UNIVERSAL
LIBRARY
OU_150435
UNIVERSAL
LIBRARY

DOCUMENTS ON INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS 1938

VOLUME II

The Royal Institute of International Affairs is an unofficial and non-political body, founded in 1920 to encourage and facilitate the scientific study of international affairs.

The Institute, as such, is precluded by its Royal Charter from expressing any opinion on any aspect of international affairs. Any opinions that may be expressed in this book on such subjects are not, therefore, the views of the Institute.

DOCUMENTS ON INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS

1938

VOLUME II

EDITED BY

MONICA CURTIS

OXFORD UNIVERSITY PRESS
LONDON NEW YORK TORONTO
Issued under the auspices of the Royal Institute of International Affairs

1943

CHECKED 1956

OXFORD UNIVERSITY PRESS
AMEN HOUSE, E.C. 4
LONDON EDINBURGH GLASGOW NEW YORK
TORONTO MELBOURNE CAPETOWN BOMBAY
CALCUTTA MADRAS
HUMPHREY MILFORD
PUBLISHER TO THE UNIVERSITY

Checked 1965

Checked 1969

[00033779]

PRINTED IN GREAT BRITAIN

PREFACE

THE year 1938 will be remembered in history above all as the year of the annexation of Austria and of the Munich Agreement, and it is with these events, in their setting as part of the foreign relations of Germany, that the present volume deals. The background against which they took place is illustrated by the documents which appeared in Volume I.

The concentration of all the main documents relating to German foreign policy in 1938 within the covers of one volume brings out clearly the consistency and precision of the German plan. Each step in the German advance was designed to make the next seem difficult or impossible to prevent. The Austro-German Agreement of July 1936—to carry the story back no farther—was the prelude to the Berchtesgaden Agreement in February 1938; the concessions extorted from Dr. von Schuschnigg at Berchtesgaden prepared the way for the annexation of Austria. This annexation gravely impaired the defensive position of Czechoslovakia. The Munich decisions deprived what remained of the Republic of any power of resisting the establishment of the 'Protectorate' in March 1939; and the destruction of Czechoslovakia prepared the way for the German victories of 1939 and 1940.

The documents which appear in the following pages show the headlong pace of the Austrian drama; the gradual transformation of the internal controversy between the Czechs and the German minority in Czechoslovakia, through the spring and summer, into an international issue on which peace or war for Europe depended; the efforts of the Western Powers to avert a conflict; the Munich Agreement and its consequences for Czechoslovakia; the complex events which followed after Munich, including the cession of territory to Poland and Hungary, and the transformation of Czechoslovakia into the federal State of Czecho-Slovakia. By the end of the year, Germany had increased her territory by some 110,000 square kilometres and her population by ten millions, removed the barrier which Czechoslovakia, with her system of fortifications, her efficient army, and her alliances had constituted, and immensely increased her prestige and influence in Europe at the expense of those of the Western Powers. The pogroms in Germany towards the end of the year, together with the violent anti-British campaign in the controlled Press of Germany, already showed how fragile were the hopes expressed by the statesmen of the Western Powers that a genuine improvement in their relations with Germany would follow on the satisfaction of her 'last territorial claims in Europe'.

In view of the great importance of this period from the historical point of view, the present collection has been made as full as possible, and extensive

use had been made of German, Austrian, Czechoslovak, and Hungarian sources. Some of the documents have not previously been published in English, and many others are not now readily accessible in the original. One document, that known as the 'Fourth Plan'—the Czechoslovak Government's final offer to the Sudeten Germans—has never been published in its entirety at all. A German text of it was supplied to the Royal Institute of International Affairs by the Czechoslovak Government in London from their official archives, together with other information. I take this opportunity of expressing my great appreciation of the courtesy of the Czechoslovak Government in communicating this information.

Some difficulty is created, in preparing a collection such as this, by the character of the German National-Socialist Press. Important speeches are often very incompletely reported, and passages considered unsuitable for the foreign reader are frequently omitted, not only from the version published in the Press, but from those subsequently printed in German official collections. These passages, which are sometimes of particular importance, can only be traced from the reports sent by foreign Press correspondents in Germany.

The passages from Herr Hitler's speeches which appear in this volume are reproduced from Professor Norman H. Baynes's authoritative translation, issued under the auspices of the Royal Institute of International Affairs (*Hitler's Speeches, 1932–1939.* An English Translation of Representative Passages. Oxford University Press, 1942). For certain Czechoslovak State documents, the English text which appears in Dr. Hubert Ripka's *Munich: Before and After* (Gollancz, 1939) has been used. With a few other exceptions, mentioned where they occur, all the rest of the translations have been prepared by the Information Department, Chatham House.

MONICA CURTIS.

CHATHAM HOUSE, *January 25, 1943.*

CONTENTS

PREFACE v

GERMANY AND HER NEIGHBOURS

I. GERMAN FOREIGN POLICY

Introductory Note 1

1. Declarations of Policy

(i) Extracts from Speech by Herr Hitler, February 20, 1938 . . 4

(ii) Speeches by National-Socialist Leaders at the Sixth Rally of Germans from Abroad, Stuttgart, August 28–September 4, 1938:

(*a*) Extracts from Speech by Herr Hess, August 28, 1938 . 14

(*b*) Extracts from Speech by Herr Bürckel, September 1, 1938 16

(*c*) Extracts from Speech by Dr. Goebbels, September 4, 1938 16

(iii) Extracts from Speech by Dr. Goebbels, September 10, 1938 . . 17

(iv) Extracts from Speech by Herr Hitler, October 26, 1938 . . 19

(v) Extracts from Speech by Herr Hitler, November 6, 1938 . . 19

(vi) Extracts from Speech by Herr von Ribbentrop, November 7, 1938 21

(vii) Extract from Speech by Herr Hitler, November 8, 1938 . . 25

(viii) Speech by Herr von Ribbentrop, November 25, 1938 . . . 27

(ix) Extracts from Speech by Dr. Schacht, November 29, 1938 . . 29

2. Visits of Statesmen

Herr Hitler's Visit to Rome, May 3–9, 1938:

(a) Extract from Speech by H.M. the King of Italy, May 4, 1938 31

(b) Extract from Herr Hitler's Reply 31

(c) Extract from Speech by Signor Mussolini, May 7, 1938 . 32

(d) Extract from Herr Hitler's Reply 33

3. Protests Concerning Anti-Jewish Measures and Press Campaign

(i) Statement by the Rt. Hon. Neville Chamberlain, November 14, 1938 34

(ii) Extract from Speech by the Rt. Hon. Sir Samuel Hoare, November 21, 1938 35

(iii) Question by Mr. Arthur Henderson, and Reply by the Rt. Hon. Neville Chamberlain, November 21, 1938 35

(iv) Official German Announcement concerning Relations with the United States, December 30, 1938 35

II. ANNEXATION OF AUSTRIA

Introductory Note 36

(i) Extracts from Interview given by Dr. von Schuschnigg, Federal Chancellor of Austria, January 4, 1938 42

(ii) Communiqué issued after the Meeting of the Rome Protocol States at Budapest, January 12, 1938 43

(iii) Extracts from Article on 'The Vitality of the Rome Pact', by Dr. von Schuschnigg, January 13, 1938 44

(iv) Identical German and Austrian Communiqués announcing Dr. von Schuschnigg's Visit to Berchtesgaden, February 12, 1938 47

(v) Identical German and Austrian Communiqués on the Berchtesgaden Conversations, February 15, 1938 47

(vi) Broadcast Statement by Colonel Adam, Chief of the Press Department in Vienna, February 15, 1938 48

(vii) Extract from Speech by Herr von Papen, German Ambassador at Vienna, February 15, 1938. 49

(viii) Austrian Official Communiqués, February 18 .

(a) Communiqué concerning National-Socialist Activities . 49

(b) Communiqué concerning the Measures agreed upon at Berchtesgaden 50

(ix) Extract from Speech by Herr Hitler, February 20, 1938 . . 50

(x) Extracts from Statements by the Rt. Hon. Sir John Simon, Chancellor of the Exchequer, February 21, 1938 . . . 51

(xi) Extracts from Speech by Dr. von Schuschnigg, February 24, 1938 53

(xii) Extracts from Speech by Dr. von Schuschnigg, March 9, 1938 . 62

(xiii) Proclamation concerning the Austrian Plebiscite, March 9, 1938 . 64

(xiv) Communiqué issued by the Austrian Government, March 11, 1938 65

(xv) Broadcast Statement by Dr. von Schuschnigg, Former Austrian Federal Chancellor, March 11, 1938 65

(xvi) Broadcast by Dr. Seyss-Inquart, March 11, 1938 . . . 66

(xvii) Austrian Official Communiqué, March 11, 1938 66

(xviii) Statement issued by the German News Bureau from Vienna, March 11, 1938. 66

(xix) Speech of Welcome to Herr Hitler by Dr. Seyss-Inquart, March 12, 1938 67

(xx) Speech by Herr Hitler, March 12, 1938 68

(xxi) Herr Hitler's Proclamation to Germany, March 12, 1938 . . 69

(xxii) Exchange of Messages between Herr Hitler and Signor Mussolini, March 12, 1938:

(a) Telegram from Herr Hitler to Signor Mussolini . . 72
(b) Reply from Signor Mussolini 72

(xxiii) Announcement by the Official German News Agency, March 12, 1938 72

(xxiv) Statement issued by the German Embassy in London, March 12, 1938 72

(xxv) Federal Constitutional Law concerning the Reunion of Austria with the German Reich, March 13, 1938 73

(xxvi) Law concerning the Reunion of Austria with the German Reich, March 13, 1938 73

(xxvii) Extracts from Statement by the Rt. Hon. Neville Chamberlain, March 14, 1938 74

(xxviii) Extracts from Speech by Herr Hitler, March 15, 1938 . . 78

(xxix) Extracts from Speech by Herr Hitler, March 18, 1938 . . 80

(xxx) Extracts from Letter from the German Government to the Secretary-General of the League of Nations, March 18, 1938 . 83

(xxxi) The Plebiscite Campaign, March 22–April 9, 1938:

(a) Extracts from Speech by Dr. Goebbels, March 22, 1938 . 83

(b) Extracts from Speech by Herr Bürckel, German Commissioner for the Plebiscite, March 24, 1938 . . 84

(c) Extracts from Speech by Herr Hitler, March 25, 1938 . 89

(d) Extracts from Speech by Herr Hitler, March 28, 1938 . 91

(e) Extracts from Speech by Herr Hitler, April 3, 1938 . 92

(f) Extracts from Speech by Herr Hitler, April 5, 1938 . 92

(g) Extracts from Speech by Herr Hitler, April 9, 1938 . 93

(xxxii) Declaration of the Austrian Bishops, March 27, 1938 . . . 94

(xxxiii) Extracts from Broadcast by Admiral Horthy, Regent of Hungary, April 3, 1938 94

(xxxiv) Closing of British and American Legations in Vienna:

(a) First Note from the British Government to the German Government, April 2, 1938 96

(b) Second Note of the same date 96

(c) Note from the United States Government to the German Government, April 6, 1938 96

(xxxv) Negotiations between Great Britain and Germany concerning Austrian Loans:

(a) Statement by the Rt. Hon. R. A. Butler, May 16, 1938 . 97

(b) Extract from Statement by the Rt. Hon. Sir John Simon, July 1, 1938 97

(xxxvi) Negotiations between the United States and Germany concerning Austrian Loans:

(a) Note from the United States Government to the German Government, April 6, 1938 98

(*b*) Note from the United States Government to the German Government, June 9, 1938 100
(*c*) Note from the United States Government to the German Government, October 19, 1938 101
(*d*) Note from the German Government to the United States Government, November 17, 1938 101
(*e*) Extracts from Note of the United States Government to the German Government, November 25, 1938 . . 103

III. DISMEMBERMENT OF CZECHOSLOVAKIA

Introductory Note 106

1. Up to the Crisis of May 21

Introductory Note 107
(i) Extracts from Speech by Dr. Hodža, Prime Minister of Czechoslovakia, March 4, 1938 113
(ii) Extracts from Statement by President Beneš, March 5, 1938 . . 117
(iii) Extract from Statement by the Rt. Hon. Neville Chamberlain, March 14, 1938 120
(iv) Extracts from Speech by the Rt. Hon. Neville Chamberlain, March 24, 1938 120
(v) Extracts from Broadcast by Dr. Hodža, March 28, 1938 . . 123
(vi) Extracts from Speech by President Beneš, April 16, 1938 . . 127
(vii) Extracts from Speech by Herr Henlein, Leader of the Sudeten German Party (the 'Eight Points'), April 24, 1938 . . . 130
(viii) Statement by M. Krofta, Czechoslovak Foreign Minister, April 25, 1938 138
(ix) Communiqué issued by the Czechoslovak Government on the Visits of the British and French Ministers in Prague, May 7, 1938 139
(x) Statement by M. Kalinin, President of the Supreme Council of the Soviet Union, May 11, 1938 139
(xi) Extracts from Statement by Dr. Hodža, May 20, 1938 . . 139
(xii) Extracts from Speech by President Beneš, May 21, 1938 . . 142
(xiii) Statement by the Rt. Hon. Neville Chamberlain, May 23, 1938 . 145

2. The Negotiations During the Summer

Introductory Note 146
(i) Statement by the Rt. Hon. R. A. Butler, Under-Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, May 26, 1938 151
(ii) Memorandum ('The Fourteen Points') presented by the Sudeten German Party, June 7, 1938 151
(iii) Joint Communiqué issued by the Press Bureau of the Sudeten German Party and the Official Czechoslovak Press Bureau, June 15, 1938 162

(iv) Extracts from Communiqué issued by the Czechoslovak Government, June 18, 1938 162
(v) Extracts from Speech by Dr. Goebbels, June 21, 1938 . . 163
(vi) Extracts from Communiqué issued by the Czechoslovak Government, June 23, 1938 164
(vii) Extract from Speech by President Beneš, June 30, 1938 . . 164
(viii) Communiqué of the Czechoslovak Government concerning Relations with Germany, July 16, 1938 164
(ix) Communiqué of the Czechoslovak Government concerning the Progress of the Discussions on the Nationalities Statute, July 16, 1938 165
(x) Extracts from Speech by the Rt. Hon. Neville Chamberlain, July 26, 1938 166
(xi) Extracts from Speech by the Rt. Hon. Viscount Halifax, July 27, 1938 169
(xii) Communiqué of the Czechoslovak Government, July 29, 1938 . 171
(xiii) Extracts from Speech by Herr Henlein, July 29, 1938 . . 172
(xiv) Communiqué of the Sudeten German Press Bureau concerning Herr Kundt's Letter to Dr. Hodža, July 30, 1938 173
(xv) Dr. Hodža's Reply to Herr Kundt's 'Five Questions', July 31, 1938 174
(xvi) Lord Runciman's Statement to the Press on his Arrival in Prague, August 3, 1938 174
(xvii) Extracts from Statement by Dr. Hodža, August 25, 1938 . . 175
xviii) Communiqué of the German Government on Herr Henlein's Visit to Herr Hitler, September 2, 1938 177
(xix) Extract from Speech by M. Bonnet, September 4, 1938 . . 177
(xx) The 'Fourth Plan' drafted by the Czechoslovak Government, September 7, 1938 178
(xxi) Extracts from Broadcast Speech by President Beneš, September 10, 1938 184
(xxii) Extracts from Speech by Field-Marshal Göring, September 10, 1938 189
(xxiii) Extracts from Speech by Dr. Goebbels, September 10, 1938 . . 190
(xxiv) Extracts from Speech by Herr Hitler, September 12, 1938 . . 191
(xxv) Communiqué concerning the Proclamation of Martial Law in Certain Districts, September 13, 1938 198
(xxvi) Communiqué concerning the Prohibition of Meetings in Czechoslovakia, September 13, 1938 198
(xxvii) Communiqué of the Sudeten German Party, September 14, 1938 198

3. The September Crisis

Introductory Note 199
(i) Communiqué concerning the Message from the Rt. Hon. Neville Chamberlain to Herr Hitler, September 14, 1938 . . 204

(ii) Statement by the Japanese Foreign Office Spokesman, September 14, 1938 204
(iii) Message to the Nation from the Rt. Hon. Neville Chamberlain, September 15, 1938 205
(iv) Declaration by Herr Henlein, September 15, 1938 . . . 205
(v) Unsigned Article by Signor Mussolini entitled 'Letter to Runciman', September 15, 1938 206
(vi) Statement by the Rt. Hon. Neville Chamberlain on his Return from Berchtesgaden, September 16, 1938 208
(vii) Call to Arms by Herr Henlein, September 17, 1938 . . . 208
(viii) Broadcast Speech by Dr. Hodža, September 18, 1938. . . 209
(ix) Communiqué issued after the Conversations between M. Daladier and M. Bonnet and British Ministers in London, September 18, 1938 213
(x) Anglo-French Proposals submitted to the Czechoslovak Government, September 19, 1938 213
(xi) Reply of the Czechoslovak Government to the Anglo-French Proposals, September 20, 1938 214
(xii) Telegram of Instructions from Lord Halifax to the British Minister at Prague, September 21, 1938 216
(xiii) Note from the Czechoslovak Government accepting the Anglo-French Proposals, September 21, 1938 217
(xiv) Extract from Broadcast by the Czechoslovak Government, September 21, 1938 217
(xv) Letter from Lord Runciman to the Rt. Hon. Neville Chamberlain, September 21, 1938 218
(xvi) Extracts from Speech by M. Litvinov, September 21, 1938 . . 224
(xvii) Statement by the Rt. Hon. Neville Chamberlain on leaving for Godesberg, September 22, 1938 225
(xviii) Statement by the British Delegation at Godesberg, September 22, 1938 226
(xix) Broadcast by President Beneš, September 22, 1938 . . . 226
(xx) First Letter from the Rt. Hon. Neville Chamberlain at Godesberg to Herr Hitler, September 23, 1938 227
(xxi) Letter from Herr Hitler to the Rt. Hon Neville Chamberlain, September 23, 1938 228
(xxii) Second Letter from the Rt. Hon. Neville Chamberlain to Herr Hitler, September 23, 1938 231
(xxiii) Memorandum handed by Herr Hitler to the Rt. Hon. Neville Chamberlain, September 23, 1938 232
(xxiv) Extract from Czechoslovak Mobilization Order, September 23, 1938 233
(xxv) Extract from Statement by M. Litvinov, September 23, 1938 . 233

(xxvi) Statement by the Rt. Hon. Neville Chamberlain on his Return from Godesberg, September 24, 1938 234

(xxvii) Letter handed by the Czechoslovak Minister to the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs: September 25, 1938 . . . 235

(xxviii) Broadcast by the Czechoslovak Government, September 26, 1938 236

(xxix) Extracts from Speeches by Signor Mussolini during his Tour of Italian Cities, September 18–26, 1938:

(*a*) At Trieste, September 18 239

(*b*) At Gorizia, September 20 240

(*c*) At Udine, September 20 240

(*d*) At Treviso, September 21 241

(*e*) At Padua, September 24 241

(*f*) At Belluno, September 24 242

(*g*) At Vicenza, September 26 242

(*h*) At Verona, September 26 243

(xxx) Letter from the Rt. Hon. Neville Chamberlain to Herr Hitler, September 26, 1938 243

(xxxi) Letter from the Czechoslovak Minister in London to the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, September 26, 1938 . . . 245

(xxxii) Communiqué published by the Czechoslovak Government, September 26, 1938 246

(xxxiii) Extracts from Speech by Herr Hitler, September 26, 1938 . . 249

(xxxiv) Statement by the Rt. Hon. Neville Chamberlain, September 26, 1938 260

(xxxv) British Official Statement, September 26, 1938 261

(xxxvi) President Roosevelt's Appeals for Peace:

(*a*) President's Roosevelt's First Message to Dr. Beneš, Herr Hitler, Mr. Chamberlain, and M. Daladier, September 26, 1938 261

(*b*) Reply from the Rt. Hon. Neville Chamberlain, September 26, 1938 262

(*c*) Reply from M. Daladier, September 26, 1938 . . . 263

(*d*) Reply from President Beneš, September 26, 1938 . . 263

(*e*) Reply from Herr Hitler, September 26, 1938 . . . 264

(*f*) President Roosevelt's Second Message to Herr Hitler, September 26, 1938 266

(*g*) Telegram from the President of the Argentine Republic to the President of the United States, September 26, 1938 267

(xxxvii) Letter from Herr Hitler to the Rt. Hon. Neville Chamberlain, September 27, 1938 268

(xxxviii) Broadcast Speech by the Rt. Hon. Neville Chamberlain, September 27, 1938 270

(xxxix) Statement issued from the Headquarters of the British Legion, September 27, 1938 272

(xl) Declaration of Neutrality by General Franco, September 27, 1938 272

(xli) Personal Messages sent by the Rt. Hon. Neville Chamberlain to Herr Hitler and Signor Mussolini, September 28, 1938:
(a) To Herr Hitler 272
(b) To Signor Mussolini 272
(xlii) Extracts from Speech by the Rt. Hon. Neville Chamberlain, September 28, 1938 273
(xliii) Broadcast Statement by M. Daladier, September 28, 1938 . . 288
(xliv) Agreement concluded at Munich, September 29, 1938 . . 289
(xlv) Joint Declaration by the Rt. Hon. Neville Chamberlain and Herr Hitler, September 30, 1938 291
(xlvi) Statement by M. Daladier, September 30, 1938 291
(xlvii) Second Statement by M. Daladier, September 30, 1938 . . 291
(xlviii) Message from the Rt. Hon. Neville Chamberlain to M. Daladier, October 1, 1938 292
(xlix) Letter from M. Daladier to the Rt. Hon. Neville Chamberlain, October 4, 1938 292
(l) Statements on the Munich Agreement made in the Debate in Parliament, October 3–6, 1938:
(a) Extracts from Speech by the Rt. Hon. Neville Chamberlain, October 3, 1938 292
(b) Extracts from Speech by the Rt. Hon. Viscount Halifax, October 3, 1938 298
(c) Extracts from Speech by the Rt. Hon. Sir Samuel Hoare, October 3, 1938 301
(d) Extracts from Speech by the Rt. Hon. Sir Thomas Inskip, October 4, 1939 302
(e) Extracts from Speech by the Rt. Hon. Sir John Simon, October 5, 1938 302
(li) Extracts from Broadcast by Mr. Sumner Welles, October 3, 1938 303
(lii) Extract from Speech by M. Daladier, October 4, 1938 . . . 307
(liii) Extracts from Speech by Mr. Francis B. Sayre, October 10, 1938 314
(liv) Extracts from Speech by Count Ciano, November 30, 1938 . . 315

4. The Post-Munich Period

Introductory Note 321
(i) Communiqué issued by the Czechoslovak Government, September 30, 1938 326
(ii) Broadcast by General Syrový, September 30, 1938 . . . 326
(iii) Order of the Day issued to the Czechoslovak Army by General Krejčí, September 30, 1938 328
(iv) Extracts from Speech by Herr Hitler, October 4, 1938 . . 329
(v) Letter of Resignation from President Beneš, to General Syrový, October 5, 1938 329
(vi) Farewell Broadcast by President Beneš, October 5, 1938 . . 330

(vii) Extracts from Declaration by General Syrový, October 5, 1938 . 333
(viii) Extracts from Speech by Herr Hitler, October 5, 1938 . . 335
(ix) Extracts from Official Czechoslovak Broadcast, October 7, 1938 . 336
(x) Extracts from Speech by Herr Hitler, October 9, 1938 . . 337
(xi) Communiqué issued after the Meeting of the International Commission set up under the Munich Agreement, October 13, 1938 339
(xii) The British Legion's Offer of Services:
(*a*) Extracts from Communiqué issued by the Foreign Office, October 3, 1938 340
(*b*) Extract from Letter from the Rt. Hon. Viscount Halifax to the British Legion Volunteer Force on their Disbandment, October 17, 1938 341
(xiii) Protocol determining the Frontier between Germany and Czechoslovakia, November 21, 1938 341
(xiv) Autonomy of Slovakia and Ruthenia:
(*a*) Extracts from Communiqué issued after the Meeting of the Club of Deputies and Senators belonging to the Slovak National Party, September 19, 1938 . . . 341
(*b*) Extract from Joint Declaration adopted by the Representatives of the Slovak Parties, October 6, 1938 . . 342
(*c*) Extract from Czechoslovak Official Broadcast, October 6, 1938 342
(*d*) Introductory Clause of the Constitutional Act concerning the Autonomy of Slovakia, November 22, 1938 . . 342
(xv) Polish Claims:
(*a*) Extract from Statement by M. Krofta, May 20, 1938 . 343
(*b*) Statement issued by the Polish Embassy in London, May 21, 1938 343
(*c*) Communiqué of the Czechoslovak Government, October 1, 1938 343
(*d*) Extracts from Broadcast by Colonel Beck, October 1, 1938 344
(xvi) Hungarian Claims:
(*a*) Hungarian Official Communiqué concerning the Hungarian Démarche of September 26, 1938 344
(*b*) Extracts from Broadcast by Dr. Imrédy, Hungarian Prime Minister, October 1, 1938 345
(*c*) Hungarian Official Communiqué concerning the Hungarian Note of October 2, 1938 346
(*d*) Joint Official Communiqué by the Hungarian and Czechoslovak Governments on the Opening of Negotiations at Komárno, October 9, 1938 346
(*e*) Declaration by M. de Kánya, Hungarian Minister for Foreign Affairs, breaking off the Negotiations, October 13, 1938 347

(*f*) Statement by Colonel Beck, October 18, 1938 . . . 347
(*g*) Extracts from Statement by Dr. Imrédy, October 24, 1938 348
(*h*) Note of the Czechoslovak Government, October 26, 1938 348
(*i*) Extract from Speech by Mgr. Vološin, Minister for the Administration of Ruthenia, October 26, 1938 . . 349
(*j*) Note of the Hungarian Government, October 27, 1938 . 349
(*k*) Award in the Dispute between Hungary and Czechoslovakia, Vienna, November 2, 1938 351
(*l*) Extracts from Broadcast by Dr. Tiso, President of the Slovak Government, November 2, 1938 . . . 352
(*m*) Extracts from Speech by M. de Kánya, November 12, 1938 353
(*n*) Extracts from Broadcast by M. Revay, Ruthenian Minister for the Interior, November 19, 1938 . . 358
(xvii) Extracts from Speech by the Rt. Hon. Neville Chamberlain, November 1, 1938 359
(xviii) Extracts from Speech by M. Beran, Prime Minister of Czecho-Slovakia, December 13, 1938 363

GERMANY'S RELATIONS WITH HER NEIGHBOURS

I. GERMAN FOREIGN POLICY

'In the history of our people the year 1938 will be a great, incomparable, proud year.' Herr Hitler, speaking on October 5,[1] had every reason for his boast, since he had, as he said on October 9,[2] added some 110,000 square kilometres and ten million Germans to the Reich without war. It was in this year that, outmanœuvring his opponents—and, it might be added, also his allies—he laid the strategic foundations for his victories of 1939 and 1940.

