, to a revival of suspicion of the Russians. This suspicion cannot simply be written off as "anti-Communist prejudice". It is felt most deeply by those who were most insistent upon the need for opposing Hitler. One may demonstrate the need for collaboration between Soviet Russia and the Anglo-Saxon Powers; one may insist that the Soviet Union has no need to fear for her future security or to base her policy upon the attempt to improve Russia's strategic position; one may point to the vast opportunities for internal development which the Soviet Union enjoys. Yet any examination of Soviet policy must end on a note of uncertainty and enquiry. Russia seems more anxious to be feared than to be trusted; in her relations with her Allies, she employs all the technique of the "war of nerves" and of the *fait accompli*. This may well be the result of a deep suspicion for which, in the past, there have been grounds enough. But there are no longer any grounds for this suspicion. Only a catastrophic error of judgment on the part of Soviet Russia could bring about a conflict between herself and the West.

Those who argue the case for Anglo-Russian co-operation by insisting that the Soviet system is becoming more like society in the Western democracies are doing a grave disservice to the cause which they seek to advance. For, despite the changes introduced by Stalin, the political and economic régime in Russia remains very different from that in the Anglo-Saxon countries. Instinctively, British opinion reacts against such attempts to pull the wool over its eyes. The only enduring basis for Anglo-Russian understanding is frank recognition that the two systems are profoundly unlike, but that this dissimilarity is no bar to co-operation on a basis of give and take. The decision to

apply the word "democracy" to systems so completely unlike one another as the British and Russian systems was not a happy one. Most people in Great Britain have a very clear idea what they mean by democracy.[1] To the British people, democracy implies a free press, freedom of speech, freedom to criticise and freedom for trade unions to employ the strike weapon. It implies that restrictions on personal liberty such as Regulation 18B should be employed only when a moment of grave national peril makes them necessary. If co-operation between Great Britain and Russia were dependent upon the two countries evolving identical political systems, the outlook would indeed be black.

There have, in fact, only been two very brief periods during which the British and Russian political systems have ever been at all similar, the brief attempt to introduce parliamentary government after Russia's defeat by Japan in 1905, and the equally short-lived Kerensky régime in 1917. But that fact has not prevented Great Britain and Russia from fighting together against Napoleon, William II and Hitler. Except for the almost fortuitous conflict at the time of the Crimean War (1853-55), Great Britain and Russia have never been at war with one another, and this conflict had nothing whatever to do with the fact that Russia was an autocracy and Britain a Liberal democracy. In fact, as the common struggle against Napoleon, William II and Hitler shows, community of interests has in the past always transcended differences of internal political structure.

If it is true that, to-day, the main preoccupation of Soviet Russia lies in attainment of security, then there is a fundamental identity of interests between the two countries. There could be no stronger guarantee of peace than the strength and security of a peaceful Russia. The only possible threat to the security of Russia would be a hostile coalition of the other Great Powers, and only Russia could bring such a coalition into being. No British Government could follow an anti-Soviet policy unless the British people was persuaded that the Soviet Union was threatening the independence of other countries. It is equally plain that American opinion will permit the United States Government to intervene in European or Asiatic affairs only if the policy of another government threatens the ideals and interests of the United States.

[1] Mr. Humphrey Sumner, in his *A Survey of Russian History*, points out that the word " democracy " does not appear in the Stalin Constitution.

Chapter Fourteen

WORLD BALANCE

EVER since the European peoples began to develop colonial empires in the other four continents, the balance of forces in Europe has been affected by extra-European factors. Historically, England has owed her European position largely to the wealth derived from her extra-European trade, wealth which has made it possible to subsidise European coalitions. As the development of Soviet Asia continues, Russia will, to an ever-increasing extent, derive her economic and military strength from her extra-European territories. The strength of the United States has twice in a generation been thrown into a conflict which was, in its origin, essentially European. To-day, the naval, military and economic strength of the United States exercise an influence in Europe not dissimilar from that exerted on the Continent in past centuries by Great Britain. Similarly, the balance of forces in Europe reacts upon the power and influence of the United States, just as, in past centuries, the balance of forces on the Continent has reacted upon the position and interests of Great Britain. Those who argue the case for the "United States of Europe" forget that Europe is nothing more than a fortuitous geographical expression. The United States of Europe could be achieved only if Great Britain, Russia and the other European peoples disinterested themselves in the affairs of other continents, or, alternatively, if a European federation agreed to pool all the non-European territories which retained their ties with Europe.

Necessarily, then, any appraisal of the forces affecting the European balance must take account of the influence of non-European countries. The Anglo-Japanese alliance of 1902 arose from the realisation, on Britain's part, that, in her relations with European Powers, Great Britain would be strengthened by association with Japan. As her resources are developed, China will, no doubt, also become a factor in the European balance. But, for the present, the United States remains the most important extra-European influence upon the power-relationships of Europe.

At the end of the 1914 war this obvious truth was as generally recognised, both in the United States and in Great Britain, as it is to-day.

Precisely because it appears so axiomatic, it is easy to forget that, to most Americans, it seemed, during the greater part of the nineteen-twenties and the whole of the nineteen-thirties, a most dangerous, and even sinister, heresy. An American who insisted, between the wars, that his country could not disinterest itself in European affairs, risked being regarded as the victim, or even as the agent, of interested propagandists. The majority of the American people came to believe that their country's intervention in the Four Years' War had been the result of British propaganda and of the sinister machinations of vested interests. A succession of Neutrality Acts, passed through Congress, were expressly designed to tie the hands of the President and to prevent any repetition of the train of events which, in the popular view, had caused the United States to become involved in war in 1917, against its true interests. It was held that the purchase of war supplies on credit by a belligerent had created in America a vested interest in the victory of one side. The neutrality legislation, therefore, laid down that all purchases by a belligerent in time of war must be paid for in cash. It was argued that the despatch of goods to a belligerent in American ships, resulting in the sinking of American vessels, had led to the demand for American intervention. It was, therefore, laid down that goods bought by a belligerent must be fetched in non-American ships. To forestall the effect upon American opinion of the sinking of United States vessels or the loss of American citizens travelling on the ships of belligerents, the President was obliged by the neutrality laws to ban American ships from "combat areas" and to forbid travel by U.S. citizens on the ships of belligerent States. This legislation reflected very clearly the current belief that the United States had taken part in the First World War, not because it was in her interest to do so, but because the American statesmen of the time had failed to take the steps necessary to prevent their country from being drawn into the conflict. In the circumstances, it must have seemed self-evident to the Germans that the United States would remain neutral in the war for which Hitler was preparing. Although many Americans have reproached Great Britain and France for their failure to oppose Germany at the time of Munich, as they were perfectly entitled to do, America's attitude also helped to persuade Hitler that his plans for world conquest would encounter no effective resistance. Or at least that American resistance, if it did eventually materialise, would come too late to be useful.

In fact, the isolationist standpoint was only tenable on two assumptions, namely, that American interests would not have been endangered by a victory of the Central Powers in the Four Years' War, and that the outcome of any future European war would be a matter of indifference to the United States. Neither of these arguments could bear close analysis. A German victory in 1917 or 1918 would have meant a more immediate threat to the United States than a German victory in 1940. For, in 1917, Germany was already a first-class naval Power. The elimination of the British and French navies would have left the United States face to face with the fleets of two potentially hostile Powers, Germany and Japan. As Mr. Walter Lippmann has pointed out,[1] American security rested on the fact that the British navy stood guard over the Atlantic, and that the United States could count upon the friendship of Britain.

In 1940 the danger to the United States of a German victory was less immediate. The Reich, preoccupied with the expansion of its army and air force, had not yet had time to build a powerful surface fleet. With the assistance of the Italian navy, and even of the French navy, the German surface fleet would still have been no match for the Americans. But Hitler would inevitably have equipped Germany with a fleet capable of meeting the United States navy on terms of equality. He had already shown that he understood how completely the resources of a defeated enemy could be exploited. Inevitably the captured shipyards of Tyneside and Clydebank would have been set to work on surface ships and submarines for the German navy; and the shipbuilders of the Clyde and the Tyne would have been powerless to refuse German demands for their services. They would not have enjoyed building warships for the German navy, any more than the Czechs enjoyed building tanks for the German army. But they would have had no choice. The combined output of German, Italian, French and British shipyards would, in the event of a German victory, have enabled the Reich to keep pace with American shipbuilding. Even if the United States had been able to match the shipbuilding of Germany and occupied Europe, Japanese production would probably have tipped the scales in favour of the Axis. Something like the old naval ratio of 10 : 10 : 7 [2] might have subsisted, but with the difference

[1] Cf. *U.S. Foreign Policy* and *U.S. War Aims*.

[2] The ratio between the American, British and Japanese fleets fixed by the Naval Conference of 1930.

that Germany would have taken the place of Great Britain with a fleet as strong as that of the United States. Even as it was, the Japanese surface fleet and the German submarine flotillas were, at first, more than a match for the combined fleets of the United States and Great Britain. It looked, for many months, as though enemy sinkings of Allied merchant ships would considerably exceed the replacements coming from Allied shipyards. If Great Britain had been defeated in 1940, there would have been no bases in the British Isles from which U-boats could be attacked as they sallied out from the Bay of Biscay.

If the foreign policy of a country were determined solely by rational considerations, the danger for America of the domination of Europe by a hostile, or potentially hostile, power would have been as apparent to the American public as it was to President Roosevelt. But it is in no way surprising that, in the mood of disillusionment which followed the victory of 1918, the majority of American opinion should have succumbed to the arguments of the isolationists. The mere factor of geographical remoteness engendered in America a "Maginot mentality" which can more easily be justified than its French counterpart. The British people did not recognise to the full the menace from Germany until the *Wehrmacht* had established itself in the French Channel ports. It is not easy for Americans to understand the deep historical roots of European conflicts. The United States have to their credit the remarkable achievement of fusing together into a single nation peoples who, in the countries of their origin, are bitterly hostile to one another. German-Americans, Italian-Americans and even Japanese-Americans have fought loyally for the country of their adoption and against the countries of their origin. This fact has made it difficult for many Americans to realise why Europe has failed to achieve a similar harmony between her races and peoples.