The main statements on German foreign policy are given in the section which follows; but reference should also be made to some of the declarations which it has seemed more convenient to print in the sections dealing with the annexation of Austria and the dismemberment of Czechoslovakia. These include in particular Herr Hitler's speeches of March 18,[3] September 12,[4] September 26,[5] October 5,[6] and October 9,[7] and Field-Marshal Goering's of September 10.[8]

Herr Hitler's Assurances.—In his statements of 1938, Herr Hitler alternated between violent abuse of whatever country—first Austria, then Czechoslovakia—was the immediate object of his attack, and declarations of his pacific intentions once he had attained his professed object of 'bringing back into the Reich' the populations of German race which lived beyond its frontiers. True, he declared that he would never return to the League of Nations,[9] which continued to be a chief object of his sarcasm; but to other countries individually he gave a series of categorical assurances. Italy, his partner in the Axis, received not only expressions of appreciation and gratitude for the support given by Signor Mussolini, but a declaration that her frontiers were regarded as inviolable. This was given on March 18, immediately after the annexation of Austria,[10] during Herr Hitler's visit to Rome in May,[11] and again on September 26, when Herr Hitler said that he had 'banished from the world' a problem—he was alluding to the Tyrolese under Italian rule—'that from henceforth simply does not exist for us.'[12]

He spared no effort to convince the Western democracies that after achieving his objects in Austria and the Sudetenland, he would have no further territorial claims in Europe. He did not renounce his colonial claims,[13] but said that they would in no case lead to war; in effect they were, for the moment, put into cold storage. But his assurances with regard to Europe were emphatic and repeated—in his first important speech of the year on February 20,[14] on September 12, when he said that he had voluntarily given up the claim to Alsace-Lorraine in order to 'end the eternal quarrel with France once and for all', [15] and again on September 26.[16] The Munich Agreement was accompanied by the Anglo-German Declaration signed by Herr Hitler and Mr. Chamberlain,[17] and followed by the Franco-German Declaration of December 6.[18] Other and less reassuring aspects of Anglo-German relations in 1938 are dealt with below.

Poland was singled out for protestations of friendship; the improvement of relations, Herr Hitler said, had only been possible because in Poland he was

[1] See p. 336. [2] See p. 338. [3] See pp. 80–83. [4] See pp. 191–98.
[5] See pp. 249–60. [6] See pp. 335–36. [7] See pp. 337–39. [8] See pp. 189–90.
[9] See pp. 5–7. [10] See pp. 82–83. [11] See p. 34. [12] See p. 253.
[13] See pp. 4, 24, 25, and 287. [14] See p. 10. [15] See p. 194. [16] See pp. 252–53, 259, and 285.
[17] See p. 291. [18] See *Documents on International Affairs*, 1938, Vol. I, pp. 220–23.

dealing not with a Parliamentary democracy, but with a man.[1] The Danzig question, he said on February 20, was no longer a source of danger.[2] On September 26 he went further: 'We realize that here are two peoples which must live side by side and that neither of them can destroy the other. A State with a population of thirty-three millions will always strive for an access to the sea.'[3] Even to Czechoslovakia, on September 26, he flung in deliberately offensive language the assurance that when that country had come to terms with her minorities, he would have 'no further interest in the Czech State. . . . We want no Czechs!'[4] Herr von Ribbentrop,[5] on November 7, also spoke of 'final appeasement' with Czechoslovakia if she would completely reorientate her policy towards Germany.[6]

The U.S.S.R.—To one country, Herr Hitler offered no pacific assurances. He referred to Soviet Russia on February 20 with open and violent hostility: 'There is only one State with which we have not sought to establish relations, nor do we wish to enter into closer relations with it: Soviet Russia. More than ever do we see in Bolshevism the incarnation of the human destructive instinct.'[7] Other hostile references were made in Herr von Ribbentrop's speech of November 25 on the second anniversary of the signature of the Anti-Comintern Pact,[8] and in that of Dr. Goebbels on September 10, in which he gave a theoretical exposition of Nazi doctrine on the relation between democracy and its 'bad boy,' Bolshevism.[9]

The Far East.—In his speech of February 20, Herr Hitler defined his attitude towards China and Japan. He expressed his intention of recognizing 'Manchukuo', and said that while Germany entertained friendly feelings towards China, she regarded Japan as the bulwark in the Far East against Bolshevism, which he considered China too weak, both materially and spiritually, to resist; Germany would therefore be neutral in the Sino-Japanese conflict.[10] Herr von Ribbentrop's speech of November 25, which was mentioned above, also deals with Germany's friendly relations with Japan.

Relations with Great Britain.—In his dealings with Great Britain, Herr Hitler spoke with two voices. On the one hand he gave the assurances which have been mentioned above; pointed to the Naval Treaty of 1936 and said that he never again intended to enter on a fleet-building competition with Great Britain;[11] and in his references to Mr. Chamberlain and his Government generally observed the forms of decency. To this there was one exception: the speech of February 20 contained two sarcastic references[12] to Mr. Eden, who was then still a member of the Government, from which he resigned on the following day. But throughout the year Herr Hitler took every opportunity of attacking the democratic system. His first main complaint referred to the freedom of the Press, which allowed it to carry on what he called a campaign of war-mongering against Germany.[13] Herr von Ribbentrop, at the Foreign Press Association dinner on November 7, also read the foreign Press a long lecture on how it should behave.[14] Herr Hitler's statement on November 6, that 'in the authoritarian, that is the disciplined States, it goes without saying that one does not abuse foreign peoples, does not lie about them, does not incite to war'[15] and other similar observations by him and Herr von Ribbentrop[16] make curious reading in view of the character of the German controlled Press throughout the year, and especially during the anti-British campaign in the autumn which is mentioned below. As will be shown in later sections of the present volume, Herr Hitler himself in his personal attacks on

[1] See pp. 13, 194, and 251. [2] See p. 13. [3] See p. 252. [4] See p. 259.
[5] Herr von Ribbentrop succeeded Baron von Neurath as Minister for Foreign Affairs on February 4, 1938.
[6] See p. 24. [7] See pp. 7–8. [8] See pp. 27–28. [9] See p. 18. [10] See pp. 8–9.
[11] See pp. 194 and 252. [12] See pp. 8 and 11. [13] See pp. 10–12 and 338. [14] See pp. 21–24.
[15] See p. 20. [16] See pp. 22 and 194.

Dr. von Schuschnigg and President Beneš went to lengths for which it would be difficult to find a parallel.

Herr Hitler's second charge against the democratic system was that it was unreliable because the Government could at any time be replaced by an Opposition holding directly contrary views.[1] He made this charge the occasion for personal attacks of extreme virulence on British Opposition statesmen. In these Mr. Churchill holds pride of place, but Mr. Eden and Mr. Duff Cooper receive their share.[2] Herr Hitler also complained bitterly of British interference in German internal affairs—of 'schoolmasterly supervision'[3] and the 'tutelage of governesses.'[4] To all criticisms of Germany's treatment of the Jews and other non-Nazi elements, he and other spokesmen regularly retorted with a '*tu quoque*' and allegations concerning India and Palestine.[5]

In his post-Munich speeches, Mr. Chamberlain expressed the hope that the Anglo-German Declaration would mean the beginning of a real improvement in relations between the two countries.[6] The futility of any such expectation soon became evident. Herr von Ribbentrop expressed resentment at the British rearmament policy,[7] though Herr Hitler and Field-Marshal Goering often referred with pride to Germany's military preparations,[8] which, Herr Hitler said, had been in progress for nearly six years.[9] But far more serious developments were not long in coming. The assassination of Herr vom Rath, a member of the German Embassy staff in Paris, by a crazed Jewish refugee on November 7[10] was followed in Germany by a wave of pogroms, persecution of the Jews, confiscations, and organized looting which shocked the conscience of the world, and was, as Sir Samuel Hoare pointed out, a matter of international concern not only for this reason but also because it raised the refugee problem in an acute form.[11] These abominable atrocities were the best evidence of the character of the régime which carried them out. They were accompanied by an anti-British campaign in the German Press of unequalled virulence, grossness, and mendacity. British Opposition statesmen, including Mr. Churchill, were accused in scarcely veiled terms of complicity in the assassination of Herr vom Rath, and their photographs were published side by side with that of the assassin. Invented accounts of alleged British atrocities in India and Palestine were also published. This campaign—which the German Government, on its own showing, was in a position to prevent—called forth protests from the British Government.[12] Mr. Chamberlain deplored the attitude of the German Press in a speech at the Foreign Press Association dinner on December 13[13]—from which the German representatives pointedly absented themselves. In a speech of December 19 he said that he was 'still waiting for a sign' that those who spoke for Germany were ready to make their contribution to peace.[14]

The persecution of the Jews aroused no less horror in the United States, and the forcible expression given to this feeling by Mr. Ickes called forth an angry protest from Germany.[15]

Other pronouncements made by German speakers in 1938 include the speeches made at the Stuttgart Rally of Germans from abroad,[16] which throw light on the attitude which Germans were expected to adopt in foreign countries, and an *exposé* of economic policy by Dr. Schacht,[17] not long before he was relieved of his functions as President of the Reichsbank early in 1939.

[1] See pp. 21, 25–26, and 338.
[2] See pp. 20–21, 25–26. 336, and 338.
[3] See p. 26.
[4] See p. 339.
[5] See pp. 11, 27, 189, 197, and 339.
[6] See pp. 297–98.
[7] See p. 24.
[8] See pp. 189–90, 196, 251, and 337.
[9] See p. 337.
[10] See p. 34–35.
[11] See p. 35. See also Vol. I, pp. 508–10.
[12] See pp. 34–35.
[13] See Vol. I, p. 129.
[14] See Vol. I, p. 136.
[15] See pp. 35–36.
[16] See pp. 14–17.
[17] See pp. 29–31.

1. Declarations of Policy

(i) *Extracts from Speech by Herr Hitler, Führer and Chancellor of the German Reich, February 20, 1938.*[1]

[*Colonial Claims*]

. . . Our economic position is difficult—not, however, because National-Socialism rules in Germany, but because in this country there are 140 human beings to the square kilometre, because we have not been given those great natural resources which other nations possess, because, above all, we have a lack of fertile soil. If Great Britain were suddenly to be dissolved to-day and England were to be restricted to its own living space, then perhaps the English would better understand the difficulty of the economic problems which confront us. The fact that Germany has mastered these problems and the manner in which she has done so are miracles and something of which we can be really proud. Germany possesses no sort of gold or foreign exchange reserves, the reason for this being not that National-Socialism is in power, but that the non-National-Socialist, democratic-parliamentary State was despoiled for fifteen years by a world eager for plunder; Germany is a country which has to support 140 people to the square kilometre and possesses no colonial complement whatever; Germany is lacking in numerous raw materials and is neither able nor willing to lead a fraudulent existence on credits; but this same country has reduced its unemployment to zero, and has not merely maintained its standard of life, but has even improved it and has done all this by its own efforts. Now when a people has accomplished a miracle of this sort, then those nations at any rate should be silent who, in spite of the most favourable economic conditions, hardly manage to solve their own unemployment problems. . . .

[But whatever we may achieve][2] in the way of an increase of production the hopeless inadequacy of the space allotted to the German nation will not thereby be removed. Therefore our demand will become more and more insistent as the years go by for those colonial possessions which Germany after all never deprived any other nation of, which are practically worthless to the Powers that hold them, but appear indispensable to our own nation.

I should like here to point out that it is futile to hope that we shall bargain away our demand in return for credits. It is not credits that we want, but those fundamental necessities of life which will enable us, by our own efforts, to secure the existence of the nation. Above all, we do not want naïve assurances that we shall be permitted to buy what we need. Once and for all we reject such declarations, which are felt in our country to be only a mockery. There is no economic recipe which could be a complete substitute for the possibilities of intensive economic activity in one's own currency area. . . .

[1] In the Reichstag. *Hitler's Speeches*, 1932–1939. An English Translation of Representative Passages arranged under Subjects and Edited by Norman H. Baynes. Issued under the auspices of the Royal Institute of International Affairs. Oxford University Press, 1942. Vol. II, pp. 1389–1409.

[2] The passage in square brackets is a connecting link summarized by Professor Baynes.

[*League of Nations*]

Recently it has again and again been rumoured that Germany was about to revise her views concerning a possible return into the League of Nations. . . . In the year 1919 there was imposed on several nations a treaty of peace which involved violent interference with national communities and property rights, to an extent hitherto inconceivable. The violence done to national and economic life, the tearing asunder of national communities, took place behind a smoke screen of moralizing phrases which were perhaps good enough to soothe the bad consciences of the perpetrators, but which seemed to the victims to be only a bad joke. After this act of violence had completely and decisively altered the map of the world, from a territorial as well as from a demographic point of view, a League of Nations was founded whose task it was to be to make permanent these insane and unreasonable actions as a final conclusion to the political and economic development of the nations and to fix the results of the Treaty as the eternal and unalterable foundation for the life and boundaries of human communities on this planet. In future no one was to seek to change by force what had arisen through force. But in order to mitigate somewhat the insanity of such an atrocious violation of humanity, the possibility was at least kept open that in future this reorganization of what had arisen through the violence of thousands of years might be modified in a legal, that is to say a reasonable, way. This somewhat difficult task was then, incidentally as it were, assigned to the League of Nations.

Germany herself had, to begin with, no right at all to join this noble society for the moral defence of former acts of violence, but only received the gracious permission to do so through the memorable Reich Chancellor, Gustav Stresemann. Now you know, gentlemen, what a failure this institution has been. It never was a League of Nations, for, from the very beginning, one of the greatest Powers in the world did not belong to it, while yet another important Power resigned later; neither was it an institution of justice nor yet, as is still maintained to-day with astonishing effrontery, of the principles of justice; it is an institution for the maintenance of a state of things which has arisen from the injustice of a thousand years. For either violence is right, or violence is wrong. But if violence is wrong to-day, then violence was wrong in the past. If, therefore, the present condition of the world has arisen through violence, and there is no doubt that this is so, then this condition is one which was produced by a wrong. The League of Nations does not, therefore, defend a condition of right, but one born of a thousand years of wrong. We do, indeed, hear that all this is to be changed. We often hear, for instance, that English politicians would be only too delighted to give us back our colonial possessions if they did not suffer so much from the thought of all the wrong and violence which the natives would thereby undergo. . . . All these colonial empires have in fact not come about through plebiscites, much less democratic ones, of the people living in them, but have been acquired by naked and brutal violence. They are

to-day, of course, inseparable parts of the States in question and as such form a part of that world order which is always represented to us, by democratic politicians in particular, as the 'World Order of Law'—of that 'law' which the League of Nations exists to protect. I quite understand that those who have an interest in the maintenance of this legal order see in the League of Nations a convenient moral forum for the maintenance and, if necessary, the defence of the possessions which they formerly acquired by violence. But what I do not understand is that the nation which has itself been robbed by such an act of violence should in its turn become a member of this illustrious society. And I must protest against the accusation that we are not ready to stand for the principles of law because we are not in the League of Nations. On the contrary: we are not in the League of Nations, because we believe that it is not an institution of justice, but rather an institution for the defence of the wrong done at Versailles.

But there is in addition a series of practical considerations.

1. We formerly left the League of Nations because, true to the principles of its birth and constitution, it denied us the right to equal armaments and therewith equal security.

2. We shall never join it again, because we have no intention of being involved in the defence of injustice in any part of the world by a majority decision of the League.

3. We believe that we are thereby doing a service to all those nations who are so unfortunate as to rely on and place confidence in the League as a factor of real assistance.

For, in the case of the Abyssinian War, for instance, we should have held it better to have had, to begin with, more understanding for Italy's vital needs and secondly to have given the Abyssinians less hope and, above all, fewer promises. This would perhaps have made possible a simpler and more reasonable solution of the whole problem.

4. But, if the worst should come to the worst, we have no intention of allowing the German nation to be drawn into conflicts in which our own interests are not involved. We are not willing to stand up for the territorial or economic interests of other nations if Germany obtains not the least advantage thereby. In addition we do not ourselves expect support of this kind from other nations. Germany is resolved to impose upon herself a wise restriction in her interests and demands. But if German interests should anywhere be seriously at stake, we shall at no time expect assistance from a League of Nations, but shall from the first assume that we shall have to do what is necessary ourselves. And it is as well to be clear about this, for it will always impose on our wishes and hopes that moderation which we often unfortunately fail to see among those who enjoy collective security.

Finally:

5. We do not intend in future to allow an attitude to be prescribed for us by any international institution which refuses officially to recognize indisputable facts and thus in its actions resembles less the conduct of a

responsible human being and more that of a well-known large bird. Since the League of Nations is itself obviously incapable of understanding historical or economic necessities and of fulfilling the demands based on them, and since on the other hand the essential interests of nations are in the long run stronger than formal considerations, a peculiar situation would arise if it were to continue for a hundred years. For it is very probable that in the year 2036 new States will have arisen, or others have disappeared, without its having been possible to register this new situation at Geneva.

[*Recognition of 'Manchukuo'*]

Germany was once compelled by her membership of the League to associate herself in such an unreasonable action; she was, thank Heaven, as a result of leaving it, in a second case able to act in accordance with reason and justice. But I make known to you to-day, gentlemen, that I have now decided in the second case also to make the necessary historically conditioned correction: Germany will recognize Manchukuo. By deciding to take this step we make a final break between a policy which is fantastic and incomprehensible, and one which implies a sober respect for real facts.

I will therefore sum up by saying once more that Germany has not the slightest intention of ever returning to the League, especially now that Italy has left it. This does not mean that we refuse to co-operate with other Powers; on the contrary, it means only that we refuse to undertake obligations which are incalculable and in most cases impossible of fulfilment.

[*Soviet Russia*]

We are of the opinion that Germany has made many valuable contributions to co-operation with other Powers. The Reich to-day cannot be considered isolated, either politically or economically. I have on the contrary endeavoured since taking office to establish the best possible relations with most of the other States of the world. There is only one State with which we have not sought to establish relations, nor do we wish to enter into closer relations with it: Soviet Russia. More than ever do we see in Bolshevism the incarnation of the human destructive instinct.

But we do not make the Russian people as such responsible for this ghastly ideology of annihilation. We know perfectly well that a small, upper class of Jewish intellectuals plunged a great nation into a state bordering on insanity. This would not concern us so much after all, had this doctrine remained within the frontiers of Russia herself, since Germany has no intention of foisting our conceptions of life on the Russian nation. Unfortunately, however, the Bolshevism of international Jewry attempts from its central point in Soviet Russia to rot away the very core of the nations of the world, to overthrow the existing social order, and to substitute chaos for civilization.

We certainly do not seek for contact with Bolshevism. On the contrary, it makes persistent efforts to corrupt the rest of mankind with its thoughts

and ideas, and by so doing to plunge the world into a disaster of unprecedented magnitude. And here we are ruthless foes. We overcame the Communist machinations of Moscow in our own land, and we have not the least intention of allowing Germany to be annihilated from without by the material forces of Bolshevism!

Great Britain has repeatedly assured us through the mouth of her responsible statesmen of her desire to maintain the *status quo* in the world. This should apply here, too. Whenever a European country falls a prey to Bolshevism, a shifting of positions becomes apparent. For the territories thus bolshevized are no longer sovereign States with independent, national lives of their own, but are now mere sections of the Moscow Revolutionary Centre. I am aware that Mr. Eden does not share this view. M. Stalin does, however, and is perfectly frank about it. In my opinion M. Stalin is still at the moment of speaking a much better judge and interpreter of Bolshevist views and aims than a British Cabinet Minister! Therefore we look upon every attempt to spread Bolshevism, no matter where it may be, with utter loathing, and where it menaces us, we shall oppose it.

[*China and Japan*]

This explains our relations with Japan. I cannot agree with those politicians who think they do Europe a service in harming Japan. I am afraid the defeat of Japan in Eastern Asia would never benefit Europe or America but only Bolshevist Soviet Russia. I do not consider China strong enough, either spiritually or materially, to withstand from her own resources any attack by Bolshevism. I believe, however, that even the greatest victory gained by Japan would be infinitely less dangerous for civilization and world-peace than any success achieved by Bolshevism. Germany has concluded a pact with Japan to counteract Comintern aims. She has always been on friendly terms with China, so I think, under the circumstances, we may best be considered truly neutral spectators of this drama. I need hardly say we all earnestly desired, and still desire, appeasement and at length peace between these two great Eastern nations. We believe, however, that peace would perhaps have been restored long ere now, if certain elements had not, as in the case of Abyssinia, upset the balance in Eastern Asia by putting their advice and perhaps promises of moral assistance into the scale of one party. This attitude—as matters stand—could only have a purely platonic significance. A drowning man, however, clutches at every straw. It would have been more expedient to have drawn China's attention to the full gravity of her position, instead of citing, as so often before, the League of Nations as the certain guarantee of peace and security!

No matter at what time and in what manner the happenings in Eastern Asia may ultimately right themselves, Germany, in the defensive attitude she adopts towards Communism, will always regard and value Japan as an element of security, and a guarantee, moreover, for the culture of mankind. For just as we are perfectly certain that Japan's greatest victory would not

affect the civilization of the white races in the very least, so do we not doubt for a moment that a victory gained by Bolshevism would signify the end of the present thousand-year-old civilization of the white races!

In this connexion I should like to defend myself most emphatically against those idiotic attacks which accuse Germany of betraying the interests of the white race in the conflict in the Far East, because of the attitude we have adopted. Really, I must confess we are simply amazed when forced to read such assertions in French and English newspapers. That just this very National-Socialist State, always the object of attack on account of its racial policy, should now suddenly have the honour of drawing the sword for racial ideals, or, rather let us say racial interests, is a huge jest in world history. Germany has no territorial interests of any kind in Eastern Asia. She has the natural wish to carry on trade and commerce, and in so doing she is not obliged to support any one party. But one thing we are obliged to do, and that is to recognize the fact that a Bolshevist victory would here, too, destroy all possibilities.

Moreover, Germany once possessed territory herself in Eastern Asia. True this did not prevent certain Powers with the help of a coalition of white and yellow races from expelling the German Reich from the country. To-day we have really no longer any desire to receive invitations to return, to Eastern Asia, let us say.

[*Spain*]

Neither does Germany have any territorial interests which might be connected in any way with the terrible civil war now raging in Spain. The situation there is similar to that which we ourselves formerly experienced in Germany. The attack, inspired and conducted both personally and materially by Moscow, is directed against a national independent State and arouses the fierce opposition of a national population unwilling to be slaughtered. And precisely as in the case of Germany, the democratic International is on the side of the Bolshevist incendiaries. The German Government would see in the bolshevizing of Spain not only an element detrimental to the peace of Europe, but also one disturbing to the balance of power on the Continent. If Spain were to become a section of the Moscow Centre, there would be grave danger of the spread of this plague of annihilation and destruction, the consequences of which we could under no circumstance view with indifferent calm. We are indeed happy in the knowledge that our anti-Bolshevist attitude is also shared by another State.

[*Italy*]

Italo-German relations are based on conceptions of life and of the State common to both nations, as well as on co-operative action in warding off the international dangers that menace us both. How greatly this fact is appreciated everywhere in Germany was most strikingly evidenced in the joyous enthusiasm with which the creator of the Fascist State was welcomed

in the Reich. One fact at least ought to be acknowledged by all European statesmen. If Mussolini had not conquered Italy in 1922 with the help of his Fascist Movement, the country would in all probability have fallen a prey to Bolshevism. The dire consequence to Western culture in the event of such a collapse would be inconceivable. The very thought of such a possibility is horrifying to a man of historical vision and sense of responsibility based on a knowledge of the facts. The sympathy which Benito Mussolini enjoys in Germany is a tribute to a personality of saecular greatness.

Italy's position resembles that of Germany in certain respects. Under the circumstances, therefore, it was but natural that suffering as we both do from overcrowding, we should show a keen understanding for the activities of a man and his Government who, refusing to allow their people to be sacrificed on the altar of the fantastic ideals of the League of Nations, were rather fully determined to save their nation. And all the more so, since there is no doubt that the apparent ideals of the League of Nations coincide rather too closely with the exceedingly realistic interests of its chief Powers.

Furthermore, Germany and Italy have taken a common stand with regard to the Spanish conflict. Its aim is to see a national Spain which enjoys complete independence. The Italo-German friendship, springing as it does from definite causes, has become an element of stabilization in the appeasement of Europe. The connexion of both States with Japan presents the most powerful of all obstructions to the further advance of the menacing power of Russian Bolshevism.

[*Great Britain and France*]

There has been much talk and still more writing in recent years about the differences between France and England on the one hand, and Germany on the other. I do not quite see wherein these differences are supposed to be embodied. Germany has no further territory in Europe to claim from France, a point I have frequently stressed. We hope the regaining of the Saar districts has now definitely closed the chapter of Franco-German territorial disputes.

Nor has Germany any quarrel with England unless perhaps it may be our wish for colonies. There is, however, not a single reason for any kind of possible conflict. But what does poison friendly relations between the two countries, and consequently causes trouble, is an absolutely intolerable Press campaign which is being conducted in France and England under the slogan of 'Liberty for expression of personal opinions'. I have little use for the reiterated sentiments of foreign statesmen and diplomats who declare that there is no law in these countries to put an end to lies and calumnies. Here it is not a case of private affairs, but one concerned with the cohabitation of peoples and States. And we are not in a position to make light of such things for any length of time. We simply cannot close our eyes to the effects of such a virulent campaign. If we do so, it can easily happen that in certain countries the malicious machinations of international weavers of

lies will succeed in arousing hatred of our country, which, if disregarded, will gradually develop into an openly hostile attitude towards us. The German nation could not possibly face this with the necessary power of resistance, since our own Press policy prevents the expression of such hostility towards these nations. And this is a grave menace indeed, and one that endangers peace. For this very reason, I refuse to tolerate any longer the unbridled and persistent scoffing and slandering to which our country and people are subjected. We shall answer these calumnies in future and with real National-Socialist thoroughness. . . .