Between the wars, the isolationist campaign was probably more helped than hindered by the activities of those Americans who sought to combat it by insisting upon the common cultural, spiritual and institutional heritage of Great Britain and the United States. They laid themselves open to the reproach that they considered the United States as being merely a cultural offshoot and a spiritual colony of Great Britain. Even Americans of British stock felt instinctively that every attempt to anchor the United States to its specifically British heritage militated against the unifying process which was leading to

the emergence of a genuine American consciousness. Americans of Continental origin resented the implication that they were any less American for the fact that they were not of English stock.

It is always tempting to assume that a lesson, once learned, will not be forgotten, and President Wilson considered it axiomatic that his country could not again revert to isolationism. Every development in the art of destruction must necessarily increase the American interest in the course of European development. Yet it cannot be assumed that the American public will necessarily accept as axioms, in ten or twenty years, truths which to-day are scarcely challenged. In common with the British, the Americans are apt to regard the continent of Europe as a turbulent region which should properly be left to resolve its own conflicts without external interference. Yet, whether the fact is recognised by the American public or not, it remains true that the United States are as directly threatened as Great Britain by the growth of an aggressive Power seeking to dominate the Continent and control its human and industrial resources. A Power which effectively dominates Europe, subduing all opposition, will inevitably dominate Africa also. Established on the west coast of Africa, it will be better placed to intervene in South America than the more distant United States. If Great Britain had been defeated in 1940, the Germans would have established themselves at Dakar, and they would then have had every reason to expect that, in due course, they would control the South Atlantic. In Latin America they would have been able to employ the same technique which yielded such satisfactory results in the Balkans. In conjunction with the Japanese, they would have dominated the continents of Europe, Asia and Africa, and effective control of both the Atlantic and the Pacific would have followed.

Some American writers,[1] recognising their country's permanent interest in the security of the Atlantic, have suggested that United States foreign policy should be based either upon a permanent Anglo-American alliance or upon a federation of the countries which border the Atlantic. The second proposal is, in fact, only an elaboration of the first, since the nucleus of such a federation would, in fact, be an alliance between the Anglo-Saxon countries.

At first sight, these proposals have much to commend them. Great Britain, the United States, the British Dominions and the democratic

[1] Cf. Walter Lippmann, *U.S. War Aims* and *U.S. Foreign Policy*, and Clarence Streit, *Union Now with Britain.*

countries of Western Europe are bound together by common institutions, common ideals and common strategic interests. A threat to the security of any of them menaces the security of every other. War between any member of the British Commonwealth and any other is unthinkable. Equally unthinkable is war between any member of the British Commonwealth and the United States. War between the United States and a Latin American country, or between Great Britain and a Latin American country, could come only if a Continental or Asiatic country established itself on the South American continent, or brought a part of Latin America under its influence. It is to-day unnecessary for Great Britain or France to contemplate the danger of war with each other, although Great Britain cannot ignore the danger from French territory occupied by a hostile Power. The Scandinavian countries, Belgium and Holland share the ideals and strategic interests of Great Britain and America. Portugal, a democratic Spain, Italy, Greece and Turkey might be drawn into the orbit of the "Pax Anglo-Americana". Within a very considerable area, comprising the Americas, the United Kingdom, the British Dominions, the western and southern seaboard of Europe, the greater part of Africa and the British territories of Asia, peace is already assured, not by covenants or formal ties, but by the existence of mutual confidence.

It is characteristic of this great area that the countries falling within it do not seek to form "combinations" among themselves to offset the power of other countries or groups of countries falling within the area. Nor do they establish relations with countries outside the area so as to strengthen themselves against countries which fall within it. Because there is confidence between them, they do not feel obliged to make warlike preparations against one another. The frontier between Canada and the United States remains unfortified because the possibility of war between them, or between the British Commonwealth and the United States, is excluded. The strength of the countries falling within this area is directed, so to speak, outwards, not inwards.

It is, perhaps, the half-conscious realisation that, within this great area, considerations of power do not operate, and that such conflicts of interest as may arise will not be resolved by war, which prompts the popular outcry against "power politics". Armaments, alliances and pacts can never provide the same security as that which results from the mutual confidence which renders considerations of power superfluous. The perfect relationship between States is that which

permits them to dispense with the means of defence in their relations with one another. It must be the object of foreign policy to bring about such a relationship with every State.

Even if it is Utopian to hope that this state of affairs can yet become universal, it might seem logical to formalise the "Pax Anglo-Americana" over the widest possible area. Each country within this area might consent to abandon a separate foreign policy and to pool the means of its defence, considering an attack upon any member-state as an attack upon itself. It is a fact that the security of every Power within this area is a vital interest of every other. It is true that every federation carries with it the risk of internal conflict. If there had been no federal tie between the states of the American Union, there would have been no American civil war. A demand by a member-state to secede would compel the other member-states to choose between permitting secession and fighting to prevent it. But this risk may seem small in comparison with the benefits which such an arrangement would confer.