Mr. Eden boasted in a recent speech of the various liberties of his land. One special liberty he failed to mention, liberty for journalists to slander and jeer at other nations, their organizations, men, and Governments to their heart's content. . . . But the harm caused by such incitement is nevertheless so great that in future we do not intend to tolerate it without a vehement protest. This crime is all the more serious when it deliberately aims at goading on the nations to war. . . . The British Government wishes to limit armaments or ban bombing. I once proposed that myself. But at that time I also suggested that it was still more important to prevent the poisoning of public opinion by infamous articles in the Press. What has strengthened our feelings towards Italy—if that were at all possible—is the fact that in that country State leadership and Press policy follow one path. The Government does not talk of mutual understanding while the Press agitates for the opposite course.

This chapter on the disturbance of international relations includes the impertinence of writing letters to the head of a foreign State asking for information about sentences passed in courts of law. I would suggest that certain members of the House of Commons concern themselves with sentences passed by the British Courts Martial in Jerusalem, and not with the sentences passed in the German People's Court. We can perhaps understand interest in German traitors, but it does not improve relations between England and Germany.

For the rest, let no one imagine that such tactless interventions will have any influence on German law courts or on their sentences. I, for instance, would never allow a member of the German Reichstag to interfere in matters of English justice. The British Empire has wide interests, and we recognize them as such, but the affairs of the German nation and Reich are determined by the German Reichstag, and by me, its representative, not by a delegation of English letter-writers!

I am sure it would be a most praiseworthy achievement were we to come to an international agreement, so as not only to prevent the use of poison, incendiary, and explosive bombs, but above all to prevent the circulation of those newspapers which do more harm to the promotion of friendly relations between nations than any poison or incendiary bombs.

Since such an international Press campaign is not conducive to appeasement, but must rather be regarded as a grave menace to peace among the

nations, I have decided to carry through the strengthening of Germany's armed forces as a security against the day when these wild threats of war might actually turn into bloodshed and violence. On 4 February these measures were begun and since then have been in progress: they will be carried through with speed and resolution.

Germany at any rate has a sincere desire to restore mutual confidence between herself and all the Great Powers of Europe, as well as with other States. If this is not successful, it is not our fault. We earnestly believe that little can be expected at this time from conferences and single conversations because of this attitude on the part of the Press. It is impossible to deceive oneself as to the following facts. This international Press campaign against peace will immediately destroy every attempt to arrive at an understanding between peoples. It will immediately misinterpret or distort the meaning of every conference. It will immediately place a false light on every agreement. And there is, therefore, nothing to give one confidence under these circumstances that any good can come out of such conferences or out of such conversations, as long as Governments on the whole are not in a position to act decisively because they must always consider the public interpretation placed upon their actions.

We believe, therefore, that for the time being the only practical way of arriving at an understanding is through the normal diplomatic exchange of notes, thus preventing too crude falsifications of the International Press.

Though Germany does herself set a limit to her interests, this must not be taken as a lack of interest in everything that goes on in the world outside. We are happy to have been able to maintain normal, and in part also, friendly relations with most of the States that border on Germany. We believe that by so doing the feeling of general tension has been relieved. We are filled with deep and sincere satisfaction at the genuine wish to maintain a real neutrality that we have observed in several European States. We believe we can see in this an element of increasing calm, and therefore of increasing security. But we see also, on the other hand, the deplorable consequences of the economic and population problems caused by the violence done to the map of Europe in the mad act of Versailles.

[*Austria and Czechoslovakia*]

Over ten million Germans live in two of the States adjoining our frontiers.

Till 1866 they were constitutionally united with the whole German people. They fought up to 1918 in the Great War shoulder to shoulder with the German soldiers of the Reich. Under the terms of the Peace Pact they were kept against their will from forming a union with the Reich. This in itself is sufficiently distressing. But about one thing there can be no doubt. The fact that they are now citizens of other States should not deprive them of their rights as members of a national community.[1] Yet a people has the

[1] German: *Die staatsrechtliche Trennung vom Reich kann nicht zu einer volkspolitischen Rechtlosmachung führen, d.h. die allgemeine Rechte einer volklichen Selbsbestimmung . . . können nicht einfach miszachtet werden.* (Note by Professor Baynes.)

right to self-determination, as we were solemnly assured in Wilson's Fourteen Points which served as the basis of the Armistice. This cannot be overlooked simply because the people in question happen to be Germans! In the long run it is intolerable for a self-respecting World Power to know that across the frontier are kinsmen who have to suffer severe persecution simply because of their sympathy, their feeling of union with Germany, because of their common fate, their common point of view. Of course, we realize that a frontier settlement pleasing to all is scarcely possible in Europe. It should, therefore, be all the more important to avoid all unnecessary humiliation of national minorities, for it is quite enough that they must be separated from their homeland without adding to this the pain of persecution for belonging to a certain national community (*Volkstum*). We can prove that it is possible with a good will to find ways of conciliation, of relief of tension. If one tries to prevent the solution of the problem in this way and uses force in so doing, then one day this violence will be returned with violence. We cannot dispute the fact that, as long as Germany was feeble and powerless, she simply had to endure these persecutions of Germans across her frontiers. Just as England looks after her interests which cover the whole globe, so also will the Germany of to-day look after and safeguard her relatively restricted interests. And to these interests of the German Reich belongs also the protection of those fellow-Germans who live beyond our frontiers and are unable to ensure for themselves the right to a general freedom, personal, political, and ideological.

[*Poland*]

We are glad to be able to state now in the fifth year after the first great foreign political agreement of the Reich that in our relationship with the State from which we might have expected the greatest opposition, there has occurred not only a lessening of the tension, but also during this year there has been a pronounced rapprochement. Of course I realize that we have a certain circumstance to thank for this—the circumstance that there was then no Western parliamentarianism in Warsaw, but rather a Polish marshal, who, an outstanding personality, realized the importance to Europe of relieving this tension between Germany and Poland. That work, regarded at the time with scepticism by many people, has endured the test of time, and I may well say that dating from the moment that the League of Nations finally gave up its continual attempts at disturbing affairs in Danzig and appointed a new Commissioner, a man of high personal qualities, that from that very moment the danger point to European peace entirely lost its threatening aspect. The Polish State respects the national relations of Danzig, and Danzig and Germany respect Polish rights. So it was possible to find the way to an understanding in spite of attempts to disturb it, and, beginning with Danzig, to remove difficulties in relations between Germany and Poland, thus arriving at a sincere spirit of friendly co-operation. . . .[1]

[1] Then followed the passage on Austria which appears on pp. 50–51 below.

I can assure you, gentlemen, that our relations with the other European Powers, as well as with the States outside Europe, are either normal or else very friendly. I need only point to our especially warm friendship with Hungary, Bulgaria, Yugoslavia, and many other States. Our foreign trade balance has given you an impressive picture of our economic co-operation with the other peoples!

But above all stands our co-operation with those two great Powers who have recognized a world danger in Bolshevism, just as Germany has, and are determined to unite their strength in common defence against the Comintern movement. That this work of co-operation with Italy and Japan may ever become closer is my sincere desire. In addition, we are happy for every relief of tension that can be effected in the general political situation. For however great may be the achievement of our people we are not in doubt that general prosperity would be increased if a closer international co-operation could be secured.

The German people in its whole character is not warlike, but rather soldierly, that is, while they do not want war, they are not frightened by the thoughts of it. They love peace, but they love honour and their freedom just as much. Fifteen terrible years lie behind us as a warning and a lesson, which, I believe, the German nation will always remember and never forget. . . .

(ii) *Speeches by National-Socialist Leaders at the Sixth Rally of Germans from Abroad, Stuttgart, August 28–September 4, 1938.*

(*a*) *Extracts from Speech by Herr Hess, Deputy of the Führer, August 28, 1938.*[1]

. . . What it has meant during these years of the Interim Reich to live abroad as Germans in a scornful world, working for Germany and standing by her in spite of everything, can be estimated only by one who has lived abroad himself. Many of you, my Germans from abroad, know what it means, and to-day your homeland thanks you for your fortitude. Many of you formed germ-cells of Germanism at just the most critical time. You laid new foundations for Germany's foreign trade, difficult as it was, with practically no capital. It was hard work out there for both German employer and German employee. Others, again, exerted themselves to improve the standing of the German community—but how difficult that was, how infinitely difficult! And how they treated you in many places—with what contempt!—until at last Adolf Hitler's new Reich arose. It brought with it, I admit, an increase of hatred over wide sections of the globe; but side by side with the hatred there came a gradual revival of respect: respect which people were being forced to pay us, though sometimes much against their will. This respect grew, and to-day you, my German kinsmen, may be prouder than ever to call yourselves Germans. . . .

You have banded yourselves together in the foreign organization of the

[1] *Völkischer Beobachter* and *Frankfurter Zeitung*, August 29, 1938. Translation.

National-Socialist Party in order to foster your Germanism and to become good National-Socialists. Your Germanism and your National-Socialism are essentially your own concern. You practise no 'peaceful penetration'. It never occurs to you to practise it in the countries which give you hospitality. No; your Germanism and your National-Socialism are personal to you and remain essentially your own concern. No matter if you are suspected here or there of dark undertakings or designs—or if people think to deprive you of your National-Socialism by arbitrarily forbidding the outward forms of fellowship. Neither the courage within you nor the spirit among you can be a danger to the country whose hospitality you enjoy, whether you are formed into local groups or not. . . . Neither we nor our Germans abroad force our way into the internal affairs of other countries. Let them work out their own salvation. We do, however, expect them not to interfere in our affairs but to let us also find our own salvation. . . .

[*Austria*]

In this favoured land of democracy six and a half million German men and women were being terrorized by a small political minority. But what a cry went up from people in foreign countries when Germany, acting upon a really free decision and in accordance with the right of self-determination, brought these six and a half million Germans living in what was then Austria back home to the great German nation. It was not the democracies, not the countries who held out solemn promises of the right of self-determination, but we, a dictatorship, we, the land of the authoritarian régime, who made the will of a free nation our law and thereby accomplished this democratic deed. . . .

[*Czechoslovakia*]

It is with the deepest sympathy that the German people look on at the sufferings of their German kinsmen in Czechoslovakia. No one in the world who himself loves and is proud of his nation can blame us for turning our thoughts towards the Sudeten Germans on this occasion too; for telling them how much we admire their iron discipline in the face of despicable intrigues, terrorism, and murder. Had proof been needed that the Sudeten Germans are the embodiment of our finest national virtues it would be found in this discipline and in the unshakable calm which comes from a conviction of one's rights. You in the Sudetenland know that we are with you heart and soul. Yours is the right of three and a half million German men and women—the right of millions of members of a great people—to lead and shape your lives in a manner befitting those who belong to this great and civilized nation. . . .

(*b*) *Extracts from Speech by Herr Bürckel, Reich Commissioner for Austria, September 1, 1938.*[1]

. . . The people of Austria demanded their right to live—they wanted to return home, to Adolf Hitler's Reich. Thus the destiny of the ancient Ostmark was fulfilled. Austria has received her German mission again, of which she was deprived by a foreign dynasty and its epigoni, Dolfuss and Schuschnigg. . . . It is not our fault that the work of reconstruction in the Ostmark is so difficult. We National-Socialists are not to blame for the distortion and misuse of the law by some 3,000 Jewish attorneys and magistrates in the city of Vienna in past decades. It is not our doing that close upon 60,000 Jewish traders and money-changers carry on business in Vienna, descending on the population like a plague and exploiting them, and at the same time depriving so many worthy Germans of their livelihood and occupation by their pernicious practices. It is not our doing that tens of thousands of our German kinsmen in Austria live in hovels unfit for human habitation. All that is the work of their most Christian Government. We can only make good what that has destroyed. Much still remains to be done for this land and its people. Large-scale economic reconstruction is only in its beginnings. The workers' standard of living has not yet been regulated. Prices must in many cases be brought down. The chasm between the Church and that section of the population which has suffered so severely in the past must be bridged over. There is still a mass of superfluous Jews there. . . .

They[2] would do well to write instead about a 'wave of persecution' on the part of the Jews all over the world against everything that is German. We are generous enough not to avenge ourselves for crimes committed in certain other States recently and by the Jews in Vienna, but these have given us reason enough to settle the Jewish question once for all. . . .

(*c*) *Extracts from Speech by Dr. Goebbels, Reich Minister for Propaganda, September 4, 1938.*[3]

. . . We are not the weaklings who once ruled Imperial or Marxist Germany. We know our enemies. That is why these campaigns of lies make no more impression on us. It is far more difficult for you who live abroad, for you are most of you cut off from sources of home news and must laboriously piece together, out of the wilderness of lies which our enemies spread, a necessarily inadequate picture of events in the homeland. The only thing is to keep up your spirits and your courage and not lose your nerve, particularly in crises. . . .

If at this Congress last year we could only think of Austria, but could not speak of it, matters have progressed so far to-day that not only can we

[1] *Frankfurter Zeitung*, September 2, 1938. Translation.
[2] Foreign Press critics of Germany's anti-Jewish policy in Austria.
[3] *Frankfurter Zeitung*, September 6, 1938. Translation.

speak of Austria, but Austria has become part of our Reich. National-Socialist Germany has established herself in the world as a Great Power. . . .

If democracy is taken to mean a number of parties which get in each other's way, or the drawing up of impracticable social schemes, we have no use for it. If, on the other hand, it means the government of a nation by the best among its sons, we in Germany have already arrived at this form of democracy. . . .

We are just as happy to have you here as you are to be with us. As sons of the new Reich you form outposts all over the world and have personal experience daily of the envy and disapproval which our rise in power arouses in certain circles. To this we may trace the accusation that you are being used as spies by the Reich, whereas you have no desire but to go honestly about your work. . . . When you return to your outposts in these various countries you will in truth be the Führer's political henchmen throughout the world, bearers of his idea and his achievement to Germans wherever they may be. Your loyalty you owe to the countries which give you hospitality, your love to your fatherland.

(iii) *Extracts from Speech by Dr. Goebbels, September 10, 1938.*[1]

Men and women of the National-Socialist Party: Public life in Europe to-day is influenced by three striking political phenomena which I will group together under the popular heading 'National-Socialism, Bolshevism, and Democracy.' It is, however, clear to me that these names cannot define their full significance. The general public thinks of them as a triangle of irreconcilable contrasts. It would be understandable and logical if their reactions upon political personalities, actions, achievements, negotiations, and developments showed a corresponding degree of contrast, but this is only the case to a limited extent. Often, and indeed mostly, we find, where decisive political problems are concerned, a united front of democracy and Bolshevism opposed to the nationalist, authoritarian States and their representatives. This is one of the most puzzling phenomena of modern politics. It can only be explained by the essential nature of the three political systems. I therefore think it necessary to analyse them in some detail from the theoretical point of view and in their effect on racial relations in Europe.

The political starting-point of democracy dates from the storming of the Bastille in 1789. The new principles of the State and social life which were then proclaimed, as previously in liberal philosophy, were Liberty, Equality, and Fraternity. . . . Economic and cultural liberty was proclaimed. The individual, who in the authoritarian State was of secondary importance, emancipated himself and was released from the authoritarian tie to the State. The ideas and conceptions of this so-called 'Great Revolution' were

[1] At the Nazi Party Congress, Nuremberg. *Völkischer Beobachter*, September 12, 1938. Translation.

expressed in the popular and psychologically prevalent slogan that all those who bear human form are equal. . . . Everywhere the more or less complete severance of the tie which binds the individual to the community was elevated into a principle. The Revolution thus carried within it the seeds of the Marxist-Bolshevist conceptions which were later to arise. It was not until the twentieth century that this lack of connexion found its ultimate expression in the Bolshevist system. . . .

The fact that the causes and effective potentialities of Bolshevism were already existent in a latent form in democracy explains why Bolshevism flourishes only on democratic soil, and is indeed generally the inevitable consequence of a radical and excessively democratic conception of the State. Bolshevism allegedly makes a classless society its aim. The equality of whatever bears a human form, which democracy applied only to political and social life, is set up as a ruling principle for economic life also. In this respect there are supposed to be no differences left. But this equality of all individuals in respect of economic goods can, in the Marxist-Bolshevist view, result only from a brutal and pitiless class struggle. . . . It is only logical that in connexion with this, Bolshevism should proclaim the equality of nations and races. . . . The opposition between the democratic and the Bolshevist mentality and conception of the State are in the last resort merely theoretical, and here we have the answer to the mysterious riddle which overshadows Europe and the explanation both of the opposition in the lives of nations to-day and of the things which they have in common. It enables us to see at once why democracy and Bolshevism, which in the eyes of the world are irrevocably opposed to one another, meet again and again on common ground in their joint hatred of and attacks on authoritarian nationalist concepts of State and State systems. For the authoritarian nationalist conception of the State represents something essentially new. In it the French Revolution is superseded. . . .

It is no proof to the contrary that democracy and Bolshevism will not make public admission of any common cause. . . . They put up artificial oppositions of a purely theoretical character which on closer inspection are seen to be without substance. . . . They do not touch the root of the matter. At heart democracy and Bolshevism are closely related and indeed almost identical. They represent merely different stages in the development of a common outlook. Bolshevism is in a sense the bad boy of democracy. Democracy gave it birth, brought it up, and alone keeps it alive. It may be ashamed of the connexion now and again, but at critical moments in European life the maternal instinct breaks through and the two again present a common front, united above all by the violence of their assault upon authoritarian-nationalist State concepts, which they have come to recognize as their bitterest, most dangerous foes. . . .[1]

We have modernized and ennobled the concept of democracy. With us

[1] The portion of the speech which is omitted includes a passage dealing with Czechoslovakia, which will be found on p. 191 below.

it means definitely the rule of the people, in accordance with its origin. We have given the principle of Socialism a new meaning. . . . Never have we left anyone in doubt that National-Socialism is not for export. . . . We do not aim at world domination, but we do intend to defend our country, and it is our new conceptions which give us the inexhaustible and ever-renewed strength to do so. . . .

We Germans were strong in the past, but nothing more than strong; and when our weapons were taken from us, we lay helpless. In that time of national suffering we learned that the strength of nations lies not only in weapons, but in ideas. A great idea and the faith which it inspires can remove mountains. Weapons cannot produce ideas, but, as Germany has shown, ideas can produce weapons. . . . The Führer himself gave us this great and vivid idea of liberty which fills and inspires us all to-day. And, most essential of all, he is producing the weapons with which to defend the ideas and their political and economic outcome. Now we no longer fear anyone or anything. . . .

(iv) *Extracts from Speech by Herr Hitler, October 26, 1938.*[1]

. . . You can all be proud to belong to the greatest and strongest Reich of Europe. . . . From the first the decision had been irrevocable; in one way or another they had been determined to march into the Sudetenland on 2 October. . . . He only would secure his rights who was strong enough to fight for them . . . the decisive point was that each should have the consciousness that this Germany was his Germany, that this Germany belonged to him and to his children and that he for his part belonged body and soul to this Germany. . . .[2]

(v) *Extracts from Speech by Herr Hitler, November 6, 1938.*[3]

. . . We have an ideal which floats before our minds and in accordance with that ideal we educate Germans, generation after generation. So National-Socialism will continually be transformed from a profession of political faith to a real education of the people. . . . The umbrella-carrying types of our former *bourgeois* world of parties are extinguished and they will never return. . . .

From the very first day I have proclaimed as a fundamental principle: 'the German is either the first soldier in the world or he is no soldier at all'. No soldiers at all we cannot be, and we do not wish to be. Therefore we shall be only the first. As one who is a lover of peace I have endeavoured to create for the German people such an army and such munitions as are calculated to convince others, too, to seek peace.

[1] At Znaim, in the occupied area of Southern Moravia. Baynes, *op.cit.*, Vol. II, p. 1542.

[2] Professor Baynes continues: 'To this report of the speech in the German Press the *Manchester Guardian* adds: "The German troops occupied this territory on 2 October. They would have done it even if an agreement had not been reached at Munich, for the Reich was ready to envisage all eventualities and the German people had decided to make justice triumphant whatever the cost."'

[3] At Weimar. Baynes, *op. cit.*, Vol. II, pp. 1543–8.

There are, it is true, people who abuse the hedgehog because it has spines. But they have only got to leave the animal in peace. No hedgehog has ever attacked anyone unless he was first threatened. That should be our position, too. Folk must not come too near us. *We* want nothing else than to be left in peace; we want the possibility of going on with our work, we claim for our people the right to live, the same right which others claim for themselves. And that the democratic States above all others should grasp and understand, for they never stop talking about equality of rights. If they keep talking about the rights of small peoples, how can they be outraged if in its turn a great people claims the same right? Our National-Socialist army serves to secure and guarantee this claim of right. It is with this in view that in foreign policy also I have initiated a change in our attitude and have drawn closer to those who like us were compelled to stand up for their rights. And when to-day I examine the results of this action of ours, then I am able to say: Judge all of you for yourselves: Have we not gained enormously through acting on these principles?

But precisely for this reason we do not wish that we should ever forget what has made these successes of ours possible. When certain foreign newspapers write: 'But all that you could have gained by the way of negotiation', we know very well that Germany before our day did nothing but negotiate continuously. For fifteen years they only negotiated and they lost everything for their pains. I, too, am ready to negotiate but I leave no one in any doubt that neither by way of negotiation nor by any other way will I allow the rights of Germany to be cut down. Never forget, German people, to what it is you owe your successes—to what Movement, to what ideas, and to what principles! And in the second place: always be cautious, be ever on your guard!

It is very fine to talk of international peace and international disarmament, but I am mistrustful of a disarmament in weapons of war so long as there has been no disarmament of the spirit.

There has been formed in the world the curious custom of dividing peoples into so-called 'authoritarian' States, that is disciplined States, and democratic States. In the authoritarian, that is, the disciplined States, it goes without saying that one does not abuse foreign peoples, does not lie about them, does not incite to war. But the democratic States are precisely 'democratic', that is, that all this can happen there. In the authoritarian States a war-agitation is of course impossible, for their Governments are under an obligation to see to it that there is no such thing. In the democracies, on the other hand, the Governments have only one duty: to maintain democracy, and that means the liberty, if necessary, even to incite to war. . . .

[*Attack on Mr. Churchill*]

If Mr. Churchill would but spend less of his time in *émigré* circles, that is with traitors to their country maintained and paid abroad, and more of his

time with Germans, then he would realize the utter madness and stupidity of his idle chatter. I can only assure this gentleman, who would appear to be living in the moon, of one thing: there is no such force in Germany which could turn against the present régime. In Germany there is only one force, the force of the German nation in its leadership and in those who follow that leadership, in its army and in its arms (*in Wehr und in Waffen*).

I will not refuse to grant to this gentleman that, naturally, we have no right to demand that the other peoples should alter their constitutions. But, as leader of the Germans, I have the duty to consider this constitution of theirs and the possibilities which result from it. When a few days ago in the House of Commons the Deputy Leader of the Opposition declared that he made no secret of the fact that he would welcome the destruction of Germany and Italy, then, of course, I cannot prevent it if perhaps this man on the basis of the democratic rules of the game should in fact with his party in one or two years become the Government. But of one thing I can assure him: I can prevent him from destroying Germany. And just as I am convinced that the German people will take care that the plans of these gentlemen so far as Germany is concerned will never succeed, so in precisely the same way Fascist Italy will, I know, take care for itself! . . .

So long as the others only talk of disarmament, while they infamously continue to incite to war, we must presume that they do but wish to steal from us our arms in order once more to prepare for us the fate of 1918–19. And in that case my only answer to Mr. Churchill and his like must be: That happens once only and it will not be repeated! . . .

(vi) *Extracts from Speech by Herr von Ribbentrop, Reich Minister for Foreign Affairs, November 7, 1938.*[1]

. . . The way in which the Sudeten problem was handled was an almost classic example of a campaign of agitation of this nature and of the damage which an irresponsible Press can do. I should like briefly to recapitulate what happened.

1. The nations know that the only sensible solution is the return of the Sudetenland to Germany and that the time is more than ripe for this solution. A certain international Press maintains the contrary and begins a campaign of agitation to prevent this solution. Taking courage from this, the Czechs invent the story of German mobilization in order to mobilize themselves on May 21 and prevent this sensible solution. Germany does nothing and watches this unusual game with the utmost calm.

2. The fact that Germany takes no action is immediately seized upon by these international Press agitators to accuse her of weakness and of climbing down before the threats of the Western Powers. This goes so far as to denote private visits by Germans to Western capitals as peace offers by Germany

[1] At the annual dinner of the Foreign Press Association in Berlin. Version issued by the Anglo-German Information Service.

from fear of the anger of the Western Powers. The attempts of Press agitators to pave the way for war against Germany become more and more open. But Germany still remains calm and prepares for every eventuality.

The Führer declares that the Sudetenland must now, one way or the other, come to Germany, and makes his military preparations. The war Press abroad becomes frantic in its efforts. At this moment, taking no notice of all the agitation, the heads of the Governments take matters into their own hands. The Munich agreement is brought about, the Sudetenland goes to Germany in complete peace. And on their return the heads of the Governments are received with loud cheers by their peoples.

And so I say to you: in the first place a certain international Press succeeded in the face of all justice and common sense in making a world problem out of the Czech problem, when all it concerned was the vital interests of Germany alone; in the second place—when it was clear that the iron determination of the Führer stood in the way—this Press did all it could to egg the nations on to go to war for this reason and against their will. And who knows if they would not perhaps have been successful if, instead of Chamberlain and Daladier, those war agitators whom we know only too well had been at the helm in these countries and had endeavoured to banish their fearful dreams by unleashing a preventive war. It is to be hoped that recent events will have taught the lesson that on the one hand Germany was completely prepared for such a possibility, and that, on the other hand, the success of this agitation would have meant hell for the agitators' unsuspecting nations.

I should also like to mention the particularly regrettable fact that during the crisis some Governments made no efforts to persuade the Press of their countries to report the news calmly and objectively. I am convinced that every Government can, if it wishes, make sure that news reports are true to the facts. On the contrary we have repeatedly seen how Governments, instead of exercising a calming influence, have themselves now and then heightened unrest and added fuel to the flames.

We have been distressed to see how a number of Governments, the farther away they were from events, the more they adopted a one-sided attitude and increased unrest, thereby rendering an ill service to peace. We have seen that a number of Governments issued proclamations which were not in accordance with the facts, and were also entirely unsuited to calm people's minds or to enlighten them as to the true circumstances. These proclamations were obviously intended to be a means of exerting pressure or bluffing other Governments in the course of the diplomatic discussions of the past weeks. In this connexion I wish to state that Germany was in deadly earnest during this period, and that if a solution had not been found in Munich the Führer would have freed the Sudetenland with a stroke of the sword. . . .

Is it not quite natural after all that a healthy and strong nation should not continue to allow itself to be oppressed, but that—when the Führer

came—it should flock behind him? It is not abstract power politics—as our opponents abroad often maintain—that is the mark of National-Socialist Germany; the idea that always stood behind National-Socialist foreign policy was to unite our German people and safeguard it in a strong Reich.

That the Führer was able to fulfil this miracle in less than six years is sometimes represented abroad as the result of a brutal power policy. Nothing could be more false, for through Versailles Germany was completely powerless and defenceless. It is not brutal power politics that have freed Germany, but an historically unique gathering of all Germany's spiritual forces in National-Socialism, the heroic determination of the German people to face any sacrifice, its belief in the Führer and its unity. Only thus was it possible for a World Power to emerge from the Germany of weakness and feebleness that existed before 1933.

Gentlemen, you have lived through this creation of a completely new and powerful Germany. It is a proud feeling that overcomes every German after the years of defeat and oppression, when he knows that Germany is unassailable for all time. In the consciousness of the inner strength of her 80,000,000 people, Germany's future is now secured. Over and above this, Germany can rely on the firmly founded friendship of other Powers. The Rome-Berlin Axis, the association of Germany and Italy with Japan in her successful struggle against Bolshevism, our friendly relations with Poland —those pillars of German foreign policy are to-day the guarantees of order and peace in Europe and the world.

It was under the banner of this new order of forces and of the deep friendship between Fascist Italy and National-Socialist Germany and their two great leaders that the Führer succeeded in the great historical deed of peacefully incorporating Austria and the Sudetenland, those ten million Germans, into the German Reich. This incorporation, without the shedding of a single drop of blood, is without precedent in history—an event which fulfilled a wish cherished by the Germans for a thousand years.

A further sign of the confidence of the nations in this new European order and in the approach of Fascism and National-Socialism to European problems is the fact that the Hungarian and Czechoslovak Governments a few days ago appealed to the Axis Powers to bring about a settlement by arbitration in the century-old conflict over the delimitation of the northern frontier of Hungary. What the League of Nations could not accomplish in twenty years required only one day in Vienna. Thus Vienna prepared the ground for a new co-operation and peaceful reconstruction in the south-east of Europe. The arbitral award made by the Italian Foreign Minister, Count Ciano, and myself, after mature deliberation and careful weighing of all interests has now definitely established the frontier between Hungary and Czechoslovakia on an ethnographic basis.

The award also proved that after the settlement of the Sudeten question

Germany is not governed by any feeling of revenge or hatred towards Czechoslovakia, but that the German Government took pains both to safeguard the interests of friendly Hungary and to deal with Czechoslovak interests in a loyal and just manner. If the Czechoslovak Government are prepared, after the final delimitation of the frontier, to take the new situation fully into account and to undertake a complete reorientation of their policy towards Germany, it will be possible to bring about a settlement with this State and a final appeasement between the two nations.

The position of the Third Reich as a World Power is now definitely established. But this does not mean that Germany does not share the desire for a settlemcnt regarding the interests of the various Powers. In this connexion it may here be recalled that it was the Führer who invited the Powers to Munich in September in order to find a peaceful way out of the crisis. In the same spirit, at the desire of the British Prime Minister, the Führer made with him on the day of his departure the famous Anglo-German peace declaration.

We were all the more astonished that the first answer to the spirit of Munich should take the form of the slogan: 'Peace is saved, therefore arm to the utmost'. This new armament fever in several countries is accompanied by renewed efforts on the part of the incorrigible warmongers. In this connexion we must note with regret that these warmongers, fearing that Germany's well-known and uncompromising legal demand for the return of her former colonies might be fulfilled, are carrying on in the African Press an amazing propaganda against Germany and everything German.

Mr. Chamberlain and Lord Halifax have with wise insight given a clear rebuke to all these English war agitators and their endeavours to drive the nations apart. The French Prime Minister, M. Daladier, and his Foreign Minister, M. Bonnet, have likewise made speeches in the last few weeks which have found a sympathetic echo in Germany. It may be expected that in the further pursuit of the path entered upon with Great Britain at Munich, new possibilities of better understanding between Germany and France will also result and will take an appropriate form. In this sense the desire of the French Foreign Minister for sincere collaboration between Germany and France has been welcomed by us. The recently confirmed settlement between Italy and Great Britain is in the same direction.

This attitude on the part of the responsible statesmen in London and Paris admits of the hope that reason may after all gain the upper hand over the war agitators in the Western democracies. In his recent speech at Weimar the Führer condemned the activities of these war agitators with relentless vigour and logic. As against these activities the German nation stands united and firm behind its Führer: strong and alert, always ready for peace but without fear of war, and always resolved to preserve the vital rights of the nation against anyone.

(vii) *Extract from Speech by Herr Hitler, Führer and Chancellor of the German Reich, November 8, 1938.*[1]

. . . As responsible leader I will direct the attention of the nation to dangers, and I see a danger in the fact that in other countries there is a continuous incitement to war. He who does not wish to believe that has only to look at certain very recent happenings. It is no long time since in the English House of Commons questions of civil aviation were being discussed and a new civil aeroplane was said to be especially useful and serviceable. On that occasion a member of the Opposition called out 'It is to be hoped that it can also carry bombs to Berlin.' We know what that means! Perhaps someone may reply: 'Yes, but that is only a member of the Opposition.' And my answer is: 'According to the constitution of the democracies the Opposition of to-day may be the Government of to-morrow. In general that is in fact the rule.'

[*Colonial Claims*]

We are very thankful when in France and England the leading men will have nothing to do with such ideas and wish to live in good relations[2] with Germany. We have more than once stated that we want nothing from these countries save the return of our former colonies—unjustly taken from us. But I have always affirmed that that is, of course, no occasion for war. It is, let us say, a question of justice and of a real desire to make it possible for nations to live together. Otherwise we have no demands to make of these countries and we ask nothing from them. We wish only to carry on business with them, that is to say, we wish to trade with them. So when people talk of 'understandings', we do not know on what we should come to an understanding.

[*Attack on British Opposition Parties*]

But there is one thing I must keep in view. In France and England there are certainly men at the helm who wish for peace, but there are others who make no secret of the fact that they want war with Germany. I am compelled to state this quite soberly before the nation and to draw the consequences which arise from that fact. To-morrow Mr. Churchill may be Prime Minister. And when a British leader of the Opposition explains: we do not wish to destroy the German people, only the régime, the two are precisely identical, for nobody can destroy the régime without destroying the German people. When someone declares that he wishes to liberate the German people from the régime, then I would say to him: 'For the German people you are not the competent authority!' If there is anyone at all who is the competent authority for the German people, then, gentlemen of the British Parliament, that person is myself! The régime in Germany is a domestic affair of the

[1] At Munich, on the anniversary of the 'Putsch' of 1923. Baynes, *op. cit.*, Vol. II, pp. 1550–60.
[2] German: *auf gutem Fusse.* (Note by Professor Baynes.)

German people, and we would beg to be spared every form of schoolmasterly supervision! Besides, I have an idea that we have more achievements to our credit than all these gentlemen, above all, we have set our State in order, which cannot be said of all countries in the world.

I am therefore compelled to consider also the outlook of those who to-day are not in the Government, but who may be in the Government to-morrow and who leave no doubt of what they are thinking in their own minds. The German people will understand why I utter this warning and why I myself am determined to take all measures so as to be safeguarded from every attack. And I can further give the assurance: the German people is in no fear that bombs may fall upon it from Mars, let us say, or from the moon. Here, too, as is the way of Germans, we shall keep within limits. But I am determined to strengthen the defences of the Reich to the utmost extent, and I know that in this the whole German people will agree with me. That, doubtless, means sacrifices. But it is better that we should accept these sacrifices than that we should one day make them in favour of the outside world in the form of contributions or, as they were called in the past, of reparations. For us there can be only the one decision, that which I expressed at Saarbrücken: at any time we are ready for peace: we have not broken the peace. But also at any time we are ready to defend ourselves and that, too, with manliness and resolution.

Then if anyone says to me: 'You wish to make history not by the way of right but by the way of force', I can only say: The Germany of to-day has not refused to gain its rights by the way of negotiation. Year after year we have sought to attain our rights by the way of negotiation. Especially members of the English Parliament have no reason to doubt that, for it is by the way of negotiation that we concluded a treaty with England.[1] If the others refused to co-operate, we cannot help that. But people must note one fact: National-Socialist Germany will never go to Canossa! We have no need to do so. If the rest of the world obstinately bars the way against any attempt to let rights be recognized as rights by the way of negotiation, then there should be no surprise that we secure for ourselves our rights by another way if we cannot gain them by the normal way.

When these British advocates for world-democracy now declare that in one year we have destroyed two democracies, then I can only ask, What is democracy then after all? Who has the right to speak in the name of democracy? Has the good God handed over to Mr. Churchill and Mr. Duff Cooper the key to democracy? Is this inscribed on tables of the law which are in the possession of the British Opposition? Democracy in our eyes is a régime that is supported by the will of the people. Formerly I became Chancellor in Germany under the rules of Parliamentary Democracy—and that, too, as the leader of by far the strongest party. Under the rules of Parliamentary Democracy I obtained the absolute majority of votes and to-day—of course Mr. Churchill can doubt it—I have the unanimous support of the German

[1] The Naval Agreement. (Note by Professor Baynes.)

people. In this year I have not overthrown two democracies but, I might almost say, as Arch-Democrat, I have overthrown two dictatorships—the dictatorship of Herr Schuschnigg and the dictatorship of Mr. Beneš. I have, it is true, endeavoured to persuade these two dictatorships to introduce for their subjects the right of self-determination by the way of Democracy. In this endeavour I failed. Only then was the strength of the great German people thrown into the scale in order to establish Democracy in these countries, that is, to give freedom to the oppressed.

[*Palestine*]

The gentlemen of the English Parliament can assuredly be quite at home in the British World-Empire, but not in Central Europe. Here they lack all knowledge of the conditions of events, and of relationships. They will not and must not regard this statement of fact as an insult, we for our part are in the last resort not so well informed on India or Egypt, not to speak of Palestine. But I could wish that these gentlemen would at this moment concentrate the prodigious knowledge which they possess and the infallible wisdom which is their peculiar property on, let us say, precisely Palestine. What is taking place there has a damnably strong smell of violence and precious little of democracy. But all that I merely cite as an example, in no way as criticism, for after all I am only the representative of my German people, not an advocate for the cause of others. And that is where I differ from Mr. Churchill and Mr. Eden, who are advocates for the entire world.

I am only the representative of my people. As such I do everything I consider to be necessary, and if Mr. Churchill says to me: 'How can the Head of a State cross swords with a member of the British Parliament?' I answer: Mr. Churchill, you should feel only the more honoured. From the fact that in Germany even the Head of the State is not afraid to cross swords with a member of the British Parliament you can judge how high is the prestige of a member of the British Parliament with the German people. And besides, I am not the Head of the State in the sense of being either Dictator or Monarch: I am the Leader of the German People! I could have given to myself—of that folk may be convinced—quite other titles. I have kept my old title and I will keep it so long as I live, because I do not wish to be anything else and never think of becoming anything else. The old title contents me. Mr. Churchill and these gentlemen are delegates of the English people and I am delegate of the German people—the only difference lies in the fact that only a fraction of the English votes were cast for Mr. Churchill, while I can say that I represent the whole German people. . . .

(viii) *Speech by Herr von Ribbentrop, Reich Minister for Foreign Affairs, November 25, 1938.*[1]

Two years ago to-day, on November 25, 1936, there was signed by Germany and Japan the Pact against the Communist International, which

[1] In Berlin on the second anniversary of the signature of the Anti-Comintern Pact by Germany and Japan. *Völkischer Beobachter*, November 26, 1938. Translation.

a year later was extended to become the Anti-Comintern Pact between Germany, Italy, and Japan. The meaning of this Pact was a joint and uncompromising declaration of opposition to the disintegrating activities of the Communist International.

To-day we may note with satisfaction that collaboration between the three States against this disintegrating activity has proved brilliantly successful. Neither in Spain nor in China have the machinations of Moscow succeeded in setting up Bolshevist rule with the intention of carrying the conflagration into peaceful countries. Czecho-Slovakia was to have become another point of departure for the world revolution. These plans were nipped in the bud last autumn by the iron resolution of the Führer, by the solidarity of the anti-Bolshevist countries, and, above all, by the close collaboration between National-Socialism and Fascism.

During the period of its existence the Pact against the Communist International has achieved great importance. The Berlin-Rome-Tokyo triangle is now a conception recognized throughout the world. It is not only a factor and safeguard of order, but a fact of world politics.

This organically developed and creative policy of the three States belonging to the Anti-Comintern Pact is opposed to the destructive efforts of the Comintern and the Powers which support it. There could be no greater mistake than to believe that Bolshevism has abandoned its struggle. Quite recently we have seen that the Communist International has set up a new organization in order to promote the aims of world revolution by means of propaganda.

The effect of this propaganda is to be seen in a new campaign of agitation which has been unleashed everywhere against the so-called authoritarian States, i.e. those States which stand for order. What else than this Jewish-Bolshevist propaganda of disintegration, for example, is behind the new wave of agitation against Germany in America, by which an attempt is being made to draw the respectable section of the American people, which has nothing whatever against the German people, into a psychosis of hatred against the German people, which has nothing whatever against the American people.

In spite of this I am firmly convinced that the States which have signed the Anti-Comintern Pact will succeed in frustrating the design of the Communists to bring about world revolution, and will thus do an invaluable service to all civilized States. The fight against the Communist International is not directed against any other nation, and excludes no other State. The Powers belonging to the triangle will, however, as a result of their hard and uncompromising struggle against Communism, be united by ever deeper friendship and will thus become the guarantors of a new and just world order.

To-day I greet the Powers which are united with us in the Anti-Comintern Pact—Italy and Japan.

(ix) *Extracts from Speech by Dr. Schacht, President of the Reichsbank, November 29, 1938.*[1]

. . . The collapse of German economic life after Versailles culminated in the credit crisis of 1931. It was started by the run of our foreign creditors, who would have liked to demand the repayment of the whole debt of no less than 25 milliard Reichsmarks at three months' notice. The National-Socialist Government did not lose a moment in adopting measures to set economic life in motion again.

It is obvious that this whole programme for providing employment and for rearmament could only be set in motion by the State, and only by means of financing on a large scale. . . .

It is possible that no bank of issue has ever conducted so bold a credit policy in time of peace as the *Reichsbank* has since National-Socialism took over the Government. With the help of this credit policy, however, Germany has created armaments which are not inferior to those of any other Power, and this armament in turn has made the success of our policy possible. Yet we are not in presence of a miracle, or in any case not a financial miracle. . . . The miracle is to be sought in quite another sphere. The fundamental political attitude of our people has been miraculously changed in the few years since 1933. Fatalistic resignation has been replaced by an iron will and a fanatical belief in the future of our nation. Egoism and discord have given place to a strict national discipline. Instead of a weak and vacillating direction of the State, a single purposeful, energetic personality now rules.

I will now turn to the second great series of questions, namely, those of commercial policy. The conception of what is called the 'new plan', with which we will now deal, is the very opposite of what is known as thinking in terms of money. The new plan is the completely logical recognition that nothing is done by means of money alone, but that the only question is what commodities and how many of them I can procure for myself with money.

Germany entered on the 1931 depression with a foreign debt of not less than 25 milliard Reichsmarks. It was clearly proved in the course of this depression, if any further proof were needed, that German exports could not be raised sufficiently to pay for the necessary imports of goods and also to pay the interest on the debts. The raising of the American and British tariffs, the fixing of quotas by France and so on, prove this beyond dispute. Germany was therefore under the necessity, in the first place, of paying for certain imports, and, in the second place, of continuing the unproductive service of her debts. To do both at once was beyond German power, and therefore the first thing which Germany had to do before embarking on a new commercial policy was to limit the service of the loans. There was thus no other possibility except to introduce the transfer moratorium, with which you are well acquainted, to an increasing extent.

[1] To the Economic Council of the German Academy. *Völkischer Beobachter*, November 30, 1938. Translation.

The service of the foreign debt having been limited in this way, regulation of the trade in actual goods was necessary if the exchange problem was to be mastered. The answer given by classical economic theory to the question where it is most advantageous to buy is, 'obviously in the cheapest market'. To-day that is quite out of the question. If you have no foreign exchange to pay with, then you are not so much concerned with the question where is the cheapest market as where you can obtain the goods at all. Taking it all in all, the fundamental question underlying this simple and primitive economic idea was whether the rest of the world was willing or able to give up a market consisting then of 70 million and now of 80 million people, or whether it wished to preserve this market.

The new system of foreign trade required that exports and imports should be subjected to some degree of control, but it need not necessarily have forced the whole German trade policy into the extreme of systems of bilateral trade agreements, which we now see as a governing factor not only in German commercial policy, but also—as a result of the difficulties of Germany—in the rest of Europe, and which our rich American cousins dislike so much. This extreme system of bilateral trade agreements was forced on us by our foreign creditors, for the latter thought that by controlling our exports to their countries they would be able to recoup themselves for their capital claims which Germany was no longer meeting in full. In any case it is a false assumption that the bilateral trade system by which Germany now sustains her economic system was an arbitrary invention of our own. Oh, no! It is a natural and necessary consequence of the war tribute and the clearing system which were imposed on us.

As soon as our creditors are prepared to co-operate with us in removing the consequences of the war tribute, a door will be opened through which we can come to multilateral trade and to a free exchange of international payments. . . . When we shall be able to abolish our control of foreign trade, I do not know. I hope it may be soon. Among the necessary conditions are the easing of our raw materials position and the settlement of the conflict between debt policy and commercial policy. In this connexion I cannot refrain from expressing the hope that some day an economic text-book will be published in the United States which will carry matters at least a little way beyond pre-war ideas. Until these conditions are fulfilled, the new plan must remain in force. It is true that it calls for sacrifices, but it also guarantees success.

The national, economic, and cultural will to live of a great nation cannot be kept down indefinitely. Even times of the greatest weakness and the worst oppression call forth new national strength, for which in the fullness of time a new leader arises, as he has for us in the person of Adolf Hitler. What we are now going through is a period of struggle, and the measures taken in a period of struggle are often harsh and not always conventional. To be obsessed by the disadvantages of methods necessary at such a time, and therefore to become less disposed to peace, is folly. If foreign countries

are ready to respect our right to live and our essential requirements, then the methods adopted will also become pacific.

2. Visits of Statesmen

Herr Hitler's Visit to Rome, May 3–9, 1938.

(a) *Extract from Speech by H.M. the King of Italy, May 4, 1938.*[1]

Führer!

It gives us special pleasure to offer to you, our most honoured guest, a most sincere and cordial welcome.

In your person Italy greets the head of the great friendly nation, the leader who has restored to Germany her greatness and her cultural mission. Numerous and deep are the affinities of spirit and works that bind the new Italy to the new Germany and that render the friendship of the two peoples intimate and secure. This friendship is and will be in future an instrument in the service of European peace for which the Government of the Reich and our Government are co-operating so faithfully.

From the enthusiasm which greeted your journey from the Italian frontier to Rome and from the reception that our capital gave you on your arrival, you have been able to note how deeply rooted are the feelings which Italy cherishes for your person and your country.

We know that these sentiments are fully reciprocated by the German people. For this people that has made such great contributions to the civilization and achievements of Europe and which you are leading with a firm hand to its glorious destiny, we express our keenest hopes. . . .

(b) *Extract from Herr Hitler's Reply.*[1]

Your Majesty!

For the extremely cordial greetings just extended to me I would offer my deeply felt thanks. Your Majesty's friendly words explain the expression of sympathy with which I have been met in such a cordial manner by the Italian people in the course of my journey through Italy and in Rome itself. This was more than a merely external expression of cordial hospitality. It was a proof of the firm and intimate connexion of our two nations in their ideals and aspirations. I may therefore consider myself fortunate at this moment to be the interpreter of my own people which is animated by a sincere inclination and profound friendship for Your Majesty and the Italian people. The entire German people join with me in admiring the extraordinary successes fought for and gained by Italy under the wise rule of Your Majesty and under the guidance of a reorganizer and Prime Minister of genius in all the spheres of national life in the face of a world of opposition.

[1] At a banquet in the Quirinal. English version published in *Völkerbund*, May 1938.

Your Majesty has spoken of the close connexions that bind new Italy with new Germany. The grandiose reception which I have found in this country is a proof that Fascist Italy feels that she has a sincere and permanent friend in National-Socialist Germany. This mutual friendship is not only a pledge of the security of the two nations, but is also a strong guarantee of general peace. . . .

(c) *Extract from Speech by Signor Mussolini, May 7, 1938.*[1]

Führer, it is with the most cordial joy that I, the Government, and the Italian people welcome you in this Rome which to-day receives you in the twofold glory of her tradition and her power.

Your visit to Rome fulfils and seals the understanding between our two countries. This understanding, which we have firmly desired and tenaciously constructed, has its roots in our two Revolutions, its strength in the ideal fellowship which binds our two peoples, and its historical function in the permanent interests of our two nations.

One hundred years of history—from the time when first Germany and Italy raised themselves by Revolutions and by arms to claim their right to national unity—bear witness to the parallel nature of these positions and the solidarity of these interests. In the same faith and with the same will Germany and Italy have fought to build their unity, have worked to make it sound and compact, and have redeemed themselves in recent times from the corruption of destructive ideologies in order to create the new régime of the people which is the characteristic of this century.

Along this path, traced by history, our two peoples are marching, united with loyal intentions and with that convinced trust which has been tested by the events of these years of peace and understanding between the two nations. Fascist Italy knows only a single ethical law in friendship: that which I recalled before the German people on the Maifeld.[2] It is this law which the collaboration between Nazi Germany and Fascist Italy has obeyed, obeys, and will obey.

The premises and the objectives of this collaboration, consecrated in the Rome-Berlin Axis, have been repeatedly and openly affirmed by us. Germany and Italy have turned their backs on the Utopias to which Europe had blindly entrusted her fate in order to seek between them and with others a régime of international comity which may restore equally for all more effective guarantees of justice, security, and peace.

This goal can only be reached when the elementary rights of our people to live, work, and defend itself are loyally recognized and the political equilibrium corresponds to the reality of the historical sources which constitute and determine it. We are convinced that it is along this path that the European nations will find that tranquillity and peace which are

[1] At a banquet at the Palazzo Venezia. English version published in *Völkerbund*, May 1938.
[2] See *Documents* for 1937, pp. 298–301.

indispensable for the preservation of the very foundations of European civilization. . . .

(d) *Extract from Herr Hitler's Reply.*[1]

Duce, with deep emotion I thank you for the moving words which you have addressed to me in the name both of the Italian Government and of the Italian people. I am happy to be here in Rome in which the powerful manifestations of the young Fascist Italy are united with the evidences of its incomparably venerable past.

Since the moment when I first set foot on Italian soil I have been conscious everywhere of an atmosphere of friendship and sympathy which fills me with profound pleasure. With the same heartfelt emotion the German people last autumn greeted in your person the creator of Fascist Italy, the founder of a new Imperium and at the same time also the great friend of Germany.

The National-Socialist Movement and the Fascist Revolution have created two new powerful States which to-day in a world of unrest and disintegration stand as creations of order and healthy progress. Germany and Italy have thus like interests and through sharing in a common *Weltanschauung* are closely bound together. In this way there has been created in Europe a bloc of 120,000,000 people who are determined to safeguard their eternal vital rights and to defend themselves against all those forces which might venture to oppose their natural development.

Out of this fight against a world which rejects and refuses to understand their claims, a fight which Germany and Italy have had to wage shoulder to shoulder, there has gradually grown up a warm friendship between the two peoples. This friendship has proved its strength during the events of the last few years. These events have, further, shown to the world that in one way or another account must be taken of those justified interests which are of vital import to great nations. It is therefore only natural that our two peoples should in the future continue to build up and deepen in constant co-operation this friendship which in recent years has ever proved of increasing value.

Duce, last autumn on the Maifeld in Berlin, you proclaimed a principle which, you said, as the moral law was sacred both for yourself and for Fascist Italy: 'Speak plainly and frankly, and if you have a friend, march with him right to the end.'

In the name of National-Socialist Germany I, too, profess my allegiance to this law. To-day I wish to give you the following answer:

Two millennia have now passed since Romans and Germans met for the first time in history so far as that history is known to us. Standing here, on this the most venerable soil in our human history, I feel the tragedy of a destiny which formerly failed to draw clear frontier lines between these two highly gifted, valuable races. The consequence of that failure was

[1] Baynes, *op cit*,, Vol. II, pp. 1460–2.

untold suffering for many generations. Now to-day after nearly two thousand years, thanks to your historic activity, Benito Mussolini, the Roman State arises from remote traditions to new life, and north of you there arose, formed out of numerous tribes, a new Germanic Reich. Now that we have become immediate neighbours, taught by the experience of two millennia, we both wish to recognize that natural frontier which Providence and history have clearly drawn for our two peoples. That frontier will then render possible the happiness of a permanent co-operation peacefully secured through the definite separation of the living-spaces (*Lebensräume*) of the two nations, but it will also serve as a bridge for mutual help and support. It is my unalterable will and my bequest to the German people that it shall accordingly regard the frontier of the Alps, raised by Nature between us both, as for ever inviolable. I know that then through this delimitation a great and prosperous future will result both for Rome and Germany.

Duce, just as you and your people maintained your friendship with Germany in days of crisis, so I and my people will show the like friendship towards Italy in times of difficulty. . . .

3. Protests Concerning Anti-Jewish Measures and Press Campaign

(i) *Statement by the Rt. Hon. Neville Chamberlain, Prime Minister, November 14, 1938.*[1]

I regret to have to say that the reports in the Press of action taken against Jews in Germany appear to be substantially correct. They have, indeed, to some extent been corroborated by Dr. Goebbels to foreign Press correspondents in Berlin, and the measures taken by the German Government have now been published. No one in this country would for a moment seek to defend the senseless crime committed in Paris.[2] At the same time, there will be deep and widespread sympathy here for those who are being made to suffer so severely for it. His Majesty's Chargé d'Affaires in Berlin has taken immediate steps for the safeguarding of British subjects. He has reserved the right to present claims for damage, and has requested that the attention of the competent authorities should be drawn to the rights of British residents in Germany.