In fact, however, the consequences of such a policy are all too plain. An exclusive Anglo-American alliance, or an Atlantic federation based upon an Anglo-American alliance, would be regarded by the Soviet Union as an attempt by the English-speaking peoples to dominate the world. An Atlantic federation would be meaningless without the inclusion of France and some, at least, of the other Western European countries whose security is a vital British interest. Inevitably, Soviet Russia would seek to prevent an Anglo-American alliance or Atlantic federation from maintaining a foothold on the Continent. It would seem to the Soviets that Great Britain and America were following a balance of power policy directed against Russia. Faced by such a policy, Soviet Russia might well attempt to create a rival system based upon association with Germany, and, perhaps, Japan. The two groups would then compete for the support of countries which had adhered to neither system, and even to gain support from countries falling within one another's spheres. The inevitable result of such a development would be a third world war.

On the other hand, Soviet Russia cannot legitimately object to a more restricted security arrangement designed to protect Western Europe against any revival of German aggression. An "Eastern *bloc*" already exists. It comprises the Soviet Union, Czechoslovakia, Jugoslavia and Poland, and the three ex-satellite countries, Bulgaria,

Roumania and Hungary, are closely associated with it. Given the existence of this *bloc*, devised for protection against Germany, Russia could have no cause to complain of a Western Entente based upon Great Britain and France. It may well be argued that all such *blocs* should be avoided, and that the peace of Europe should be guaranteed by more general arrangements, based upon the closest co-operation between the Great Powers. Alternatively, if there are to be *blocs*, they should clearly be subordinated to more general arrangements, with which they should not, in any sense, be allowed to compete. But, if the Soviet Union considers an "Eastern *bloc*" a necessary condition of its security, it thereby forfeits any right to complain of similar understandings in Western Europe. If Great Britain had been the first in the field with a "Western *bloc*", she would equally have forfeited the right to complain that Russia, by creating an "Eastern *bloc*", was dividing Europe into opposing groups of Powers.

The very fact that one regional security arrangement has grown up, that another is under discussion, and that such projects as an Atlantic federation or an Anglo-American alliance are being mooted, only serves to underline the failure of the major victors to agree upon the fundamental principles which should govern their relations with one another.

At Dumbarton Oaks,[1] satisfactory arrangements were worked out for guaranteeing the world against aggression from Germany or Japan. But the wider problem of relations between the victors was brushed aside, probably consciously, with the assumption that "peace-loving States" will not, in any case, come into conflict with one another. It was tacitly assumed that the present victors were, and would necessarily remain, "peace-loving States". On the basis of this assumption, it was laid down that the World Organisation should not be allowed to initiate measures of coercion against a permanent member of the Security Council, since each permanent member was accorded a right of veto. If such a provision had been written into the Covenant of the League of Nations, both Japan and Italy would have been placed "above the law", and the League would not have been within its rights in attempting to prevent Japan from conquering Manchuria, or Italy from attacking Abyssinia. Unless, at some future date, this

[1] It is assumed that, by the time this book appears, the Dumbarton Oaks proposals will have been adopted, without major alterations, as the Charter of the United Nations.

formidable restriction upon the powers of the World Organisation is removed, the new League will be able to restrain aggression only if it comes from one of the defeated Powers. But, in practice, Germany and Japan will be able to disturb the future peace only if there is basic disagreement between the present victors. Thus the World Organisation, in the form devised at Dumbarton Oaks, must be considered incapable of dealing with the only serious threat to peace, namely, the threat of aggression from a Great Power. In the circumstances resulting from their defeat, Germany and Japan will have ceased to be effective Great Powers.

No form of international organisation, however technically perfect, can provide more than a basis for the relations between Great Powers. For it is beyond the power of any institution, however ingeniously devised, to eliminate suspicion or bridge the gap between policies which have become irreconcilable. An international organisation cannot, by its mere existence, bring about agreement between its member-states. At the very most, its existence can help to create an atmosphere favourable to the pursuit of agreed policies.

In fact, the form of the World Organisation, as elaborated at Dumbarton Oaks, is itself symptomatic of the present malaise in inter-Allied relations. The Soviet Union looked upon the whole project of a World Organisation with mixed feelings. Anything which might strengthen the barriers against fresh German aggression was welcome to the Russians. But at the same time, remembering their own expulsion from the old League at the time of the first Russo-Finnish war, they feared that the new body might be made the vehicle of anti-Soviet policies, of a new *cordon sanitaire*.[1] As a result, the collective security arrangements of the new World Organisation were so hedged about by the veto provisions that the five Great Powers, which are permanent members of the Security Council, are placed above the law. In fact, so far as the provisions of the Dumbarton Oaks plan are concerned, they are free to attack their neighbours without fear of being subjected to collective sanctions. The stock argument advanced in support of the veto is that, if the Great Powers fail to agree, the

[1] In fact, the Soviet Union is in process of evolving a *cordon sanitaire* of its own. Unlike its predecessor, which was designed to check the spread of the " Bolshevik virus ", the new *cordon sanitaire*, comprising most of the countries bordering upon Soviet Russia, is designed as a forward glacis for the protection of the Soviet Union against attack.