His Majesty's Chargé d'Affaires has also been instructed to address a strong protest to the German Government in regard to recent articles in the German Press, associating former British Ministers and Members of this House with the recent murder of a member of the German Embassy in Paris.

[1] In the House of Commons, in reply to a question by Mr. Noel Baker. *Hansard*, November 14, 1938, cols. 503–4.

[2] The shooting of the Third Secretary at the German Embassy in Paris by a Jewish refugee on November 7.

(ii) *Extract from Speech by the Rt. Hon. Sir Samuel Hoare, Secretary of State for the Home Department, November 21, 1938.*[1]

. . . We all condemn the senseless crime[2] that led to the death of the German diplomat in Paris. We should not, however, be honest with ourselves or with the world if we concealed the depth of our feelings at the suffering inflicted upon thousands of men and women as the result of a crime with which they had no connexion whatever. I speak as a convinced believer in the possibility of Anglo-German friendship. I speak as a staunch supporter of the Munich Agreement. Indeed, it is because I am so anxious to see a complete and permanent settlement of the questions that divide our two countries that I frankly and unreservedly state my views this evening. I am opposed to all attempts to intervene in the domestic affairs of other countries, but the issue that has been raised in these last few days by the measures against the Jews in Germany, and the way in which it has been raised, forces it upon the attention of other countries. How can a question remain exclusively domestic when it involves scores of thousands of men, women and children, destitute and penniless, seeking admission into other countries? . . .

(iii) *Question by Mr. Arthur Henderson, and Reply by the Rt. Hon. Neville Chamberlain, Prime Minister, November 21, 1938.*[3]

MR. ARTHUR HENDERSON asked the Prime Minister whether his attention has been drawn to the anti-British propaganda now being carried on in Germany through the medium of agencies under the direct control of the German Government; that charges are being made against His Majesty's Government of permitting acts of terrorism in India and Palestine; and whether he proposes to take any action in the matter?

THE PRIME MINISTER: The answer to the first two parts of the question by the hon. Member for Kingswinford (Mr. Henderson) is in the affirmative. The German Government will be well aware of the unfortunate effect of such articles on Anglo-German relations, and my Noble Friend does not consider that it is necessary to draw their attention to this fact.

(iv) *Official German News Agency Announcement concerning Relations with the United States, December 30, 1938.*[4]

The Secretary of the Interior of the United States of America Ickes, shortly before Christmas, delivered a speech before the Zionist Society in

[1] In the House of Commons. *Hansard*, November 21, 1938, col. 1464. See also Vol. I of the *Documents* for 1938, pp. 508–10.

[2] See footnote on p. 34.

[3] In the House of Commons. *Hansard*, November 21, 1938, cols. 1310–11.

[4] *Frankfurter Zeitung*, December 31, 1938. Translation published in *The Times*, December 31, 1938. Mr. Ickes had said that Germany's treatment of the Jews could be compared only to 'a period of history when man was unlettered, benighted, and bestial'. It was an insult to the Middle Ages to compare modern totalitarianism to conditions in those days.

Cleveland, in which, besides making attacks upon the Third Reich, he attacked its leadership in the most unqualifiable fashion. The German Chargé d'Affaires in Washington delivered the sharpest protest to the Acting Secretary of State against these assaults.

The American State Department did not, however, dissociate itself from the expressions of the American Secretary of the Interior, as is usually done as a matter of course when such cases occur in international relations, but instead tried to cover them up. It must therefore be made clear that so long as such conduct, which clearly serves Jewish interests but neglects the true German-American interests, obtains in the relations between the United States of America and Germany, the hope expressed by the American State Department to the German Chargé d'Affaires of an improvement of relations on both sides is without the slightest foundation.

II. THE ANNEXATION OF AUSTRIA

A FULL account of the annexation of Austria is given in the *Survey of International Affairs* for 1938;[1] it is therefore unnecessary to give here more than a brief summary of the sequence of events. The previous history will be found in earlier volumes of the *Survey* and of the *Documents on International Affairs*; reference should be made in particular to the *Survey* for 1934, pp. 416–87, and the *Documents* for 1934, pp. 272–98, for the suppression of the Social Democrats and for the Nazi *Putsch* which resulted in the murder of Herr Dollfuss; the *Survey* for 1936, pp. 402–56, and the *Documents* for 1936, pp. 320–7, for the compromise agreement between Germany and Austria dated July 11, 1936; and the *Survey* for 1937, Vol. I, pp. 437–44 and the *Documents* for the same year, pp. 308–16, for the uneasy relations which continued to exist between the two countries after the signing of the agreement.

Neither the internal nor the external position of Austria at the beginning of 1938 offered favourable prospects for resistance against the threat to her independence. Internally, the quasi-dictatorial régime which Dr. von Schuschnigg had inherited from Herr Dollfuss lacked strength because his single party, the Fatherland Front, represented the Catholic elements only and was opposed on the one hand to the Austrian Nazis and on the other to the Social Democrats. The truculence of the Nazis, supported as they were by Germany, gave cause for alarm; but the embittered relations which had existed between the Government and the Social Democrats since the repression of February 1934 still remained. In external affairs, Italy, which had been the defender of Austrian independence in 1934, had joined with Germany in the Rome-Berlin Axis in 1936, and—especially in view of her commitments in Spain—was not now likely to oppose her partner. Great Britain and France could not be unaware of the danger which an advance of National-Socialist Germany in Central Europe would represent; but for reasons into which it is not necessary to enter here,[2] it was at this time their policy to avoid a clash with Germany at almost any cost. Finally, with regard to Germany herself, Dr. von Schuschnigg had been obliged to accept, in the Agreement of July 11, 1936, arrangements which gave the National-Socialists a foothold in the country which they could exploit to their own advantage.

[1] See *Survey of International Affairs*, 1938, Vol. I, pp. 179–259.
[2] See *Survey of International Affairs*, 1938, Vol. I, pp. 184–5.

An example of this was provided by the discovery of the 'Tavs plot' on January 26. Dr. Tavs was the secretary of a committee set up under the Agreement to provide for liaison between the Fatherland Front and the Austrian Nazis who were prepared to work with it. Dr. Seyss-Inquart was a member of the committee. The object of the plot, which was prepared in the offices of the committee, was to bring about a *Putsch* in Vienna which was to be supported by a German military demonstration on the frontier and was to result in the replacement of Dr. von Schuschnigg as Chancellor by a person of Nazi sympathies, probably Dr. Seyss-Inquart himself.

At the beginning of the year, Dr. von Schuschnigg expressed his point of view in an outspoken interview given to the *Daily Telegraph and Morning Post*.[1] He admitted the common ties between Germany and Austria, but decisively rejected the idea of an *Anschluss*; an absolute abyss separated Austria from Nazism. He said that though he was personally a monarchist by conviction, a Habsburg restoration was out of the question in present circumstances. This interview was severely criticized in the German Press.

A meeting of the Rome Protocol States—the last, as events were to prove—was held from January 10–12. One of the decisions taken, according to the *communiqué*,[2] was that Austria and Hungary would recognize the Government of General Franco. On January 13 Dr. von Schuschnigg published an article[3] in which he expressed the belief that the Rome Pact retained its full validity and was not in contradiction with the Austro-German Agreement of July 11, 1936.

Herr Hitler made his first definite move on February 9, when the German Ambassador, Herr von Papen, transmitted to Dr. von Schuschnigg an invitation to visit Herr Hitler at Berchtesgaden. The Austrian Chancellor informed the British Government of the impending visit, but without making any request for advice;[4] the French and Italian Governments were also informed. The Austrian public was told nothing until a *communiqué* was issued on February 12[5] which gave no information beyond the bare statement that the meeting had taken place. A further *communiqué* of February 15[6] stated that the aim of the Berchtesgaden conversations had been to clear up difficulties which had arisen in the application of the Agreement of July 11, 1936, that both parties adhered to the principles of that Agreement (which, it will be remembered, included that of the independence of Austria), and that measures had been agreed upon between the two parties. The *communiqué* was followed by a broadcast by Colonel Adam, head of the Austrian Press Department,[7] which was designed to reassure public opinion; it stated that no sensational changes would be made as a result of the conversation. None of these announcements gave any hint of the actual character of the interview, and Dr. von Schuschnigg described it with equal restraint in his speech of February 24.[8] Even Herr Hitler, speaking on February 20,[9] referred to it as if it had been a conversation of the kind which is usual in diplomatic intercourse; it was only later, in his speeches of March 25[10] and March 28[11] during the plebiscite campaign, that he gave a more exact impression of what had actually occurred. He treated Dr. von Schuschnigg with the grossest discourtesy, and overwhelmed him with abuse; at one stage the German military commanders were called into the room to give a report on Germany's preparations for the invasion of Austria.[12]

[1] See pp. 42–43. [2] See p. 43–44. [3] See p. 44–47.

[4] See Mr. Eden's statement in the House of Commons on February 17. *Documents* for 1938, Vol. I, p. 4.

[5] See p. 47. [6] See pp. 47–48. [7] See pp. 48–49. [8] See pp. 55–58.

[9] See pp. 50–51. [10] See p. 89. [11] See p. 91.

[12] For a description of the interview, see *Survey of International Affairs* for 1938, Vol. I, pp. 189–191. A still more detailed account, based on unofficial but well-authenticated sources, is given by G. E. R. Gedye in *Fallen Bastions: the Central European Tragedy*. Gollancz, London, 1939.

The substance of the measures forced upon Dr. von Schuschnigg at Berchtesgaden was given in the House of Commons by Sir John Simon on February 21.[1] A general amnesty was to be proclaimed for all political offences in Austria, and this was to apply to Social Democrats as well as to Nazis. (This was no doubt intended to produce an effect on public opinion abroad; and Mr. Chamberlain in fact drew attention to it in his statement of March 2.[2]) Dr. Seyss-Inquart was to be included in the Austrian Government as Minister for the Interior and Public Security; this meant that a key position in the Austrian Cabinet would be under Herr Hitler's control. Austrian Nazis were to be allowed to engage in political activity; safeguards were provided, since it was stated that they were to remain loyal to Austria and her Constitution of 1934; but it was only too soon clear that no reliance whatever could be placed on any such assurances. Dr. von Schuschnigg was given until February 15 to accept the terms, and he had no other possibility than to comply. Two *communiqués* of February 18[3] announced the measures relating to the political activity of the Austrian Nazis, and stated that no other measures had been agreed upon at Berchtesgaden beyond those already made public, and in particular that there would be no change in Austrian economic and currency policy. On the same day Herr von Papen, who had been recalled by Herr Hitler, referred to the Berchtesgaden conversations, and said that 'an independent Austria can find its mission only within the framework of the development of Germany as a whole'.[4]

Herr Hitler's speech, which was fixed for February 20, was anxiously awaited in Austria, and arrangements were made for it to be broadcast there. It was of great length,[5] and it contained two passages relating to Austria. The second of these[6] was an account of the Berchtesgaden meeting which gave little information and was phrased in the normal language of diplomacy. But it was preceded by another[7] which was very different in tone, and which sounded the alarm-note both for Austria and for Czechoslovakia. 'Over ten million Germans live in two of the States adjoining our frontiers.' It was intolerable, Herr Hitler said, for a self-respecting World Power to know that its kinsmen across the frontier were persecuted 'simply because of their sympathy, their feeling of union with Germany . . . their common point of view'. He claimed the right for the Reich to protect these Germans outside its frontiers if they could not ensure for themselves the right to personal, political, and ideological freedom. In neither of these passages did Herr Hitler explicitly repeat his pledge to respect the independence of Austria in accordance with the Agreement of July 11, 1936. The speech was the signal for violent Nazi demonstrations in Vienna and Gratz.

Dr. von Schuschnigg gave his reply in a speech of February 24[8] to an extraordinary session of the Federal Diet. In it he rose to a height of oratorical fervour which he had never before reached. He made a lofty appeal to the spirit of Austria as he conceived it: a blending of classical humanism, German nationalism, and Western Christianity. He paid a tribute to his murdered predecessor, Herr Dollfuss, and he emphasized that Austria, though a German State, had her own character and her own function to fulfil. To the Nazis, he said that the Austrian Constitution recognized no parties and no Party State; to the Social Democrats, that the conception of a Popular Front was as inapplicable to Austria as a dictatorial constitution. But in a later passage he paid his tribute to 'all the victims' of the troubles of 1934 who had acted from motives of conscience and not from self-interest. He went on to give his account of the Berchtesgaden meeting. He reaffirmed the concessions which he had made to Herr Hitler, and he also quoted the pledges which Herr Hitler had given but had not reaffirmed in his speech of February 20. He would, he said, 'fulfil Austria's pledged word without any

[1] See pp. 51–2. [2] See *Documents* for 1938, Vol. I, p. 27. [3] See p. 49–50. [4] See p. 49.
[5] See pp. 50–51, also pp. 4–14. [6] See p. 50. [7] See pp. 12–13. [8] See pp. 53–62.

afterthought and in absolute sincerity'. 'We well knew that we could go right up to the limit beyond which it is clearly written "Thus far and no farther". '[1] He then continued with a review of Austria's economic achievements, which formed a counterblast to the similar review which Herr Hitler had given for Germany, and he concluded with an affirmation of 'our unflinching determination to maintain our fatherland as a separate, independent State', and an impassioned appeal to his hearers. The speech was received with enthusiasm—except in the Nazi stronghold of Graz—and Dr. von Schuschnigg became what, with his reserved nature, he had never sought to be—a popular figure.

In the days which followed, the Austrian Nazis became increasingly truculent in their demonstrations, especially in the provinces. In view of the alarming situation, a last-minute attempt was made to bring about a reconciliation between the Government and the Social Democrats, from whom the Chancellor received a deputation on March 3. But it came too late; though the Austrian workers placed themselves unreservedly at the Chancellor's disposal on March 11, the independence of Austria by then had only a few more hours to run.

Dr. von Schuschnigg now decided to make one last and desperate bid. In a speech made on March 9[2] at Innsbruck, a stronghold of his own Clerical and Legitimist supporters, he announced his intention of holding a plebiscite[3] on March 13 in which the people of Austria would be asked whether they were in favour of a 'free and German, independent and social, Christian and united Austria'. He had, he said, repeatedly been called upon (by the Austrian Nazis) to hold a plebiscite; the time had now come to do so. He would not yield to intimidation; he would keep to the agreement reached at Berchtesgaden—but not a stroke farther. The National-Socialists would be welcomed by the Fatherland Front, provided that their activity was legal.[4] There followed a passage about the Social Democrats which, in the text as printed in the Austrian Press, is obscure. Mr. Gedye, who was listening to the broadcast of the speech, says that in the relay to Vienna it was overlaid—probably by the deliberate act of a Nazi operator—by another transmission, and that only a garbled version was published. In his view what Dr. von Schuschnigg really said was: 'There is one thing I will not tolerate. If a member of the former Social Democratic Party comes to our ranks and puts up the patriotic emblem of the Front, I will not have it suggested that ours is a Red Front, that the admission to our ranks of a Socialist means Bolshevism. Such talk must cease.'[5]

Unfortunately, the regulations for Dr. von Schuschnigg's plebiscite were framed in such a way as to give his opponents good reason to say that they did not allow of a free expression of opinion. It may well have been Herr Hitler's intention to goad Dr. von Schuschnigg into making some error of this kind. In any case, the criticisms of the regulations made in Herr Hitler's proclamation of March 12,[6] the German official statement of the same date,[7] and Herr Hitler's speech of March 25,[8] can hardly be refuted.

Signor Mussolini said on March 16[9] that Dr. von Schuschnigg informed him of his intention to hold the plebiscite, and that he replied that 'this piece of ordnance will explode in your hands'. The prediction was soon verified. Events now moved swiftly.

The clearest and fullest official account of what happened on March 11 was that given by Mr. Chamberlain in the House of Commons on March 14.[10] The successive ultimata delivered to Dr. von Schuschnigg by his own Ministers, Dr. Seyss-Inquart and Dr. Glaise-Horstenau, and by the German Government,

[1] See p. 60. [2] See pp. 62–64. [3] See pp. 64–65. [4] See p. 64, lines 8–13.
[5] Gedye, *op. cit.*, p. 276. [6] See pp. 70–71. [7] See pp. 72–73.
[8] See pp. 89–90. See also *Survey* for 1938, Vol, I pp. 203–5.
[9] See *Documents* for 1938, Vol. I, p. 236. [10] See pp. 74–78.

resulted in the abandonment of the plebiscite; an announcement to this effect was broadcast at 7 p.m.[1] At 7.50 p.m., Dr. von Schuschnigg himself made a broadcast[2] in which he said that in order to avoid the shedding of German blood, the Government had yielded to a German ultimatum demanding that a prescribed candidate should be appointed as Federal Chancellor, and a Government constituted in accordance with the proposals of the Reich; otherwise German troops would invade the country at a specified hour. Then he took his leave of the Austrian people. A few hours later, having refused to seek safety in flight, he was arrested by the German Secret Police, in whose hands he still remains.

The German News Bureau shortly afterwards broadcast a statement over the Vienna wireless[3] denying what the late Chancellor had said in his broadcast, and stating that there had been no ultimatum.[4] Dr. Seyss-Inquart also made a statement over the wireless[5] to the effect that he was still in office as Minister of the Interior, and that there could be no question of resistance to the German troops if they entered. At 11.15 it was announced that he had been appointed as Federal Chancellor. The names of the members of the new Government—all Nazis—were published at 1.18 a.m.

Dr. Seyss-Inquart, according to his own account, sent a telegram to Herr Hitler asking him to send troops into Austria to maintain order. The alleged text was published in the *Frankfurter Zeitung* of March 13. It is, however, extremely doubtful whether such a telegram was in fact sent. German troops had entered Austria about 10 p.m. on March 11; they reached Vienna at 11 a.m. on the 12th, and the Brenner about 1.0 p.m.

Herr Hitler entered Austria on March 12; he was welcomed at Linz by Dr. Seyss-Inquart,[6] to whom he replied in a brief speech.[7] On the same day he issued a proclamation to the German people[8] in which he accused the Schuschnigg Government of not having intended to implement the Berchtesgaden Agreement. He also sent a telegram of thanks to Signor Mussolini;[9] his letter to Signor Mussolini of the same date was printed in Vol. I of the *Documents*;[10] the gist of it was repeated in his speech of March 18.[11]

Two laws concerning the incorporation of Austria into the Reich—a Reich law and a Federal Constitutional law[12]—were published on March 13. In these Austria was declared a territory of the Reich, and it was announced that a plebiscite on the incorporation of Austria would be taken on April 10. It was subsequently announced that the plebiscite would be taken in the Reich as well as in Austria. Herr Hitler, speaking in Vienna on March 15,[13] solemnly proclaimed 'the entry of my homeland into the German Reich'. In a statement to the Reichstag on March 18[14] he gave his version of his dealings with the Austrian Chancellor, to whom he consistently referred as 'Herr Schuschnigg', omitting the particle; complained of the attitude of the democratic countries; expressed his gratitude to Signor Mussolini, and reaffirmed the inviolability of the Italian frontiers.

The plebiscite campaign was carried on with great intensity, both in Austria and in the Reich. Dr. Goebbels, opening it on March 22,[15] explained that the purpose of the plebiscite was to answer foreign critics who might otherwise try 'to persuade the world that we had taken Austria by force'. It was to be held in the Reich as well as in Austria because 'from now on, German Austria is to have everything in common with the Reich, including its vote for the Reich'. Herr Bürckel, who as Gauleiter for the Saar had previous experience of plebiscite campaigns and had been appointed Commissioner for the Austrian plebiscite,

[1] See p. 65. [2] See pp. 65–66. [3] See pp. 66–67. [4] See also pp. 73, 77, 81, and 84.
[5] See p. 66. [6] See pp. 67–68. [7] See p. 68. [8] See pp. 69–71.
[9] See p. 72. [10] See *Documents* for 1938, Vol. I, pp. 233-5. [11] See pp. 80–83.
[12] See pp. 73–74. [13] See pp. 78–79. [14] See pp. 80–83. [15] See pp. 83–84.

made a long and violent speech on March 24[1] in which he expressed the National-Socialist view that 'blood' should take precedence of all kinds of political allegiance, made the fantastic allegation that Dr. von Schuschnigg would have preferred a 'Bolshevik' Austria to a German National-Socialist one, and said that with regard to the Church, the National-Socialist attitude was 'Render unto Cæsar the things which are Cæsar's, and unto God the things which are God's'. In this way he reassured the Austrian bishops, who issued a declaration[2] calling on Catholics to vote affirmatively in the plebiscite—an action which did not save the Catholic Church in Austria from subsequent confiscations and persecutions.[3] Herr Bürckel was prodigal of abuse and threats against the Jews in Austria, and even indulged in gross insults at the expense of the unfortunate Jews whom the shocking excesses of the Nazi terror in Austria[4] had driven to suicide. Some of his bitterest irony was reserved for the Monarchists—'the only people in Austria for whom we have no use whatever'. Herr Hitler himself spoke a number of times; extracts from the speeches of March 25, March 28, April 3, and April 9[5] are given below. They contain accounts of his dealings with Dr. von Schuschnigg, as well as expressions of his sense of personal triumph.

The question asked in the plebiscite was: 'Do you declare yourself for our Führer Adolf Hitler, and for the reunion of Austria with the German Reich?' Over 99 per cent of the votes, both in Germany and in Austria, were affirmative. The complete *Gleichschaltung* of Austria followed; even its historic name was changed to 'Ostmark'. The League of Nations had already been officially notified[6] that Austria had now ceased to be a Member of the League.

Reactions in other countries.—The Berchtesgaden meeting and the annexation of Austria came as a profound shock to public opinion in other countries. The British and French Governments made protests, which the German Government rejected.[7] Lord Halifax, speaking on March 16,[8] deplored the methods by which the world had been presented with a *fait accompli*, but said that the British Government could not do otherwise than recognize it, without waiting for the plebiscite, the result of which, in view of the circumstances in which it was to be held, was a foregone conclusion. The Notes concerning the closing of the British and American Legations in Vienna[9] and the negotiations concerning the Austrian foreign loans[10] will be found below. A number of references to the subject of Austria will also be found in Vol. I of the *Documents* for 1938. It was to the Berchtesgaden meeting that Mr. Eden referred when he spoke, in his speech on his resignation, of 'the progressive deterioration of respect for international obligations'.[11] Other references will be found in Mr. Eden's statements of February 16[12] and 17,[13] and Mr. Chamberlain's of March 2,[14] March 14,[15] and April 8;[16] with regard to France, M. Delbos's speech of February 26;[17] with regard to Italy, Herr Hitler's letter to Signor Mussolini,[18] the minutes of the Fascist Grand Council of March 12,[19] and Signor Mussolini's speeches of March 23[20] and May 14;[21] with regard to Hungary, M. de Kánya's speeches of March 23[22] and June 1,[23] as well as the broadcast by

[1] See pp. 84–89. [2] See p. 94.
[3] See *Survey* for 1938, Vol. I, pp. 242–256.
[4] See *Survey* for 1938, Vol. I, pp. 223–232. [5] See pp. 89–93.
[6] See p. 83. [7] See pp. 76–77. [8] See *Documents* for 1938, Vol. I, pp. 38–40.
[9] See pp. 96–97. For the dates of similar action taken by other countries, see *Survey* for 1938, Vol. I, pp. 221–3.
[10] See pp. 97–105. [11] See *Documents* for 1938, Vol. I, p. 12. [12] See Vol. I, pp. 3–4.
[13] See Vol. I, pp. 4–5. [14] See Vol. I, pp. 27–8.
[15] See Vol. I, pp. 30–34. An extract of this speech has been reprinted in the present volume, pp. 74–78, owing to its special importance.
[16] See Vol. I, p. 62. [17] See Vol. I, pp. 209–10. [18] See Vol. I, pp. 233–5.
[19] See Vol. I, pp. 235–6. [20] See Vol. I, pp. 236–7. [21] See Vol. I, pp. 239–40.
[22] See Vol. I, pp. 264–6. [23] See Vol. I, pp. 269–70.

Admiral Horthy printed in the present volume;[1] with regard to Yugoslavia, Dr. Stoyadinović's statement of March 16.[2]

(i) *Extracts from Interview given by Dr. von Schuschnigg, Federal Chancellor of Austria, January 4, 1938.*[3]

. . . In Austria there could not be dictatorship: it is too un-Austrian. But neither could we have the same parliamentary democracy as in England. Parliament never really functioned here; in the old monarchy it was a veritable battlefield for the nationalities, and in recent years party quibbles completely paralysed the Austrian Diet.

But what really *is* democracy? If it means a complete equality of all people, its right to regulate its own life and that of the State, then we are democrats. Our new Constitution is based on the democratic principle, although eliminating the parliamentary treatment of public affairs from the sphere of party strife. We can never go back to the party system, undoing all we have achieved at such great sacrifices, allowing again the extremes of Communism or a Nazi party whose avowed aim it was to destroy Austria. As we have no longer a party system, there can be no question of ever accepting Nazi representatives in the Cabinet.

An absolute abyss separates Austria from Nazism. We do not like arbitrary power, we want law to rule our freedom. We reject uniformity and centralization and adhere to autonomy for our free provinces. Christendom is anchored in our very soil and we know but one God: and that is not the State, or the nation, or that elusive thing, race. Our children are God's children, not to be abused by the State. We abhor terror; Austria has always been a humanitarian State, as a people we are tolerant by predisposition.

The interviewer asked whether Dr. Schuschnigg was in favour of the *status quo* from an international point of view.

I wasn't in 1918, but to-day, I am most decidedly in favour of it. Any change now could only be for the worse. Our foreign policy, defined by our specific civilization and our geographic position, has only one purpose—to enable our people to live and to get its share of prosperity. That is quite possible within the framework of our present State.

I do not mind admitting that I have a great sympathy for Mussolini, recognizing that he has never made the slightest attempt to interfere with our foreign or our domestic affairs. Any suggestion that we are drawn in Italy's wake is pure invention.

The interviewer asked whether Dr. Schuschnigg was in favour of the monarchy.

[1] See present volume, pp. 94–96. [2] See Vol. I, p. 296.

[3] To a representative of the *Daily Telegraph and Morning Post*. *Daily Telegraph and Morning Post*, January 5, 1938.

I am a monarchist by tradition and conviction. Our adversaries have tried to put all the sins committed in pre-war Austria on the shoulders of the Hapsburgs; in fairness Austria had to swing back to a right perspective. But I cannot take the action which some of my supporters urge. A restoration is for the time being impossible. To recall Otto to-day would mean serious complications, not only with the Little Entente, or with Germany perhaps, but an excuse for a general conflagration. That is something to which I can never be a party. Conditions must develop gradually; every patriot has to accept the régime which divides least.

For one reason: the Hapsburg question must not be allowed to block the reconstruction of Central Europe. It was a logical, but tragical, consequence of the breakdown of the Empire which followed the war that resentment remained between the Succession States. I am happy to say that this period belongs to the past. The relations between the Danubian States have never since 1918 been so good as to-day, and I hope that the growing conviction of our common interests will some day bear results which will mean much for the future peace of Europe. . . .

We feel common ties with Germany, just as an Italian-speaking Swiss feels towards Italy, or the Flemish towards Holland and the Walloons towards France. But we remain ourselves alone. In preserving Austria's historic mission in Central Europe we can continue to render great service to the German people as a whole. But not with an *Anschluss*, in which Austria would become a second Bavaria, sinking to the level of a province. Instead we are the bridge between two great cultures. . . .

(ii) *Communiqué issued after the Meeting of the Rome Protocol States at Budapest, January 12, 1938.*[1]

1. The Austrian Federal Chancellor, Dr. Schuschnigg, the Austrian Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, Dr. Schmidt, the Italian Foreign Minister, Count Ciano, the Hungarian Prime Minister, M. Darányi, and the Hungarian Foreign Minister, M. de Kánya, held joint conversations in Budapest on January 10, 11, and 12, in the framework of the Rome Protocols.

2. The representatives of the three Governments once again noted with satisfaction the positive results and the favourable development of the Rome Protocols. They renewed the expression of their joint desire of intensifying their political and economic activity and their cordial co-operation in the spirit of these protocols.

In this connexion the representatives of Austria and Hungary expressed their sympathy with the close co-operation of the two friendly Great Powers, Italy and Germany, which is rooted in the Rome-Berlin Axis and represents a new and important pledge of peace and reconstruction.

The representatives of Austria explained their policy, which they base on the harmony between the principles of the Rome Protocols and the

[1] *Pester Lloyd*, January 13, 1938. Translation.

Austro-German Agreement of July 11, 1936. The representatives of Italy and Hungary expressed their complete satisfaction with this policy.

3. The representatives of Austria and Hungary again expressed their unequivocally hostile attitude towards Communism; they therefore greeted with sympathy the Italian-German-Japanese Anti-Comintern Pact, which is based on the same principles. They confirmed their resolve to combat Communist propaganda in their countries to the utmost of their power.

4. The representatives of Austria and Hungary informed the representative of Italy of their decision to give formal recognition to the Government of Generalissimo Franco as the legitimate Government of Spain and all her possessions and colonies. The representatives of the three Governments expressed their agreed view that this decision represents a practical contribution to the normalization of relations between Spain and other nations and to the pacification of Europe.

5. The representatives of Austria and Hungary took note of the sound and weighty reasons which had led the Italian Government to withdraw from the League of Nations; they recognized the far-reaching consequences of this decision for the composition, aims, and potentialities of the League of Nations, and they declared that the League cannot and should not assume the character of an ideological group. If it were to do so, Austria and Hungary reserved the right to reconsider their relations with the League.

6. The representatives of Austria and Italy reaffirmed that their Governments recognize Hungary's full equality of rights with regard to rearmament. The representatives of the three Governments regard the speedy realization of this principle as necessary.

7. The representatives of Austria and Italy declared that their Governments followed with great interest the development of relations between Hungary and Rumania. They consider that a satisfactory outcome of the Hungaro-Rumanian negotiations would do much to consolidate peace in the Danubian region.

8. The representatives of the three Governments discussed the economic situation and are agreed in desiring to intensify commerce between the three States by every means on the newly created basis.

9. The representatives of the three Governments confirmed their common desire to co-operate with all States whose political activity is directed towards genuine aims of peace and reconstruction and a better understanding between nations.

(iii) *Extracts from Article on 'The Vitality of the Rome Pact', by Dr. von Schuschnigg, Austrian Federal Chancellor, January 13, 1938.*[1]

When the Rome Protocols were drawn up nearly four years ago,[2] their general lines were determined by two ideas. In the first place, the Danube

[1] *Reichspost*, January 13, 1938. Translation.
[2] See *Documents* for 1933, pp. 396–8.

States, Austria and Hungary, which were feeling the full force of the economic depression, were to be placed in a position to resist the difficulties of the time successfully by being enabled to carry on intensive trade with Italy. In the second place, the contracting parties desired to lay down jointly certain political principles the observation of which was, in their view, necessary for reconstruction and the safeguarding of peace in the Danube region.

Since that time, many things have happened which might make persons not in close touch with the situation wonder whether the Rome Pact was not gradually being made out of date by the course of events. We have never allowed it to be in doubt that for us the Rome Protocols, which last received a new confirmation and extension early in 1936,[1] continue as before to be the basis of our attitude. The Conference at Budapest clearly showed the correctness of this view, which is doubted neither in Rome nor in the Hungarian capital. The continued existence of the Protocols—not merely in form but in substance—appears, at the conclusion of the Budapest discussions, as a firmly established fact.

The Italian policy of close friendship with Germany—the so-called 'policy of facts'—is in full harmony with this fact. The Austro-German Agreement of July 11, 1936, which similarly was never regarded as isolated, is a welcome and effective supplement to the Rome Pact. It is well to remember that Austria has always declared herself to be a German State, long before the Axis policy came into being, and that she took every opportunity of emphasizing that she would in no circumstances be prepared to co-operate in any policy directed against Germany. This view met with full understanding in Rome and Budapest. It was also expressed unambiguously in all other inter-State discussions in which Austria took part. Thus, anyone who alleges that there have been contradictions in the development which took place during last year has failed to see the fundamental facts and can readily be convicted of error by all the statements which have been published on the occasion of the various conferences of the States adhering to the Rome Pact since 1934.

Once this basic assumption, from which the present and future attitude of Austria can be clearly derived, has been laid down, it is not difficult to outline our relation to the great international problems. Here, too, we follow courses which have long been laid down and which are obligatory for us. Since Seipel's time—that is, for fifteen years past and more—it was clear to everyone that Austria was strongly opposed to the ideas of Communism and its political effects in the country itself. Hungary was in the same position, after the bitter experience of Bela Kun's reign of terror. The German-Italian-Japanese Anti-Comintern Pact, which set itself the task of combating Communism, had therefore, in this sense, long been a practical reality for Austria and Hungary.

It is, moreover, in the nature of things that the small States should follow

[1] See *Documents for* 1936, pp. 307–8.

the development of the League of Nations with other eyes and other interests than the Great Powers quite comprehensibly did. We remember the days when Ignaz Seipel in Austria and Albert Apponyi in Hungary were the protagonists of an organized understanding between States and peoples. Like all human institutions, the League of Nations has fallen short of its ideal aims, and in addition it has suffered many vicissitudes due to the immediate circumstances of the time. The criticism was often made by the smaller States that it tended too much to be an organization of the will of the Great Powers, and that the smaller countries could not sufficiently throw their weight into the scales. I will not discuss here whether and to what extent that criticism was justified; in any case it must not be forgotten that in critical periods both Austria and Hungary received essential economic and financial assistance from the League and from its leading Powers, especially England. We have always attached importance to proving that the international assistance which we received has been injurious to no one, and that we have always most scrupulously fulfilled the obligations which we undertook. We therefore feel to-day that it is our right, and indeed our duty, in so far as it lies in our power, to use our influence so that the old and great idea of the League may once again be revitalized. In other quarters too—I may draw attention in this connexion to the statements of policy of the Swiss Federal Councillor Motta—the question of the reform of the League has been repeatedly discussed.

Recent events have brought this problem into the foreground. At the time when Soviet Russia was admitted to the League of Nations, it was regarded as a self-evident condition that the internal ideologies of the different countries could play no part in the international forum of Geneva. The idea was rather that the very dangerous attempts to propagate these ideas outside the boundaries of the State might be deprived of their venom by international connexions. It might in fact have fatal consequences for the true League of Nations if there were any departure from this principle, and if the League were transformed into any sort of *bloc* of one political and ideological tendency. Then indeed Europe would be completely divided into two camps, with all the dangers which experience has shown to be inherent in rigid systems of alliances. Austria is at one with many other States in abhorring any such development. However, the political insight of the Great Powers of the West which have remained in the League is surely a sufficient guarantee that so perilous a development, which would greatly restrict the international sphere of action of the Geneva organization, will not be allowed to occur.

All these problems, as well as the adoption of a clearly defined attitude towards the events in Spain, so unhappily distracted by civil war, were naturally discussed at the Conference of the Rome Pact States which has just ended. The fact that, without any attempt at securing a majority, and notwithstanding the undoubtedly delicate nature of the situation, solutions were found which gave equal satisfaction to all concerned, is sufficient

evidence of the unimpaired vitality of the Rome Pact. It is hardly necessary to add that economic relations between the three States of the Rome Pact, adapted to the developments of recent years, continue to be thoroughly satisfactory, and that the statements which are sometimes heard that these relations are out of date belong to the realm of myth. . . .

At this time we reflect with particular and sincere satisfaction on the tried friendship which unites us to Italy and for a long time past with Hungary, our neighbour and the companion of our fate. The unmistakable cordiality of the welcome which Austrians constantly receive in Hungary naturally increases our profound understanding of the problems which specially concern our neighbour, in the remembrance of our secular friendship and connexion.

(iv) *Identical German and Austrian Communiqués announcing Dr. von Schuschnigg's visit to Berchtesgaden, February 12, 1938.*[1]

The Austrian Federal Chancellor, Dr. Schuschnigg, to-day paid a visit to the Führer and Chancellor of the German Reich at Obersalzberg, at the invitation of the latter. Dr. Schuschnigg was accompanied by Dr. Guido Schmidt, Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, and the German Ambassador, Herr von Papen. Herr von Ribbentrop, German Minister for Foreign Affairs, was present.

This unofficial meeting was the outcome of a desire on both sides to confer on all questions concerning relations between the German Reich and Austria.

(v) *Identical German and Austrian Communiqués on the Berchtesgaden Conversations, February 15, 1938.*[2]

All questions affecting the relations between Austria and the German Reich were submitted to a detailed examination in the conversation which took place on February 12 between the Austrian Federal Chancellor, Dr. Schuschnigg, and the Führer and Chancellor of the German Reich at Berchtesgaden.

The aim of the conversation was to clear up the difficulties which have arisen in the working of the Agreement of July 11, 1936. It was agreed that both parties were resolved to abide by the principles of that Agreement, which they regard as the starting-point for a satisfactory development of the relations between the two States.

In this spirit, both parties decided, after the discussion of February 12, on the immediate execution of measures which will ensure that a close and friendly relationship between the two States shall be established, corresponding to the history of the German people and their interests as a whole.

[1] *Reichspost*, February 13, 1938. Translation.

[2] Broadcast simultaneously at 10 p.m. by Col. Adam in Vienna, and from the German wireless stations. *Reichspost*, February 16, 1938. Translation.

Both statesmen are convinced that the measures on which they have agreed will also constitute an effective contribution to the peaceful development of the European situation.

(vi) *Broadcast Statement by Colonel Adam, Chief of the Press Department in Vienna, February 15, 1938.*[1]

I should like to make some comments on this official *communiqué*, which describes the purpose and result of the meeting between the Federal Chancellor, Dr. Schuschnigg, and the Reich Chancellor, Adolf Hitler.

It is generally known that difficulties have repeatedly arisen in the application of the Agreement of July 11, 1936, and have gradually made it clear that a general clarification is desirable, as otherwise there would be a danger of a departure from the course upon which the two States entered eighteen months ago. The time for a general clearing up of the situation, and for a frank and unreserved conversation between the heads of the two Governments concerned, came in the last few weeks.

The two heads of Government have now, in a frank and detailed conversation, discussed a series of measures which, within the framework of the Agreement of July 11, 1936, offer a possibility of making relations between Austria and the German Reich friendlier than before—a development which is sincerely desired by both parties. After the meeting at Obersalzberg, both parties once more considered and laid down the measures judged necessary for a satisfactory development of mutual relations. As has already been said, they are on the lines of the Agreement of July 11, 1936.

In contradiction to all the rumours and conjectures which have made their appearance during the course of to-day, I am empowered by the Federal Chancellor to state that no change is being made in the principles of the Agreement of July 11, 1936, or in the Constitution adopted in May 1934, and that the position of the Fatherland Front is not affected.

In accordance with the Constitution and the Act concerning the Fatherland Front, there is no question of a revival of the parties, or of a splitting up of the Fatherland Front into organizations resembling parties.

It will thus now be possible to associate with patriotic constructive work even those circles which have up to now adopted a negative or hesitating attitude.

I believe that this information will be sufficient to ensure that our population will await in full confidence the publication of certain measures which will probably be decided upon in the course of this night, and will be given the widest publicity as soon as possible. There is no question of sensational changes, but of decisions which are based on a spirit of conciliation, and are

[1] As an addition to the official broadcast on the results of the Berchtesgaden conversations. *Reichspost*, February 16, 1938. Translation.

intended to secure the peaceful development of our country, the new Austria, the May Constitution, and the Fatherland Front.

(vii) *Extract from Speech by Herr von Papen, German Ambassador at Vienna, February 18, 1938.*[1]

. . . When I leave this post, by command of the Führer and Reich Chancellor, within the next few days, I think I may do so with a good conscience both as regards the Führer who appointed me and the interests of the German people. It has been my aim during this period to prepare the way (*Raum schaffen*) by peaceful methods for the ideal of German unity and to prevent yet another catastrophe from being added to the tragedy of German history.

July 1936 was a beginning, and you will remember that I expressed the view a year ago in this hall that the storm which had burst over Austria would be followed by a new spring. That spring will come—in the German problem too—as surely as the earth revolves on its axis. The conversation between the two Heads of State at Obersalzberg, which took place on the 12th of this month, will be a further landmark in the history of the German problem. I may say that the keynote was supplied by the profound historical responsibility which envelopes the problem of Germany's destiny. An independent Austria can find its mission only within the framework of the development of Germany as a whole, and only as a fellow-worker and fellow-organizer in the present course of events—in the reconquest of the position of the Reich and its spiritual influence in the West.

I cherish the hope that the result of these conversations will mark the beginning of a new era in German-Austrian relations, and that the decision taken with such loyalty and sincerity on both sides will also be the best contribution to European peace. . . .

(viii) *Austrian Official Communiqués, February 18, 1938.*

(*a*) *Communiqué concerning National-Socialist Activities.*[2]

On the basis of the agreement reached at Berchtesgaden between the Austrian Federal Chancellor and the German Reich Chancellor on February 12, Austrian National-Socialists will now be afforded the possibility of legal activity within the framework of the Fatherland Front and all other Austrian institutions. Such activity can, however, only be permitted on the basis of the Constitution, which now as heretofore precludes political parties, and on an equal footing with all other groups. On the part of the Reich measures will be taken in execution of the existing ban to preclude intervention by party quarters in Austrian internal affairs and thereby to contribute to peaceful development.

[1] In Vienna. *Wiener Neueste Nachrichten*, February 16, 1938. Translation.
[2] *Wiener Neueste Nachrichten*, February 19, 1938. Translation.

(*b*) *Communiqué concerning the Measures agreed upon at Berchtesgaden.*[1]

An official *communiqué* of February 15[2] announced various measures agreed upon by both parties in accordance with the principles of the Agreement of July 11, 1936, with a view to clearing up difficulties which have arisen in the execution of that Agreement and establishing close and friendly relations between the two States. In this connexion it is officially stated that with the *communiqué* issued to-day, all the measures which are contemplated as a result of the Berchtesgaden conversations have been made public. Statements regarding further measures which have been given publicity in many newspapers and also in other quarters are based on conjecture and in no way represent the facts. In particular it should be noted that the principles of Austria's currency and economic policy will be maintained as a matter of course and that these were not the subject of any negotiations. It is only in keeping with the attempt which has been undertaken in the political sphere to clarify inter-State relations that the efforts, now of long standing, to stimulate commercial relations between Austria and the German Reich to the interest of all concerned should be continued.

(ix) *Extract from Speech by Herr Hitler, Führer and Chancellor of the German Reich, February 20, 1938.*[3]

[*The Berchtesgaden Agreement*]

. . . I am happy to be able to tell you, gentlemen, that during the past few days a further understanding has been reached with a country that is particularly close to us for many reasons. The Reich and German Austria are bound together not only because they are the same people, but also because they share a long and common history, and a common culture. The difficulties which had been experienced in carrying out the agreement of 11 July [1936] compelled us to make an attempt to clear out of the way misunderstandings and hindrances to a final conciliation. Had this not occurred, it was clear that an intolerable situation might one day have developed, whether intentionally or otherwise, which might have brought about a very serious catastrophe. It is then as a rule no longer within the power of man to stay the course of a destiny that first arose through negligence or stupidity! I am glad to be able to assure you that these considerations corresponded with the views of the Austrian Chancellor whom I invited to come to visit me. The idea and the intention were to bring about a relaxation of the tension in our relations with one another by giving under the existing legislation the same legal rights to citizens holding National Socialist views as are enjoyed by the other citizens of German Austria. In conjunction with this there should be a practical contribution towards peace by granting a general amnesty, and by creating a better understanding

[1] *Reichspost*, February 19, 1938. Translation. [2] See pp. 47–48.

[3] In the Reichstag. (For other extracts from the speech, see pp. 4–14 above; see in particular pp. 12–13, which refer to Austria.) Baynes, *op. cit.*, Vol. II, pp. 1407–8.

between the two States through a still closer friendly co-operation in as many different fields as possible—political, personal, and economic—all complementary to and within the framework of the Agreement of 11 July.

I want to express in this connexion before the German people my sincere thanks to the Austrian Chancellor for his great understanding and the warm-hearted willingness with which he accepted my invitation and worked with me so that we might discover a way of serving the best interests of the two countries, for after all, it is the interest of the whole German people, whose sons we all are, wherever we may have been born.

I believe that in reaching this mutual understanding we have also made a contribution to European peace. The best proof that we are right in this supposition is the rising fury of democratic world citizens who are always talking about peace, and yet who let no opportunity pass of inciting to war. They are angry with, and infuriated by, this work of understanding. It is therefore a permissible conclusion that our work was good.

Perhaps this example will be helpful in gradually bringing greater relief to the tense situation in Europe. Germany is willing, in any event, supported by her friendships, to leave nothing untried in order to preserve that greatest blessing, that blessing that is the basis for every future work, namely, peace. . . .

(x) *Extracts from Statements by the Rt. Hon. Sir John Simon, Chancellor of the Exchequer, February 21, 1938.*[1]

[*Berchtesgaden Agreement*][2]

. . . It is now possible to make a somewhat fuller statement on the Austrian situation. . . . From information received from Austrian sources it is clear that no actual Treaty instrument was drawn up as a result of the conversations at Berchtesgaden, and it follows, therefore, that no document of this kind will be published. I am informed, however, again from Austrian sources, that the main points of the agreement reached at Berchtesgaden are as follow:

The Austrian Chancellor will take far-reaching and conciliatory measures with a view to furthering the internal pacification of Austria, while on the other hand Germany reaffirms the continuance of the Austro-German Agreement of July 1936, and renews her assurances of non-intervention in Austrian domestic affairs. The consolidation of Austrian internal affairs, as well as the strength of the Patriotic Front movement in Austria, makes it possible for the Austrian Government to take up a more friendly attitude towards those who have hitherto held aloof from the main trend of Austrian politics. In particular we learn that the following measures have been taken by the Austrian Chancellor:

(1) A general amnesty has been declared covering all political offences

[1] In the House of Commons. *Hansard*, February 21, 1938, cols. 6–11.

[2] In answer to a question 'whether he is now in a position to make a statement on the recent Austro-German Agreement?'

committed before 15th February of this year, provided the offender has remained in Austria. This amnesty has been extended to school and university students and its execution was completed on 19th February. All those released must sign an undertaking of good behaviour until 31st December 1941.

(2) The Government has been reconstructed and in the new Cabinet Dr. von Seyss-Inquart, the Minister for the Interior and Security, will be the only representative of National-Socialism, apart from Dr. Glaise-Horstenau, who was also a member of the last administration.

(3) The cases of public officials who were deprived of their pensions are to be re-examined. It is understood that in general these pensions will be restored and the officials will receive an appropriate indemnity.

(4) Austrian National-Socialists will be legally permitted to indulge in political activity, within the framework of the Patriotic Front, and of other Austrian organizations, to the same extent as is permitted to other groups, provided they are loyal to Austria and her constitution. It should be pointed out that the Austrian Constitution of 1934 remains unchanged.

To complete the information at our disposal I should add that an official *communiqué* published in Austria states that the above measures cover all the measures of which the execution was contemplated at Berchtesgaden. The *communiqué* continues to the effect that, contrary to rumour, the bases of Austria's monetary and economic policy will not be changed in any way, but that the endeavour to intensify commercial exchanges between Austria and Germany will be continued. It is also announced that measures are to be taken in Germany designed to exclude the interference of German Party Offices in Austrian domestic affairs. . . .

[*Guarantee of Austrian Independence*][1]

In the declaration referred to, His Majesty's Government stated that they considered themselves to be among the Powers which would, as provided for in the Agreement of 7th January 1935, between France and Italy, consult together if the independence and integrity of Austria were menaced. His Majesty's Government did not pledge themselves to any further course of action and the question of support by other countries does not, therefore, arise. His Majesty's Government are, in fact, in consultation with the French Government. . . .

The obligations of His Majesty's Government towards Austria and Czechoslovakia are those which every member of the League of Nations assumes towards all its fellow members. Apart from these, His Majesty's Government have given no special guarantees towards either country. . . .

[1] In answer to questions 'whether the Anglo-French declaration of 3rd February 1935, regarding Austrian independence and integrity, was in any way contingent upon the support of other countries?' and 'how many times Britain has guaranteed the independence of Austria since the Armistice; and how many assurances that Britain will assist in the maintenance of the independence of Czechoslovakia have been given to that State since the same date?'

[*Austrian Loans*][1]

The two guaranteed loans for Austria still outstanding are as follow:

The Austrian Government International Guaranteed Loan, 1933–53, of which the amount issued in London and guaranteed by His Majesty's Government was £4,314,200. Of this amount £3,824,500 is still outstanding; and the Austrian Government Guaranteed Conversion Loan, 1934–59, of which the amount issued in London was £10,163,900. Of this amount £10,082,200 is still outstanding. This loan was issued for the redemption of the original Austrian Government Guaranteed Loan of 1923, and His Majesty's Government's guarantee is for 24½ per cent. of each of the several *tranches* of the loan. The total amount of the guarantee at present rates of exchange is in the neighbourhood of £4,750,000. In addition there was an amount of £3,000,000 issued in London of the Austrian Government International Loan, 1930. This loan was not guaranteed, and the amount outstanding of the London issue is about £2,473,000. There is nothing, so far as His Majesty's Government are aware, in the recent Austro-German agreement to affect the liability arising under these loans in any way.

(xi) *Extracts from Speech by Dr. von Schuschnigg, Federal Chancellor of Austria, February 24, 1938.*[2]

At this grave and decisive hour the Federal Diet has assembled in this hall, the hall in which the sessions of the House of Deputies were held under the old Monarchy, and where, in the course of the last five years, Austria, the conception for which it stands, its meaning, and its existence have more than once been the subject of debate. I requested the President of this House to summon an extraordinary session of the Federal Diet, with the presence, in addition, of the other members of the Federal Assembly and the leading administrators of the Fatherland Front, for a formal reason: to introduce to the House the new enlarged Government which the President has appointed on my proposal. The increase in the number of my colleagues and the extension of the Government bench are in themselves a clear and unmistakable indication that special tasks confront the responsible leaders of the State; and these tasks, let me say at once, they are determined to fulfil, no matter what the circumstances.

. . . We are not here for any kind of debate. We are here to take decisions, to act, to rally the confidence of all who are prepared to take a positive stand, to appeal to the adherents of reasoned judgment and opinion, and to consolidate the sense of responsibility of all those who realize what responsibility means; for the first and only item on the agenda—without general procedure or debate—is Austria. That word sums up the entire content of the Government's declaration in all its parts. The Government,

[1] In answer to a question 'whether the Government is paying attention to the new situation in Austria, having especial regard to the financial guarantees incurred by His Majesty's Government in connexion with Austrian State obligations?'

[2] At an extraordinary session of the Federal Diet. *Reichspost*, February 25, 1938. Translation.

with all its members, stands immovably on the basis of the Constitution of May 1, 1934. It therefore considers it to be its foremost and obvious duty to maintain intact, to the full extent of its powers, the freedom and independence of the Austrian fatherland. It regards it as its task to secure peace in external relations by all the means at its disposal, and to foster and preserve peace at home to the best of its knowledge and ability. The Austrian Government regards the fulfilment of this task as being at the same time the full, unqualified, and convinced acknowledgment of its German duty.

What is the ultimate significance of a self-supporting, independent Austria, such as Engelbert Dollfuss intended and such as we inherited at a critical time? The struggle for independence has a meaning if it succeeds in paving the way to happiness and wellbeing, food, living space, and prosperous development for all classes of the German people in Austria; if it heals the wounds inflicted on them—and similarly on the numerically small minorities of foreign race whose home is on our soil—by a disastrous war and a miserable peace.

The struggle for independence has also a further purpose in that we are upholding a principle which was clearly formulated nearly 500 years ago by the Diet of Worms under the Emperor Maximilian, and to which we are bound by the dictates of conscience. It was this principle which gave meaning to the Vienna of Maria Theresa and no less that of Franz Josef. It was the single ray of light left to a defeated, bewildered people, deprived of their rights, after the collapse in 1918. Later, it became the sacred flame which Ignaz Seipel made it his life-work to guard, and for which Engelbert Dollfuss shed his blood; while to me personally, entrusted as I was at that time with the full and sole responsibility for the policy of our country according to the terms of the Constitution and by reason of my appointment by the Federal President, it has been the mainspring of my political thought, intention, and action. It is the principle of the harmony of our culture. This makes our life seem worth living and worthy of human dignity. It consists in the perfect blending of the elements of classical humanism, German nationalism, and Western Christianity; or, to put it otherwise, in the inheritance of a definite, clearly defined basic spiritual attitude, in the ties of blood and soil, and in the belief in an immortal soul. The scholar, the scientist, and the artist will comprehend and analyse this; the peasant and the worker will, unless they have been perverted by false education, feel it instinctively without being able to give conscious expression to its details. It speaks to us from the aspect of our German landscape, from the evolution of its countryside and its cities, its buildings and monuments, its songs and its customs, its music and plastic arts, its sorrows, and its history. It speaks to us from the countenance of hundreds of thousands of our German people, their family destinies and their names—often, too, their personal sorrows and experiences—their temperament and range of emotion, their capacity for adaptation and their world-wide popularity, their manner of speech with its particular accent and traditional phraseology, their faith,

and their will to freedom. It speaks to us from the vital rhythm of the homeland, and it says: That is what the German Austrian desires, and that is what he is.