World Organisation is, in any case, bound to fail. The unkind critic might carry the argument a stage further. If the Great Powers fail to agree, the World Organisation will break down. If they are, in any case, in agreement, it will prove superfluous.

There is no need to accept this unduly pessimistic verdict. At the very least, the World Organisation will provide a convenient diplomatic instrument and a forum for discussion. Its various technical bodies, like the corresponding organs of the old League, will, no doubt, do a great deal of useful work. At some future date, if the necessary degree of confidence between the Great Powers has been achieved, it may be possible to eliminate its most glaring defects. But, in its present form, its existence will do very little towards bringing about a genuine growth of understanding.

Essentially, the future peace of the world depends upon the growth of a sufficient degree of confidence between the major Powers. So long as there are sovereign States—and a world state, if it is possible at all, will come at the end of a long period of advance, not at the end of a bitter, and embittering, war—there will always be disagreements. But the scope of such disagreements can be restricted, as it is restricted in the relations between Great Britain and the United States. Instinctively, the British and American peoples know that, though they may differ, and though they may at times criticise one another very sharply, their differences will not be pushed to the point of war. The aim of Allied statesmanship must be to extend this basic assumption to the relationships of all the Great Powers. This, in its turn, implies that the relationships between great and small Powers must, equally, be established upon a satisfactory basis. The policy of a Great Power is judged by other Great Powers quite as much by its attitude to small Powers as by its attitude to its peers. In Russia, Great Britain is suspect because of her policy towards Greece. In Great Britain, the Soviet Union is suspect because of its policy towards Poland. Apart from direct aggression by one Great Power against the territory of another, direct intervention in its internal affairs or policies suggesting an intention to attack or to intervene, disagreements can only arise through the policies pursued towards third States, and the suspicion which these policies call forth. This truth was recognised by the authors of the Anglo-Soviet treaty of alliance (May 26th, 1942) when they wrote into that agreement the provision that the signatories should "act in accordance with the two principles of not seeking

territorial aggrandisement for themselves and of non-interference in the affairs of other States".

If this principle had been adhered to, both in the letter and in the spirit, it would have provided a very promising basis for relations of mutual confidence between the Great Powers. Indeed, in the only country where it has largely been observed, namely, in Finland, neither Great Britain nor the Western democracies have had any complaint to offer. Finland has held democratic elections, free from external interference. Those elections, whilst they revealed a very strong swing to the Left, did not lead to the emergence of a Communist régime. Both Great Britain and the Soviet Union were satisfied with the result. It was clear that, whatever the régime in Finland, the country could not in any way threaten Russia. Given the immense strength of Soviet Russia, the existence of genuinely free and democratic States on her borders could not conceivably be a menace to legitimate Soviet interests. Poland, potentially the strongest of Russia's European neighbours, cannot hope to achieve an economic or military strength which could threaten Russia. With Germany defeated and occupied, in part, by Soviet troops, no Polish government, of whatever complexion, could dream of pursuing an anti-Soviet policy. Sandwiched between Russia and Russian-occupied Germany, Poland could not hope to act as a springboard for an attack on the Soviet Union. On the basis of population and economic resources, Soviet Russia is bound to be five or six times as strong as Poland. In practical terms, Poland is bound to renounce a separate and independent foreign policy. In these circumstances, Russia would only stand to gain if the Poles were given genuine independence and were satisfied with their lot. At the same time, the Western democracies would have had no reason to suspect Russian intentions towards Poland. What is true of Poland is even truer of the much weaker States bordering the Soviet Union between the Baltic and the Black Sea.

The same is true of Turkey and of Persia. Both countries lie on the fringe of areas in which both Great Britain and Russia are directly concerned. Domination of Turkey by either Russia or Great Britain would appear as a threat to the other. In recognition of this fact, the Anglo-Turkish alliance of October 19th, 1939, specifically stated: (Protocol 2) "The obligations undertaken by Turkey . . . cannot compel that country to take action having as its effect or involving as

its consequence entry into armed conflict with the Soviet Union".[1] If the existence of this Treaty is held to give Great Britain a preponderant influence in Turkey, it might well be matched by a similar agreement between Turkey and the Soviet Union, amplified by satisfactory arrangements to meet Russia's special interest in the Straits. But the existence of a genuinely independent Turkey is the best possible guarantee that the policies of Great Britain and the Soviet Union will not arouse suspicion or impair the relations between the two countries. The existence of a relatively weak buffer State can be the simplest way of eliminating causes of friction. Since, both in the case of Turkey and in the case of Persia, Russia's local position is very much stronger than that of Great Britain, their independence could not possibly jeopardise the interests or security of the Soviet Union.

There is, of course, nothing incompatible between the doctrine of non-interference and the fact that, in certain areas, individual Great Powers have recognised interests, and that certain smaller Powers look to a given Great Power as the fountain of their security. The United States and Great Britain have recognised rights and interests in the areas of the Panama and Suez Canals. The Montreux Convention of 1936 recognises long-established Russian interests in the navigation of the Bosphorus and the Dardanelles. Czechoslovakia and Poland will inevitably look to the Soviet Union for security against Germany, and the United States will inevitably guarantee the Latin American republics against interference by a non-American Power. Equally, Great Powers will look to their smaller neighbours for assistance as a *quid pro quo* for the security which the smaller Powers derive from them. But such arrangements will be all the more stable if they are based upon genuine consent, and the fact that they result from consent, and not from domination, will allay the suspicions of other Great Powers. In an age in which the technical development of the art of warfare has enormously widened the gap between the strength of great and small Powers, a small Power cannot hope to follow policies directed against a neighbouring Great Power. Every Power has a right to require of its neighbours that they shall not adopt policies hostile to it. But there is a moral obligation to forgo interference in the affairs of a neighbour unless that neighbour adopts policies hostile to it.

It unfortunately appears that the principle of non-interference was,

[1] *The Times*, October 20th, 1939.

at a certain stage, either explicitly or tacitly, abandoned by the Great Powers in favour of the concept of spheres of influence. This concept, which was characteristic of old-fashioned nineteenth-century imperialism, was followed by the Great Powers before the last war in their relations with one another in China and in Africa. Spheres of influence were, of course, very much preferable to indiscriminate, competitive interference, and, in the years before the 1914 war, the relations between France and Great Britain, and also between Britain and Russia, were regulated in a mutually satisfactory manner by this means. France recognised the preponderant interest of Great Britain in Egypt against a corresponding recognition by Great Britain that France had a preponderant interest in the affairs of Morocco. Persia was divided into a British and a Russian sphere of influence. But, whilst the division of the world into spheres of influence has something to recommend it, provided that the Powers making such arrangements genuinely adhere to them, the whole conception results from mutual suspicion and antagonism. It is markedly inferior, as a method of regulating the relations between Great Powers, to a self-denying ordinance renouncing all interference in the affairs of third States. For, even if the area in which interference is permitted is genuinely circumscribed, the fact of interference by one Power is bound to arouse the suspicions of others.

The abandonment of the original provisions of the Anglo-Soviet Treaty is implicit in British policy in Greece and in Soviet policy in Poland, Carpathian Ruthenia, Roumania and Bulgaria. It can hardly be denied that in these three areas, and perhaps in Jugoslavia also, there has been intervention. Indeed, intervention, in the form of arming resistance movements, was required in the interest of the most effective prosecution of the war. In Jugoslavia, although the opponents of British action in Greece like to ignore the fact, British intervention took the form of arming the forces under Marshal Tito, and thereby placing them in a highly advantageous position inside the country. In Greece, but not in Jugoslavia—since Jugoslavia apparently fell within the Soviet "sphere of influence"—the British Government has acted on the principle that the arming of resistance movements imposes upon Great Britain the obligation of seeing that the arms, thus provided, are not used for the seizure of power, in violation, or in possible violation, of the will of the Greek people. Equally, if relief is to be distributed without food supplies being used as a means of political

pressure, there is, again, a case for intervention. If U.N.R.R.A. supplies had simply been handed over to E.A.M., because it happened to possess the largest private army and to have developed a very passable copy of the Gestapo, control of U.N.R.R.A. supplies would have notably assisted E.A.M. in clamping down its own brand of dictatorship upon the Greek people. This danger has always been clearly foreseen.

So there developed another theory on the issue of intervention and non-intervention. It is justifiable to intervene, within the borders of one's own sphere of influence, in order to "hold the ring", to prevent one political group from imposing its will upon others. It is worth noting that, in certain cases, even the bitterest opponents of intervention in Greece favour this interpretation. It is, in their view, legitimate to intervene in Spain to prevent Franco from imposing his will upon the Spanish people. On the other hand, those who favour intervention in Spain to prevent Franco from flouting the wishes of the Spanish people held that it was inadmissible to intervene in Greece, even if there was a danger that E.L.A.S., or alternatively the Greek Communist Party, might flout the will of the Greek people.

In their desire to base their opposition to British action in Greece—and Belgium—upon a principle, the supporters of E.L.A.S. in this country propounded a further theory, namely, that it was inadmissible to intervene against the "friends of Democracy", against those who had "fought Hitler". But, once again, the application of this theory was coloured by ideological preferences. In Greece, two groups, at least, had "fought Hitler"—E.L.A.S. and E.D.E.S. But, whilst E.L.A.S. was accorded the rights and privileges resulting from the fact that they had "fought Hitler", it was considered perfectly appropriate that E.L.A.S. should liquidate E.D.E.S., who had also "fought Hitler".