To serve this principle, and with it a valuable section of the German race, to participate within our frontiers, which, though narrow, are our own, in the shaping of the destinies of the whole German race, to continue, as ever, to act as good Germans and faithful Austrians—this is what the Federal Government has adopted as its supreme task and settled policy.

I have endeavoured to make the Federal Government as far as possible a faithful reflection of all economic and social tendencies, and also of all currents of opinion in our country, for this seemed to me right and proper in the present state of affairs. I need hardly say that there could be no question of our following foreign models, in the first place because slogans which arose out of a particular political situation should, as a matter of principle, pass current only within their country of origin, and in the second place because Austria, as we know, set foot on new paths at the time when the May Constitution was adopted, Only in the courageous Free State of the Portuguese has a parallel tendency been followed.

The Constitution recognizes no parties and no Party State. It undertakes the organization of the nation on occupational lines, with the authoritative head of the State as regulating factor. Therefore there are no coalitions, either in political life or in the Government. The Government which I now introduce to the House will not and cannot, therefore, be a coalition Government formed on some earlier model—in other words a Government of parties—but its ambition is to represent in itself a concentration of all the positive elements in our nation. For, as will be shown later, every Austrian who is ready and resolved to co-operate and to devote his strength to the work of reconstruction will find open to him the way prescribed by the Government.

We should, as a matter of principle, refrain from passing judgment on political arrangements and systems existing in other countries. We can therefore state emphatically, without fear of misconstruction, that the political conception of a Popular Front, which is derived from the lexicon of the Party States and their coalition régimes, is as little applicable for us in Austria as its opposite pole, the dictatorial constitution. What we Austrians want cannot and must not be labelled according to the political concepts of Right and Left, or the political colours of red and black, brown and green. Ours is not the party-ridden Popular Front, but the single, united front of our people with all its social grades and classes. To serve this united front of Austrians, to realize it, to maintain it, is the essential aim of the Government's programme.

[*The Berchtesgaden Conversations*]

And now for the second decisive issue on which I and my colleagues have to render account before the Federal Diet, the Federal Assembly, the whole

Austrian people, and the world at large in so far as it is interested, like ourselves, in preserving that precious possession, peace in our midst.

The Chancellor and Führer of the German Reich invited me to a personal conversation, which took place at Obersalzberg on February 12. Difficulties had arisen in the application of the Agreement of July 11, 1936, which, as you know, was designed to secure and regulate friendly relations between the two German States, and the continued failure to remove these difficulties constituted a source of acute danger. The fact that this personal contact was regarded as a political sensation far beyond the borders of our country and the German Reich is sufficient to show that all the efforts which had been made had not been entirely succeeded in relieving the tension which had for years lain over the German area—over Austria and Germany. We are firmly convinced that we neither desired nor brought about this situation, which was in the long run intolerable because it was entirely abnormal. Abnormality is always contrary to reason, and unreason undoubtedly contains the seeds of danger. That the world was aware of this is evident from the great interest taken in the meeting at Berchtesgaden, for this would otherwise be inexplicable, since the very sensible principle of having recourse to personal contact for carrying on political discussions for the settlement of questions between States is now generally accepted.

This day at Berchtesgaden was, then, as I, in common with the Chancellor and Führer of the German Reich, confidently hope, a landmark which is destined to regulate relations between our two States, now and in perpetuity, on a friendly basis in the interest of the whole German race, its culture, and its national life, and particularly in the interest of our Austrian Fatherland; a landmark of peace. . . .

Austria stands and falls by her German mission. But she must be let alone, and not deprived of the opportunity of fulfilling it. For almost a century now the German question in this country has never quite been laid to rest. Greater Germans, Little Germans, Greater Austrians stood facing one another . . . Germans in this country never quite got together, but . . . argued about who was in reality the best German. Yet it is my deepest conviction that at all times the best German in this country was the good Austrian. . . .

We have now, thank God, put behind us for all time the mental outlook and the catchwords of the revolutionary period, which threatened to destroy even what was left of Austria. I do not consider it just to condemn wholesale all those in Austria with whom the responsibility—by no means a light one—rested. The widespread poverty, starvation, bewilderment, the hopelessness of being able to keep even the fraction of Austrian soil left to us, and save it for better times, forbade any glimpse into the future and was enough to deprive us of our reason. In addition to this there was the Peace Treaty, which we never ceased to combat as an injustice, and the war guilt lie, against which we took up arms from the outset as a brutal violation of the truth. Our campaign was directed against the lie itself and against

those who, for reasons of party tactics, and under the delusion that they could thereby establish Socialist rule in Austria, helped to spread it. It was these same circles who voiced the first and loudest demand that the existence of Austria as a separate State should be surrendered, and promised the Austrian workers in particular a paradise if our country was finally liquidated and automatic union with the Reich—then under Socialist rule—achieved. But it is undoubtedly a fundamental error, and a sin against the spirit of history which no one can commit with impunity, to attempt to solve fundamental problems on the basis of a temporary political situation or on economic grounds of the moment, in order to secure relief for the time being, when such problems can only find a lasting and historically right solution if they are detached from the political conflicts of the day and the influences of current opinion.

Responsible elements in the Parliamentary-democratic period of post-war Austria were unanimous on . . . the friendly relation with the neighbouring German Reich which arose from our common destiny and age-long historical connexion, the racial community born of our common language, blood, and culture, and the geopolitical situation of our fatherland, and which was independent of the internal political configuration of the moment. When Engelbert Dollfuss assumed the Government on May 27, 1932, he said in the course of his solemn Government manifesto: 'Let all the world understand that we, as an independent German State, conditioned by the blood, the history, and the geographical situation of our homeland, are conscious of our close connexion and friendship with the German Reich, a friendship which carries with it both rights and obligations.' And yet there ensued a fratricidal war with all its griefs and horrors. . . . This fratricidal war lasted five years.

But now, let there be peace: a peace which is just to both sides; an honourable peace. . . . The conclusion of such a peace after five years of fratricidal conflict was the meaning and purpose of the Berchtesgaden meeting of February 12. . . . When I brought the Agreement of July 11, 1936, which was intended to prepare the way for peace and contained the principles which would make peace possible, to the knowledge of the Austrian people, I referred to the speech which I made in the Federal Diet on May 29, 1935. I said then: 'Austria has never let it be doubted, and will never do so while we live or at any time in the future, that she acknowledges herself to be a German State.' I went on: 'To-day I have nothing to add to that statement.'

[*The Berchtesgaden Agreements*]

The Chancellor and Führer of the German Reich, in his great speech to the German nation on February 20 of this year, said with reference to the results of the Berchtesgaden Agreements, that these Agreements were a supplement to and within the framework of the Agreement of July 11, 1936. Difficulties had arisen in connexion with the execution of that Agreement which made it imperative to make an attempt to clear away misunderstandings

and obstacles which stood in the way of a final reconciliation. The Agreement of July 11, which was thus accepted unanimously by both parties as a basis for the Berchtesgaden Agreement, contains:

> in the first place an express assurance by the Chancellor and Führer of the German Reich that the German Government recognizes the full sovereignty of the Federal State of Austria;
>
> in the second place an assurance that the two Governments will each regard the internal political conditions of the other country, including the question of Austrian National-Socialism, as a domestic concern of that country, upon which it will exert neither direct nor indirect influence;
>
> finally, an assurance that the Austrian Federal State Government's general policy and its policy towards Germany in particular shall be constantly guided by the principle that Austria recognizes herself to be a German State. There is also a reference to the unchanged validity of the Rome Protocols, which deal with Austria's relations with her neighbours, Italy and Hungary.

To ensure the smooth working of the Agreement, measures were taken by both sides which concerned on the one hand the establishment of internal political peace in Austria as a guarantee for the satisfactory functioning of the Agreement, and on the other the guarantee of Germany's non-intervention in Austria's internal political affairs,

The Agreement of July 11, 1936, has now been in force for nearly two years. There have been no lack of attempts in one quarter or another to overcome the friction and hindrances which continued to occur. . . . The new Agreement has now been concluded, and it is our ardent wish that it may fulfil in every respect the expectations of both sides. If it be argued on the Reich German side that it would be incompatible with the prestige of a Great Power and the dignity of the German race if Austria were to oppose the conception of the State which prevails in the Reich, then I may point out that Austria has always been ready to take this conception into consideration, and that the internal affairs of Germany have always been, and will continue to be, outside the scope of political discussion in Austria. I am quite convinced that this principle should be and can be completely maintained provided that possible attitudes towards the German State form are not interpreted as including internal Austrian dissensions and illegal activities directed against the Austrian Constitution and conception of the State.

The agreement which has now been reached contains every promise of good results and all the requisites for satisfactory development and the conclusion of peace without reservation. We have, unfortunately, not been able to repair all the damage which the year 1934 brought, with its civil conflicts of February and July. Its victims were many, all too many. We Austrians lost that man of our race, that courageous pioneer of a new era, who had succeeded in overcoming the formal democracy—which for us had

broken down—of a parliamentarianism which did not work; we lost our leader, Engelbert Dollfuss. As usually happens in revolts, when people do not ask who was right and who wrong, but who won and who lost, the instigators, assuring themselves in good time of foreign help, fled the country. There remained those who, for the most part faithfully following their own ideals, were ready to obey, arms in hand. Many of these had to suffer the severity of the law. At this hour we bow our heads before all the victims. The man who mounts the barricades from idealism and not from calculating motives, in the belief that he is doing his duty, has never, throughout the ages, been the one who really profits by a revolution. He was therefore entitled, if fate was kind to him, to reconciliation when peaceful times returned. This has always and everywhere been so, and this is the purpose of amnesties. What matters is not whether the amnesty is justly appreciated in the individual case and whether it is applied to those who are worthy; what matters is that a line can be drawn under all that has gone before and a new era begun without the burden of the past. . . .

We have given abundant proof of good-will and confidence. We have invited the former party-bound Social Democrats to co-operate in the Fatherland Front; we have offered the opportunity of co-operation to the former party-bound National-Socialists and to members of all other groups on terms of absolute equality. . . .

The German Peace, as I should like to call the agreement which has now been reached, again expressly lays open to those whose outlook is National-Socialist the way to co-operation as to all others, provided that their attitude is openly, clearly, and unambiguously in harmony with the principles of the Constitution, which has, in conformity with the design of Engelbert Dollfuss, established Austria as an independent, German, and Christian State, organized on corporate lines and ruled by authoritarian principles; provided that it is also in harmony with the fundamental principles of the Fatherland Front, besides which there can be no political party and no form of political organization in Austria, and within which equal rights for all are provided so long as they adhere unswervingly to its basic principles.

Observance of Austrian law, including the law concerning the Fatherland Front, and recognition of the Austrian Constitution, form, just as in the internal Austrian agreement of February 1937, the expressly defined and unambiguously formulated prerequisite for co-operation in the present inter-State agreement. From the Reich German side, a repeated assurance was given that full provision would be made to prevent interference in the internal political affairs of Austria, and that for this purpose the Reich Government was ready to take steps which would preclude such interference by German organizations. It was agreed and confirmed that former illegal activities in Austria shall not be able to count in any way on support from organizations outside the country, or on tolerance by the Austrian Federal Government. Rather will any lawless activities be forcibly dealt with according to the penal provisions of the law. This must be regarded as a final

statement on this point, which, for a particular reason, appears specially important.

I have spoken of an honourable peace. It would have been dishonourable if those in Austria who not long ago were speaking of the lack of validity of the Austrian Constitution, and were accusing the members of the Government of breaking their oath, and who spoke of force, terrorism, and the revival of parties, had been allowed to prevail. It was an honourable peace because the principles for which we have always stood with regard to the Constitution and the Front, and with regard to the basic principles of the reconstitution of our State, remained unchanged. We well knew that we could go right up to the limit beyond which it is clearly written 'Thus far and no farther', and we did so. We had no hesitation in going as far as that limit because, relying on the word and on the personality of the Führer and Chancellor who so successfully guides the destinies of the great German Reich, we have resolved to follow, jointly with him, a course which, if consistently followed, may, we are firmly convinced, be of benefit to our Austrian Fatherland and the whole German race, and also conduce to the peace of Europe. I would emphasize that I am, with a full consciousness of my responsibility and with full consideration of the vital interests and peaceful existence of our fatherland, prepared to fulfil Austria's pledged word without any afterthought and in absolute sincerity. I and all of us will be happy if the hard time of sacrifice which ended on that hard day, February 12, 1938, has led to a true German peace, a peace which, if preserved and intensified, will reward us for the sacrifices we have made. . . .[1]

[*Foreign Relations*]

Our relations with foreign countries have for many years followed normal and well-tried lines. I have already mentioned the restored—and, we hope, permanent—close and friendly relations with the German Reich. There is a second friend and neighbour about whom I need say nothing now because our relations with her have, for a hundred historical and other reasons, long been clearly known and established and our friendship requires no re-emphasis: I refer to Hungary. It need also hardly be emphasized that we are firmly resolved to continue to conduct our policy on the well-tested lines of the Rome Protocols, which have to-day lost nothing of their economic and political vitality. . . . It would therefore be contrary to the facts and misleading to speak of any change in the relations of Italy with Austria, or of Austria with Italy, as has recently been done from time to time in the international Press. These remarks are just as contrary to the facts as those which in earlier days sometimes referred to an existing or intended domination of Italy over Austria. I have repeatedly had occasion before in this House to point out that the head of the Italian Government, Benito Mussolini, whom we have always esteemed and admired for the strength of

[1] Dr. von Schuschnigg went on to give an account of the economic progress made in Austria in recent years.

will and inflexible resolution, as well as the keen appreciation of cultural ties and connexions which he has displayed in leading his country, has in many ways showed his complete understanding of and sympathy with Austria, but has always been at the greatest pains to avoid any appearance of interference in our internal affairs. Thus it came about that this personal understanding created an atmosphere of confidence which has often enabled me to discuss problems which had nothing to do with the political questions of the day, but which lay in the sphere of national culture—problems which by reason of tradition, historical development, and present conditions, are of interest to both our nations, and particularly to Austria. I have every reason to express the conviction that the future will bring no change in this respect. I felt it necessary to state this expressly and clearly in view of certain false statements which have been made.

Moreover, it seems to me imperative, at a moment when the whole world is once again preoccupied with our country, to reiterate certain essential facts . . . so that there may be no doubt of our unflinching determination to maintain our Austrian fatherland as a separate, independent State. Our country is not only an actuality which has come into being historically and organically through centuries of legitimate development; it is also a focal point in the map of Europe, and a concept to the whole civilized world the disappearance of which from the European scene is unthinkable. Since we give due weight to these facts, we are entitled to claim that our policy, both in its practical aspect and as an ideal, should be recognized as a contribution to peace.

There is one thing which should be made quite clear in this connexion. The Austrian who wishes to see his fatherland free and independent thinks in any terms rather than the Peace Treaty. It is certainly not on the basis of that treaty, conditioned as it was by the circumstances which prevailed when it was concluded, that we demand recognition of our rights. The decisive factor is the firm determination of the Austrian people and the unalterable conviction of its responsible leaders that our Austria must remain Austria. We did not approve, and are not to blame for the geographical picture which the map has shown since 1918. We did not choose our frontiers, but what we have we shall keep. It must and shall live, for even in its present state it can be of service to our own people, to German culture and destiny, to the world, and to the spirit of peace. We solemnly profess before the whole world our faith in our fatherland and in the principles which are to us the unalterable foundation of our right. We are a Christian State, we are a German State, we are a free State, and everyone in this land is equal before the law.

We are happy to state that we have been able to conclude pacts in the economic and cultural sphere with a number of States—in particular with our neighbours—and that these retain their validity. I would emphasize that it is part of our policy to try to conclude pacts dealing with all economic and cultural matters, not only with our neighbours but also with other

States. It is perhaps advisable to state once more that we regard the trend of our foreign policy as being dictated by nature, and that we follow it deliberately and unswervingly. . . . It is on these straight and unambiguous lines that Austria has always conducted her friendly relations with all States which have shown friendship, sympathy, esteem, and interest for our country. Among these I may mention in particular the Great Powers, Great Britain, France, and the United States, and last but not least, our cordial friend, Switzerland.

We know that small States can only indirectly make their voice heard when the destinies of the Great Powers, and thus of the world and of a whole generation, are being decided. Perhaps it might sometimes have been better if more attention had been given to the small States. . . . One thing cannot be begrudged even to a small State, especially when, like ours, its fate was decided by the misfortunes of war . . . and that is to make its voice heard when it believes that by doing so it is contributing to the maintenance of peace and thus to the well-being of the nations. It is a fact that frontiers have been wrongly drawn, and this is true not only for individual States but for continents also. Perhaps a day may come when the conception of Europe will be mapped out afresh in the interests of all concerned, and a new, different, more coherent Europe will be able to seek new forms of organization and guarantees of peace.

What sustains us Austrians and keeps us from ever losing heart in spite of all false interpretations and rumours . . . which sometimes cast doubt on the ability and will of our country to survive, is our faith in, and knowledge of, the immortality of our country, ever newly strengthened by the varied history of many centuries. . . .

Moreover, I am convinced in my inmost heart that the memory of Engelbert Dollfuss and all our country's martyrs will uphold and strengthen those who now bear the responsibility. And then—if I may say so—I trust in Almighty God, who will not forsake our country. But this trust is based on the knowledge that the Almighty helps those who are resolved to exert themselves to the utmost by putting out their whole strength and concentrating their will. And since we are thus determined, victory is certain.

Austria, the Red-White-Red, until death!

(xii) *Extracts from Speech by Dr. von Schuschnigg, Austrian Federal Chancellor, March 9, 1938.*[1]

[*Announcement of Plebiscite*]

. . . And now I ask you—I am bound to ask you, and all Austrians—Which do you want, work or politics? You cannot have both in the long run. It may be possible for a transitional period, but now we must have calm, and therefore all those who are conscious of their responsibility, who feel themselves part of this German people, must resolve to give the nation

[1] At Innsbruck. *Neue Freie Presse* and *Reichspost*, March 10, 1938. Translation.

what it needs for its life. For we want to live. But to carry out this programme of work, I must know whether the Austrian people approves of the path which we are following. . . . We want a free and German Austria. We want an independent and social Austria. We want a Christian and united Austria. We want bread and peace in the land, and we want equality of rights for all those who are loyal to their nation and their home. That is what we want. That has been the guiding principle of my political ideas, and my aim. . . . It has always been perfectly clear that we were entirely sincere, and it was in accordance with this policy that we concluded the Agreement of July 11, 1936, and the Berchtesgaden Agreement of this February. It was in the line of our policy. We mean to keep it, and we are certain that it will be interpreted in all quarters in a way which corresponds to its text and its meaning. But now I desire and need to know whether the people of Austria want this free and German and independent and social, Christian, united fatherland, tolerating no partisan schisms. Now I need to know whether the watchword 'Bread and peace in the land' can really unite our countrymen and their Front, which is unconquerable, and whether the idea of equality of rights for everyone in the country, so long as they are loyal to their nation and home—for all, without exception—is a watchword which can rally them. Because I need to know this, I now, at this hour, appeal to you all, fellow-countrymen and Austrians, men and women. Next Sunday, March 13, we shall hold a plebiscite.

I have mentioned before that Article 93 of the Constitution entrusts full political responsibility for policy to the Federal Chancellor. As I have always said, I do not want us in Austria to base the conception of our fatherland on persons or personal régimes. Each one of us is a worker in Austria. For many years past I have repeatedly been called upon to hold a plebiscite. Now the time has come; now is the moment for a profession of faith. . . . I know that we all want that true independence which has so often been referred to in the past weeks, that independence which is not founded on dictated peace treaties or international agreements, and I therefore want to have it proved before God and the world and the entire German people that, conscious of our duty and of this historic hour, we stand for our independence, for the German independence of Austria. Then there is the social conception which unites us all. Who in our ranks—and indeed outside our ranks—dare profess to be unsocial in our country? The social ideal belongs to the foundations of our new State. The Christian ideal is in accordance with the history, the nature, the character of our land. . . .

It is necessary to make it clear beyond all possibility of doubt what is legal and what is illegal. With what is illegal there can be no dealings. It is open to everyone to collaborate legally on the basis of the Fatherland Front, in accordance with the letter and the spirit of the agreement which I have mentioned. . . . Threats and attempts at intimidation such as have been practised here and there under cover of the National idea and on the pretended basis of the Agreement, cannot be tolerated. . . . It would destroy

peace and concord, [for I cannot ask my friends to remain silent indefinitely][1] if on the other side the agreement which has been made and proclaimed is not kept in the spirit and the letter. I am in agreement with that, and cover it with my entire responsibility. It must be so, and the agreement must be carried out. But not a stroke (*Beistrich*) further. . . . The National-Socialist who was formerly bound to his party is unreservedly welcome in our camp, and, provided his activity is legal, will enjoy full and unrestricted equality of rights. That goes without saying; but there is one thing which cannot be: that the Socialist formerly bound to his party, when he puts on a Nationalist badge . . . and comes to the Fatherland Front should talk about Bolshevization and a Red Front. That is a perversion of the facts, and it cannot be accepted. . . . The workers are welcome in the Front, but organizations which are in the nature of parties cannot be tolerated. . . .[2]

Comrades of the Front, this appeal for unity and for peace in the land, which I make to everyone, rests on the assumption that there is good will on all sides. . . . Believe me, I know what it means to bear responsibility. I have taken on myself alone responsibility for this decision, and I stand or fall, with all that I aspire to and believe in, with this confession of faith which the Austrian people is about to make; but I believe the responsibility can and must be borne, because I cannot imagine that a single man or woman, who knows the issues, can be against our watchword.

[Do not be misled by the innumerable rumours which constantly fly about. Do not lose your sense of humour, friends, and keep your heads high, as has always been our way. Then we cannot fail. You must take the idea of German peace literally and sincerely, and none of you must bear the slightest guilt for it if the hard road which we have to tread in the interests of our whole nation, our homeland, and peace, does not lead to success.] . . .

I therefore appeal to all men of good will, wherever they stand. Make your profession of faith in unity, men and women, Tyrolese and Austrians, say Yes to the Tyrol, say Yes to Austria!

(xiii) *Proclamation concerning the Austrian Plebiscite, March 9, 1938.*[3]

For a free, German Austria!

People of Austria! For the first time in the history of our fatherland the leadership of the State calls for an open profession of faith in our homeland. Next Sunday, March 13, is the day of the plebiscite. All of you, whatever may be your occupation or social class, men and women of free Austria, you are called upon to make a profession of faith before the whole world. You are to say whether you are willing to go with us on the path which we are treading, which has as its aim social harmony and equality of rights, the final overcoming of party schisms, German peace at home and abroad, and a policy of work.

[1] The passages in square brackets are omitted in the *Reichspost* version.
[2] With regard to this passage, see Introductory Note, p. 39.
[3] *Neue Freie Presse*, March 10, 1938. Translation.

For a free and German, independent and social, Christian and united Austria! For peace and work! And for equality of rights for all those who acknowledge their faith in their nation and fatherland! That is the object of my programme. To achieve this aim is our task, and the historic need of the hour.

Not a word of the formula which is placed before you as a question can be allowed to fail. Whoever answers 'Yes' serves the interests of all, and above all of peace. I therefore call on you, fellow-countrymen, to show that you are in earnest in meaning to inaugurate a new era of unity in the interests of your homeland. We must show the world our will to live. And so, people of Austria, stand up as one man and vote 'Yes'!

Front-Heil Austria!

DR. KURT VON SCHUSCHNIGG, Federal Chancellor.

(xiv) *Communiqué issued by the Austrian Government, March 11, 1938.*[1]

The Federal Chancellor and Leader of the Front has, after reporting to the Federal President, decided to postpone the plebiscite announced for the 13th of this month.

(xv) *Broadcast Statement by Dr. von Schuschnigg, former Austrian Federal Chancellor, March 11, 1938.*[2]

Men and women of Austria!

To-day we have been confronted with a difficult and decisive situation. I am authorized to report to the Austrian people on the events of the day.

The Government of the German Reich presented the Federal President with an ultimatum with a time-limit, according to which he had to appoint as Federal Chancellor a prescribed candidate, and constitute a Government in accordance with the proposals of the Government of the German Reich. Otherwise it was intended that German troops should march into Austria at the hour named.

I declare before the world that the reports which have been spread in Austria that there have been labour troubles, that streams of blood have flowed, and that the Government was not in control of the situation and could not maintain order by its own means, are fabrications from A to Z.

The Federal President authorizes me to inform the Austrian people that we yield to force. Because we are not minded, at any cost and even in this grave hour, to shed German blood, we have ordered our armed forces, in case the invasion is carried out, to withdraw without resistance[3] and to await the events of the next hours.

[1] Broadcast by the Vienna wireless at 7 p.m. *Reichpost*, March 12, 1938. Translation.

[2] Broadcast from Vienna at 7.50 p.m. *Pester Lloyd*, March 12, 1938. Translation. The versions published in the Austrian Press were heavily censored.

[3] *The Times* report of the speech states that Dr. von Schuschnigg said 'without sensible resistance', and then corrected himself and said 'without resistance'.

The Federal President has entrusted General of Infantry Schilhawsky, Military Inspector-General, with the command of the Army. Further orders to the Army will be given by him.

So I take my leave in this hour of the Austrian people with a German word and a heartfelt wish—God protect Austria!

(xvi) *Broadcast by Dr. Seyss-Inquart, March 11, 1938.*[1]

Men and women of Austria, German racial comrades: In view of the events of to-day, and with particular reference to those events which are about to take place, I declare that I am still in office as Minister of the Interior and Security, and hold myself responsible for the maintenance of peace and order in this country. I call upon everybody to maintain peace and order. It is necessary to maintain special discipline in the next hours and days. If manifestations are made to-day they should in no case assume the character of excessive demonstrations. In particular, I call upon the organizations of National-Socialists responsible for order and security to see that peace and order are everywhere observed, and to influence their own adherents in this sense. I count upon you[2] all supporting the executive in its task without exception and being at the disposal of the executive. In particular, I would point out that there can in no case be any question of resistance to the German army if it enters, and that this applies also to the Executive. The most important duty is to maintain peace and order in this country. Wait patiently, stand side by side, and give your help so that we may look forward to a happy future.