Here, again, the principle that resistance movements, from the fact of their contribution to the Allied victory, had a peculiar right to be heard, was only partially applied. In Poland there was also a resistance movement, with a record as heroic as that of any other underground movement in occupied Europe. It had to its credit the Warsaw rising of August and September, 1944, a deed of arms as glorious as any in the annals of the United Nations, and deserving to rank with the exploits of the men of Arnhem, or the defenders of Stalingrad and of Bataan. It has never been denied that these men were acting under

the orders of the London Polish Government. If there was, anywhere in Europe, a resistance movement which could rightly claim a voice in determining the future form of government of its country, it was the Polish underground movement. Yet those who were so loud in their advocacy of the Greek underground movement—or to be more precise, the Left wing of the Greek underground movement—were silent on the subject of the Polish underground movement.

By the Varkiza agreement of February 12th, 1945, which brought the Greek civil war to an end, both E.A.M. and the Greek Government accepted the principle that the elections to be held in Greece should be supervised by representatives of Great Britain, the United States and the Soviet Union. Such supervision could not be described as "interference", or as impairing the sovereignty of the Greek people, since it was to be undertaken at the Greeks' own wish. Here was a fresh principle, namely, that the Allies should concert their action so that genuine democratic elections could be held and the authentic wishes of the Greek people ascertained. On the same day which saw the conclusion of the Varkiza agreement, Marshal Stalin, President Roosevelt and Mr. Churchill announced at Yalta their mutual agreement "to concert during the temporary period of instability in liberated Europe the policies of their three governments in assisting the peoples of Europe liberated from the domination of Nazi Germany, and the peoples of the former Axis satellite States, to solve by democratic means their pressing political and economic problems".[1]

Here, again, was a workable basis for co-operation between the major Allies in their relations with the smaller Powers. Within the framework of the Yalta declaration on liberated territories, it would have been possible to hold fair and free elections, not in Greece alone, but also in Poland, Yugoslavia, Bulgaria, Hungary and Roumania. Having made possible the setting up of genuine democratic régimes, the major Allies could have left the liberated countries to work out their own salvation. On the basis of Yalta, the Allies could have pursued common policies, not only in Eastern and South-Eastern Europe, but also in their approach to the problem of liquidating the Spanish dictatorship. But there was, in the Yalta declaration, a fatal flaw. There was agreement that the liberated peoples should be assisted to solve their problems "by democratic means". There was no agreement on the interpretation of the word "democratic". In

[1] *Bulletin of International News*, February 17th, 1945, p. 166.

Finland, where the Soviet Union had permitted the holding of genuinely democratic elections, there was no disagreement. But in Roumania, where the establishment of the Groza régime during a visit from Vice-Commissar Vyshinsky was certainly more than a coincidence, and in Bulgaria, régimes have been set up which the Soviet Union considers democratic, but which are considered by the Western democracies as totalitarian police states maintained by Gestapo methods. Whilst, under the Groza Government and under that of the Fatherland Front in Bulgaria, opposition is stifled, the much-reviled Greek Government permits to the Communist opposition the right to air its views and to publish its newspapers. Thus we have in Greece the spectacle of E.A.M. loudly proclaiming its concern for those civil liberties which, under the governments which E.A.M. seeks to emulate, are so totally lacking.

In appearance, the conflict is ideological. But its roots go far deeper than this. For the question at issue is whether, in the countries which were once satellites of Nazi Germany, minority governments, resting in the last resort upon support from abroad, should make their countries into satellites of Soviet Russia. The same reproach cannot legitimately be levelled against British policy in Greece, since the intention is to hold genuinely democratic elections and to abide by the result, even if that result should be an E.A.M. victory. All this is a departure from the acceptance of genuine spheres of influence. For, within the Soviet sphere—always excepting the case of Finland—those who favour Western democratic institutions are denied the right to propagate their views. But in Greece the Communist Party is free to operate, sustained by a flood of propaganda from the Soviet zone.

By installing governments which lack popular support, but which are pledged to policies of subservience to herself, Soviet Russia may, in the short run, add to her own security. But experience has shown the dangers which beset a country which seeks to base its security solely upon physical force. Total security, effected by this means, appears to others like an attempt to achieve a dominant position. The fears thus aroused lead other countries to group themselves together into "leagues of defence". If that happened, the world would be divided into two opposing groups, and the security of the Soviet Union, in common with that of every other Power, would be exposed to the threat of war.

Fundamentally, Soviet Russia's restless search for military security

is to be attributed to suspicion. Some of the reasons for this suspicion have already been suggested. It goes back to the early days of White intervention and to the more recent memories of Munich. It manifests itself in the fear of all contact with the outside world which has led the Russians to prevent, wherever possible, any kind of "fraternisation" between Soviet citizens and the peoples who are the Allies of Russia. It must be a cardinal aim of British policy to avoid any reasonable grounds for this suspicion. For, in the last resort, the only basis for enduring peace is the growth of a genuine confidence between the major Allies. But it is beyond the power of any single government to create such a relationship of confidence. Every country must make to it a contribution commensurate with its strength. Great Britain and the United States, for their part, will have to show the necessary understanding for the Soviet demand for security, a demand which springs from the memory of the years 1941-45. The Soviets, for their part, will have to persuade British and American opinion that they are not seeking to enhance their own military position by dominating other peoples and reducing them to subservience. If, by self-imposed restraint, the three Great Powers can establish between themselves a relationship of fundamental confidence, both they and the rest of the world can look forward to a long period of peaceful co-operation which it will be beyond the power of Germany or Japan to disturb.

Over a great part of the earth's surface, the use of armed force for the settlement of international disputes has already, by common consent, been eliminated. As a result, the peoples concerned have achieved, in their relations with one another, a degree of security which armed forces alone could never afford. It should be the object of Allied statesmanship to generalise this state of affairs throughout the world. If this can be brought about, the peoples of the world will be able to apply to the tasks of peaceful development and progress all the energy which, hitherto, has gone into the amassing of armaments and the preparation of war.

CHRONOLOGY OF PRINCIPAL EVENTS

1918-1945

1918 November 11, Armistice with Germany.

1919 June 28, Versailles Treaty signed.

1922 February 6, Washington Naval Treaty; Nine-Power Treaty guaranteeing Chinese independence and integrity.
April, German-Soviet Treaty of Rapallo.
October 28, Fascist march on Rome.

1923 January 11, French occupation of the Ruhr.

1924 August 16, Dawes Plan (reparations).

1925 March 12, Great Britain rejects Geneva protocol.
December 1, Treaty of Locarno.

1928 August 27, Briand-Kellogg Pact.

1929 October, Slump on Wall Street and start of economic depression.

1930 April 22, London Naval Treaty.
May 17, Young Plan (reparations).
June 30, Allies complete evacuation of the Rhineland.

1931 May 11, Failure of Austrian *Kredit-Anstalt* and spread of the depression to Europe.
June 20, Hoover moratorium on inter-governmental debts.
September 18, Japanese invasion of Manchuria.

1932 July 9, End of German reparation payments.

1933 January 30, Hitler becomes Reich Chancellor.
February 27, Reichstag Fire.
March 5, Nazi-Nationalist coalition gains Reichstag majority.

1934 January 26, German-Polish Non-aggression Pact.
February 12, Dr. Dollfuss suppresses Austrian Socialists after heavy fighting in Vienna.
June 30, Röhm purge.
July 28, Murder of Dr. Dollfuss.

1935 January 13, Saar Plebiscite.
March 16, Germany reintroduces conscription.
June 18, Anglo-German Naval Agreement.
October 3, Italian invasion of Abyssinia.
November 18, Sanctions applied against Italy.

1936 March 7, German reoccupation of the Rhineland.
May 5, Fall of Addis Ababa.
July 11, German guarantee of Austrian independence.
July 18, Outbreak of Spanish Civil War.
August 19, First trial of Bolshevik "Old Guard" opens in Moscow.
November 25, Germany and Japan sign Anti-Comintern Pact.

1937 July 7, Japanese Invasion of China.

1938 February 4, Purge of German General Staff.
March 11, German occupation of Austria.
September 29, Munich Agreement.
November 9, Pogrom in Germany follows assassination of German diplomat in Paris.

1939 March 15, German occupation of Prague.
April 7, Italian invasion of Albania.
April 13, Anglo-French guarantees to Roumania and Greece.
April 28, Hitler denounces Anglo-German Naval Treaty and German-Polish Pact.
May 22, Italo-German Alliance signed in Berlin.
August 23, German-Soviet Pact.
August 25, Anglo-Polish Agreement on Mutual Assistance.
September 1, German invasion of Poland.
September 3, Great Britain and France declare war on Germany.
September 3, Australia and New Zealand declare war.
September 6, South Africa declares war.
September 10, Canada declares war.
September 17, Soviet troops enter Poland.
October 19, Anglo-French Alliance with Turkey.
November 30, Russian invasion of Finland.

1940 March 12, Finland makes peace with Russia.
April 9, Germany invades Norway and Denmark.
May 10, German invasion of the Low Countries.
June 11, Italy declares war on Great Britain and France.
June 21, Franco-German Armistice.
July 1, Roumanian Government denounces Anglo-French guarantee.
October 28, Italian invasion of Greece.

1941 March 25, Jugoslav Government signs pact with Germany.
March 27, Jugoslav Government overthrown; King Peter seizes power.
April 6, Germany invades Jugoslavia and Greece.

1941 June 22, German invasion of Russia.
July 9, Tito opens partisan campaign in Jugoslavia.
December 7, Pearl Harbour.

1942 May 26, Anglo-Soviet Alliance concluded.
October 23, British open El Alamein offensive.
November 8, Allied landings in French North Africa.

1943 February 2, German Sixth Army capitulates at Stalingrad.
September 3, Italy surrenders unconditionally.

1944 June 6, Anglo-American landings in Normandy.
July 20, Attempt on Hitler's life.
August 1, Opening of Warsaw rising.
August 23, French Forces of the Interior liberate Paris.
October 2, Warsaw rising suppressed.

1945 May 8, Unconditional surrender by Germany.

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