(xvii) *Austrian Official Communiqué, March 11, 1938.*[3]

Under the pressure of the internal political situation, the Federal President has entrusted Federal Minister Seyss-Inquart with the conduct of the office of Federal Chancellor with a view to the maintenance of calm and order.

(xviii) *Statement issued by the German News Bureau from Vienna, March 11, 1938.*[4]

The former Austrian Federal Chancellor, Schuschnigg, gave a broadcast from the Vienna wireless station at 7.50 p.m. this evening, in which he made a number of untrue statements. Herr Schuschnigg stated, among other things, that the Government of the German Reich sent an ultimatum with a time-limit to the Austrian Federal President, demanding the formation of a new Federal Government. This statement of Schuschnigg's is untrue. It

[1] At 8.15 p.m. *Reichspost*, March 12, 1938. Translation.

[2] The *Reichspost* version prints 'Sie'—i.e. 'you'. The *Frankfurter Zeitung* of March 13 prints 'sie'—i.e. 'them'.

[3] Broadcast at 11.15 p.m. *Neue Freie Presse*, March 12, 1938. Translation.

[4] *Frankfurter Zeitung*, March 13, 1938. Translation.

was not the Government of the Reich which presented such an ultimatum, but Austrian authorities and Austrian Ministers who, in view of the increasingly acute situation in Austria, and the fact that the policy of the Federal Chancellor Schuschnigg was leading straight to a catastrophe, submitted demands of this kind to the Federal President.

Herr Schuschnigg also said that the Government of the German Reich called on the Federal President by means of an ultimatum 'to select the Government in accordance with the proposals of the Government of the German Reich'. This too does not correspond with the facts; it was Austrian Government circles who, in full recognition of the situation in Austria, made such demands of the Federal President.

In the third place, the former Austrian Federal Chancellor said that it was untrue that disorders had broken out in Austria, and that the Government was not in control of the situation. Hundreds of reports which have reached all parts of the world from Austria prove that there have already been innumerable clashes, and that in many places Marxist disorders have occurred. For example, Communist bands in Wiener Neustadt have obtained arms, and had made a number of attacks at the time when Schuschnigg read out these untrue statements.

(xix) *Speech of Welcome to Herr Hitler by Dr. Seyss-Inquart, March 12, 1938.*[1]

My Führer! In a moment full of significance for the German people and in its more remote effects on the course of European history, I, and with me the whole of our homeland, welcome you, my Führer and Reich Chancellor, on your first arrival back in Austria. The time has come when, in spite of the dictated Peace Treaties, in spite of the compulsion, disfavour, and lack of comprehension of all the world, German and German have once and for all come together. To-day the German people stands together, finally united, to endure every struggle and every suffering as one people. The way has been difficult, hard, and beset with sacrifices. One of its stages was the most grievous defeat of the German people; but it was precisely from that that there grew up the great and glorious idea of the indivisible community of destiny, the consciousness of a living people, the idea of National-Socialism. You, my Führer, have experienced racial distress and racial suffering as a son of this border province (*Grenzmark*). Out of that experience there grew up in you the great idea of throwing in everything in order to lead the German people out of its heaviest defeat. You led it out. You are the leader of the German nation in its struggle for honour, freedom, and right. We Austrians have now freely and openly, proudly and independently, acknowledged your leadership, and have at the same time solemnly declared Article 88 of the Treaty of Peace to be without effect. The mighty army of the Reich is marching into our land amid the jubilation of Austria. Austria's

[1] On Herr Hitler's arrival at Linz. *Frankfurter Zeitung*, March 14, 1938. Translation.

soldiers welcome the grey-clad Germans who come to us, not in defiance, but to affirm clearly and definitively that the German people has come forward in its entirety to guarantee before all the world the German right and to protect it for all time. The Reich of the German race, the Reich of order, of peace, and of the freedom of peoples: that is our goal. We stand on its threshold—and Adolf Hitler is its Leader!

My Führer: We Austrians thank you. I can only use the simple words of an ordinary man, but I speak from the hearts of millions of Austrians when I say: We thank you. We have always fought on your side on the lines and in the attitude which were proper to us in this border province, holding out to the extreme limits of patience. I think I may say we fought a good fight to the last. And now we welcome you with the jubilation of all German hearts. *Heil mein Führer!*

(xx) *Speech by Herr Hitler, March 12, 1938.*[1]

I thank you for your words of greeting. Above all I thank all of you assembled here who have borne witness that it is not the will and the wish of some few only to found this great Reich of the German people, but that it is the wish and the will of the German people. Would that on this evening some of our international seekers after truth whom we know so well could not only see the facts but later admit them to be facts. When years ago I went forth from this town, I bore within me precisely the same profession of faith which to-day fills my heart. Judge of the depth of my emotion when after so many years I have been able to bring that profession of faith to its fulfilment.

If Providence once called me forth from this town to be the leader of the Reich, it must, in so doing, have charged me with a mission, and that mission could be only to restore my dear homeland to the German Reich. I have believed in this mission, I have lived and fought for it, and I believe I have now fulfilled it. You are all witnesses and sureties for that. I know not on what day you will be summoned; I hope it will not be far distant. Then you must make good your pledge with your own confession of faith, and I believe that then before the whole German people I shall be able to point with pride to my own homeland. And this must then prove to the world that every further attempt to tear this people asunder will be in vain.

And just as then it will be your duty to make your contribution to this German future, so all Germany is ready for its part to make its contribution, and it is already making it to-day. In the German soldiers who now from all the shires (*Gauen*) of the Reich are marching into Austria you must see those who are ready and willing to make sacrifices in their fight for the unity of the whole great German people, for the power of the Reich, for its greatness and its glory now and evermore—Germany, Sieg Heil!

[1] Broadcast from Linz, in reply to the greetings of Dr. Seyss-Inquart and the inhabitants of Linz. Baynes, *op. cit.*, Vol. II, pp. 1422–3.

(xxi) *Herr Hitler's Proclamation to Germany, March 12, 1938.*[1]

It is with the deepest sorrow that for years past we have watched the fate of our fellow-countrymen in Austria. Austria from ancient times has formed part of the German people; the two countries have shared a common destiny. That eternal historic association was broken only by the war of 1866 but was sealed afresh in the World War. The suffering which was inflicted on this country first from without and later from within we felt as though it were our own, just as we know that for millions of German Austrians the misfortune of the Reich caused a like concern and sympathy.

At the time when in Germany thanks to the victory of the National Socialist idea the nation found once more its way to the proud self-consciousness of a great people there began in Austria a new period of suffering and bitter trials. By the most brutal methods of terrorism, of bodily and economic torture and annihilation, a régime which lacked any legal mandate sought to maintain an existence, which was condemned by the overwhelming majority of the Austrian people. Thus we, as a great people, had the experience of seeing more than six million people of the same stock as ourselves suffering oppression at the hands of a numerically small minority simply owing to the fact that this minority had gained possession of the means necessary to enforce its will. From this deprivation of political rights and coercion there arose an economic decline which stands in terrible contrast with the development in the new Germany.

Who can blame these unfortunate members of our German people if they cast longing eyes to the Reich—to that Germany with which their ancestors had been associated for so many centuries, with whose citizens they had fought shoulder to shoulder in the cruellest of all wars, whose civilization was their civilization, and to which they had made in so many spheres contributions of their own of the highest value? To suppress this sentiment was to condemn hundreds of thousands to profound mental suffering.

If some years ago this suffering was still borne in patience, with the rise in prestige of the Reich the will to end the oppression grew ever stronger.

Germans! I have of recent years sought to warn the former rulers of Austria from pursuing this path. Only a madman could believe that it was possible permanently through oppression and terrorism to rob men of their love for the people of their birth.[2] The history of Europe proves that in such cases one breeds only a greater fanaticism. This fanaticism then compels the oppressors to resort to ever stronger methods of violence, and these in turn do but increase the loathing and the hatred of the victims.

I have further tried to persuade the responsible authorities that in the long run it is impossible for a great nation, because it is unworthy of it, to have to stand by and watch those belonging to the same people as themselves being continually oppressed, persecuted, and imprisoned solely

[1] Read by Dr. Goebbels to foreign Press correspondents in Berlin. Baynes, *op. cit.*, Vol. II, pp. 1416–21.

[2] German: *die Liebe zu ihrem angestammten Volkstum.* (Note by Professor Baynes.)

because of their origin or of their allegiance to this people or on account of their association with an idea. Germany alone has been forced to receive over 40,000 fugitives, 10,000 others within this small country have passed through prisons, dungeons, and concentration camps, hundreds of thousands have been reduced to beggary, to misery, and poverty. No nation in the world would be able permanently to tolerate these conditions on its frontier without being itself despised—and that deservedly.

In the year 1936 I endeavoured to find some way which might afford a hope of alleviating the tragic fate of this German brother-country so that one might perhaps reach a real conciliation. The agreement of the 11th of July [1936], however, was signed only the next moment to be broken once more. The majority of the population remained without rights: their unworthy position of being pariahs in this State was not abolished. He who openly professed his allegiance to the life of the German people[1] continued to be persecuted whether he was a National Socialist worker on the roads or an old leader of the army in the World War who had proved his worth.

I then tried for a second time to bring about an understanding. I endeavoured to make clear to the representative of this régime—who when compared with myself, the Leader chosen by the German people, possessed no legitimate mandate of his own—I endeavoured to make it clear that this state of affairs, if it continued, could not be maintained, since the increasing exasperation of the Austrian people could not be suppressed for ever by increasing violence and that the moment was bound to come when it would also be intolerable for the Reich to stand by any longer in silence in the face of such oppression. For if to-day solutions of colonial problems were made to depend on questions of the right of self-determination of such inferior peoples as might be concerned, it was unbearable that 6½ millions belonging to a great, an ancient civilized people should be practically denied these rights by the character of his Government. I wished therefore to secure by a new agreement that in this country all Germans should be granted the same rights and be subject to the same duties. This agreement was intended to secure the execution of the treaty of 11 July, 1936.

A few weeks later we were unfortunately forced to the conclusion that the men composing at that time the Austrian Government had no intention of carrying out this agreement in the spirit which had inspired it, but in order to create for themselves an excuse for their continued violations of the Austrian Germans' right to equality of treatment they conceived the notion of a plebiscite which was devised in order finally to deprive the majority of its rights. The methods adopted to realize this scheme were unexampled. A country which for many years had had no election at all, where there were no means of determining who were qualified to vote, announces an election which is to take place in less than three and a half days' time. There are no lists of voters, there are no voting cards, there is

[1] German: *Wer sich zum deutschen Volkstum offen bekannte.* (Note by Professor Baynes.)

no means of testing a person's right to vote, there is no obligation to maintain the secrecy of the ballot, there is no guarantee that the election will be conducted with impartiality, there is no security that the votes will be properly counted—and so on. If these are the methods which can confer on a régime the stamp of legality, then for fifteen years we National Socialists in Germany were only fools! We had to go through a hundred election fights and laboriously win the support of the German people.

When the late President of the Reich at last called me to power, I was the Leader of by far the strongest party in the Reich. Since then I have time and again sought to give to the German people an opportunity of confirming the legality of my existence and of my action: and that confirmation was granted me. But if the methods which Herr Schuschnigg wished to employ are the right ones, then the plebiscite in the Saar territory was only a mockery of a people whose return to the Reich it was desired to make more difficult. But on this point we think otherwise. I believe that we can all be proud that here too in this Saar plebiscite, we won a vote of confidence from the German people in so unexceptionable a fashion.

Against this unexampled expedient of an election fraud the German people in Austria itself at last revolted. But this time when the régime once more planned simply to crush the movement of protest with a strong arm,[1] the result could only be a new civil war.

But the German Reich will not suffer that henceforth in this territory Germans should still be persecuted because they belong to our nation or because they profess their belief in certain views. It desires calm and order! I determined therefore to place the help of the Reich at the service of the millions of Germans in Austria. Since this morning the soldiers of the German army are on the march across all the frontiers of German Austria. Tanks, infantry divisions, bands of SS. on the ground, and the German air arm in the blue heaven—summoned by the new National Socialist Government in Vienna—will be the guarantee that as soon as possible the opportunity will be given at last to the German people itself to fashion its own future and its own destiny by a real plebiscite. Behind these troops stand the will and the resolution of the whole German nation!

I myself as Leader and Chancellor of the German people shall be happy now once more as a German and a free citizen to be able to tread the soil of the country which is also my homeland. The world must convince itself that the German people in Austria is experiencing in these days hours of bliss and deep joy. It sees in the brothers coming to its help its saviours from profound distress.

Long live the National Socialist Reich!

Long live National Socialist German Austria!

Berlin, 12 March, 1938. ADOLF HITLER.

[1] German: *mit brachialen Mitteln.* (Note by Professor Baynes.)

(xxii) *Exchange of Messages between Herr Hitler and Signor Mussolini, March 12, 1938.*

(*a*) *Telegram from Herr Hitler to Signor Mussolini.*[1]

Mussolini, I shall never forget this. Adolf Hitler.

(*b*) *Reply from Signor Mussolini.*[2]

My attitude is determined by the friendship between our two countries, which is consecrated in the Axis.

(xxiii) *Announcement by the Official German News Agency, March 12, 1938.*[3]

The British and French Governments have, on the ground of certain information reaching them from Vienna, presented through their ambassadors a protest against the compulsion alleged to have been exercised by the Reich on developments in Austria. The German Government has rejected this protest as being unacceptable, and has at the same time corrected the false information in the possession of the two Governments.

(xxiv) *Statement issued by the German Embassy in London, March 12, 1938.*[4]

In concluding the Berchtesgaden Agreement of February 12 the German Chancellor once again tried to assist in the appeasement of the political development in Austria which from day to day had become more dangerous. It will be remembered that this Agreement was necessitated by the fact that the Agreement of July 11, 1936, failed to serve its purpose. In that sense the Berchtesgaden Agreement was to be a means to put the Agreement of July 11 on a working basis. The essence and the spirit of the Berchtesgaden Agreement was to grant complete freedom and equality to all Austrian citizens. Had the Agreement been executed in a loyal way a quiet development would have resulted.

On March 9, however, the Austrian Chancellor, entirely on his own initiative and without consulting his colleagues in the Cabinet, announced unexpectedly, and in open contrast to the letter and the spirit of the Berchtesgaden Agreement, his decision to hold a plebiscite within three days. This in itself was a breach of the Austrian Constitution. Article 65 of the Constitution provides that a plebiscite shall be held only after a formal decision of the entire Cabinet has been passed. The Constitution provides further that a plebiscite has to be announced by the President and not by the Chancellor.

The purpose of the plebiscite became apparent as soon as the provisions under which it was to be held were announced. No voting lists, no possibility of inspecting the lists of those who were entitled to vote was provided

[1] *Neue Freie Presse*, March 14, 1938. Translation.
[2] *The Times*, March 15, 1938.
[3] *Frankfurter Zeitung*, March 12, 1938. Translation.
[4] *The Times*, March 14, 1938.

for. There was neither a guarantee of a secret ballot, nor of an impartial supervision of the voting, nor any safeguard to ensure a proper counting of the votes. It is only too natural that the announcement of such a plebiscite which could be nothing but biased stirred up the feelings of the German population in Austria. The general situation became grave and a civil war was impending.

Furthermore, the steps taken by Herr von Schuschnigg were opposed by members of the Austrian Cabinet. The result was the resignation of Herr von Schuschnigg, and after the formation of a new Government under the leadership of Herr von Seyss-Inquart the German Chancellor was requested by the new Austrian Chancellor to dispatch army and police units to assist the Austrian Government in maintaining peace and order. The German Chancellor, wishing to prevent any development which might have led to chaos, complied.

(xxv) *Federal Constitutional Law concerning the Reunion of Austria with the German Reich, March 13, 1938.*[1]

In accordance with Article III, paragraph 2 of the federal constitutional law concerning the taking of extraordinary measures within the limits of the Constitution, B.G.B.I. No. 255, 1934, the Federal Government has resolved:

Article I. Austria is a territory of the German Reich.

Article II. On Sunday, April 10, 1938, all German men and women in Austria above the age of 20 will take part in a free and secret plebiscite on the reunion with the German Reich.

Article III. The result of the plebiscite shall be determined by a majority of the votes cast.

Article IV. The necessary regulations for the execution and supplementing of this law shall be effected by decree.

Article V. 1. This law comes into force on the day of its publication.

2. The Federal Government is entrusted with the execution of this federal constitutional law.

The passing of this law in accordance with the Federal Constitution has been recorded.

SEYSS-INQUART, GLAISE-HORSTENAU, WOLFF, HUEBER, MENGHIN, JURY, NEUMAYER, REINTHALER, FISCHBÖCK.

(xxvi) *Law concerning the Reunion of Austria with the German Reich, March 13, 1938.*[2]

Article I. The federal constitutional law of March 13, 1938, passed by the Austrian Federal Government concerning the reunion of Austria with

[1] Published in Vienna. *Frankfurter Zeitung*, March 15, 1938. Translation.
[2] Published at Linz. *Frankfurter Zeitung*, March 15, 1938. Translation.

the German Reich, herewith becomes a law of the German Reich. The text is as follows. . . .[1]

Article II. The law at present valid in Austria remains in force. The introduction of Reich law into Austria will be provided for by the Führer and Reich Chancellor, or by a Reich Minister authorized by him.

Article III. The Reich Minister for the Interior shall be authorized to issue, in consultation with the Reich Minister so appointed, the legal and administrative decrees necessary to execute and supplement this law.

Article IV. This law comes into force on the day of its publication.

The Führer and Reich Chancellor, ADOLF HITLER.
Reich Minister for Air, Field-Marshal GOERING.
Reich Minister of the Interior, FRICK.
Reich Minister for Foreign Affairs, VON RIBBENTROP.
Deputy of the Führer, R. HESS.

(xxvii) *Extract from Statement by the Rt. Hon. Neville Chamberlain, Prime Minister, March 14, 1938.*[2]

The main sequence of events of the last few days will be familiar to hon. Members, but no doubt the House will desire that I should make a statement on the subject. The result of the meeting at Berchtesgaden on 12th February between the German and Austrian Chancellors was stated by the former to be an extension of the framework of the July, 1936, Agreement. Hon. and right hon. Gentlemen will recollect that that Agreement provided, among other things, for the recognition of the independence of Austria by Germany and the recognition by Austria of the fact that she was a German State. Therefore, whatever the results of the Berchtesgaden meeting were, it is clear that the agreement reached was on the basis of the independence of Austria.

On Wednesday of last week Herr von Schuschnigg decided that the best way to put an end to the uncertainties of the internal situation in his country was to hold a plebiscite under which the people could decide the future of their country. Provision for that plebiscite is made in the Austrian Constitution of 1934. This decision on the part of the Austrian Chancellor was unwelcome to the German Government, as it was also unwelcome to the Austrian National-Socialists themselves. Matters appear to have come to a head on the morning of 11th March when Herr von Seyss-Inquart, who had been appointed Minister of the Interior as a result of the Berchtesgaden meeting, together with his colleague Dr. Glaise-Horstenau presented an ultimatum to the Chancellor. They demanded the abandonment of the plebiscite and threatened that if this was refused, the Nazis would abstain from voting and could not be restrained from causing serious disturbances during the poll. The two Ministers also demanded changes in the provincial

[1] The text of the Austrian law follows. See above, p, 73.
[2] In the House of Commons. *Hansard*, March 14, 1938, cols. 45–50.

Governments and other bodies. They required, so I am informed, an answer from the Chancellor, before one o'clock in the afternoon. The Chancellor declined to accept this ultimatum, but offered a compromise under which a second plebiscite should be held later, with regular voting lists. In the meantime, he said, he would be prepared to make it clear that voters might vote for his policy as against him personally, in order to prove that the plebiscite was not a personal question of his remaining in office. Later that day, feeling himself to be under threat of civil war and a possible military invasion, the Chancellor gave way to the two Ministers and agreed to cancel the plebiscite on condition that the tranquillity of the country was not disturbed by the Nazis. There seems to be little doubt that this offer was referred to Germany. In any event, the reply which the Ministers returned was that this offer was insufficient and that Herr Schuschnigg must resign in order to be replaced by Herr Seyss-Inquart. It appears that the Austrian Chancellor was given until 4.30 p.m., Greenwich time, in which to reply and was informed that if his reply was not satisfactory, German troops would be ordered to move at five o'clock. This fact seems to show that Germany was behind the ultimatum.

Later in the day a fresh ultimatum was delivered, which appears to have been brought from Germany by aeroplane. The demands made were the resignation of the Chancellor and his replacement by the Minister of the Interior, a new Cabinet of which two-thirds were to be National-Socialists, the Austrian Legion to be readmitted to the country and given the duty of keeping order in Vienna, and the total readmission of the Nazi party. A reply was required before 6.30 p.m., Greenwich time. To these demands the Austrian Chancellor announced, a little later on the wireless, that he had, in view of the German threatened invasion, yielded in order to avoid the shedding of German blood. He said that he wished the world to know that the President and he had yielded to force and that Austrian troops had been instructed to oppose no resistance to German troops if and when the latter crossed the frontier. The subsequent entry of German troops into Austria and the visit of the German Chancellor to Linz will be known to hon. Members.

His Majesty's Government have throughout been in the closest touch with the situation. The Foreign Secretary saw the German Foreign Minister on 10th March and addressed to him a grave warning on the Austrian situation and upon what appeared to be the policy of the German Government in regard to it. In particular Lord Halifax told him that His Majesty's Government attached the greatest importance to all measures being taken to ensure that the plebiscite was carried out without interference or intimidation. Late on 11th March our Ambassador in Berlin registered a protest in strong terms with the German Government against such use of coercion, backed by force, against an independent State in order to create a situation incompatible with its national independence. Such action, Sir Nevile Henderson pointed out, was bound to produce the gravest reactions, of which it would

be impossible to foretell the issue. Earlier that day I made earnest representations in the same sense to the German Minister of Foreign Affairs, with whom my noble Friend also had two further conversations on that day.

[*Herr von Neurath's letter*]

To these protests the German Government replied in a letter addressed to His Majesty's Ambassador in Berlin by Baron von Neurath. I think I should read the terms of that communication in full. They are as follow:

'MONSIEUR L'AMBASSADEUR,

'In your letter of March 11th your Excellency stated that news had reached the British Government that a German ultimatum had been delivered in Vienna demanding the resignation of the Austrian Chancellor, his substitution by the Minister of the Interior, the formation of a new Cabinet with a two-thirds majority of National-Socialist members and the readmission of the Austrian Legion. Should this news be correct the British Government protested against such coercion by force against an independent State in order to create a situation incompatible with its national independence.

'In the name of the German Government, I must state in reply that the British Government is not within its right in claiming the rôle of a protector of the independence of Austria. In the course of the diplomatic conversations regarding the Austrian question the German Government have never left the British Government in doubt that the form of the relations between the Reich and Austria can only be regarded as an internal affair of the German people which is no concern of third Powers. It is superfluous to recapitulate the historical and political bases of this standpoint.

'For this reason the German Government must from the outset reject as inadmissible the protest lodged by the British Government, even though only conditional. At the same time, in view of the information quoted in your letter that the Reich Government had made demands of the character of an ultimatum in Vienna, the German Government does not desire to omit, in the interests of truth, to make the following statement respecting the events of the last few days.

'A few weeks ago the German Chancellor, recognizing the dangers resulting from the intolerable position which had arisen in Austria, initiated a conversation with the then Austrian Chancellor. The aim was to make yet another attempt to meet these dangers by agreement upon measures which should ensure a calm and peaceful development in consonance with the interests of both countries and with those of the whole German people. The Berchtesgaden agreement, had it been loyally carried out on the Austrian side in the spirit of the conversation of 12th February, would in fact have guaranteed such a development.

'Instead of this, the former Austrian Federal Chancellor, on the evening

of 9th March, announced the surprising decision, taken on his own sole authority, to hold within a period of a few days a plebiscite, which having regard to the surrounding circumstances and in particular the detailed plans for the carrying out of the plebiscite, was intended to have, as it could only have, as its purpose the political repression of the overwhelming majority of the population of Austria. This proceeding, standing as it did in flagrant contradiction to the Berchtesgaden agreement, led as might have been foreseen to an extremely critical development of the internal situation in Austria. It was only natural that those members of the Austrian Government who had taken no part in the decision to hold a plebiscite should raise the strongest protest against it. In consequence there ensued a Cabinet crisis in Vienna, which in the course of the 11th of March led to the resignation of the former Federal Chancellor and the formation of a new Government. It is not true that forcible pressure on the course of these developments was exercised by the Reich. In particular the statement subsequently spread by the former Federal Chancellor—to the effect that the German Government had delivered an ultimatum with a time-limit to the Federal President, in accordance with which he was to appoint as Federal Chancellor one of certain proposed candidates and construct the Government in conformity with the proposals of the German Government, failing which the entry of German troops into Austria would have to be contemplated—is pure imagination. As a matter of fact the question of the dispatch of military and police forces from the Reich was first raised by the fact that the newly formed Austrian Government addressed to the Government of the Reich, in a telegram which has already been published in the Press, an urgent request that for the re-establishment of peace and order and for the prevention of bloodshed, German troops should be dispatched as soon as possible. Faced with the directly threatening danger of a bloody civil war in Austria, the Government of the Reich decided to meet the appeal then addressed to it.

'Such being the case it is completely inconceivable that the conduct of the German Government, as is stated in your letter, could lead to unforeseeable consequences. A general review of the political situation is given in the Proclamation which the Chancellor of the German Reich addressed at noon to-day to the German people. In this situation dangerous consequences could only come into play if an attempt should be made by any third party, in contradiction to the peaceful intentions and legitimate aims of the Reich, to exercise on the development of the situation in Austria an influence inconsistent with the right of the German people to self-determination.

'Accept, etc.,

'FREIHERR VON NEURATH.'

That concludes the letter by Freiherr von Neurath in reply to the protest of the British Government. I do not wish to enter into any long argument

about the historical narrative of events as described by Baron von Neurath, but I am bound at once to refute his statement to the effect that His Majesty's Government were not within their rights in interesting themselves in the independence of Austria, and that, as in the opinion of the German Government relations between Austria and Germany are a purely internal affair, His Majesty's Government, as a third party, have no concern in them. The interests of His Majesty's Government in this question cannot, however, on any tenable ground be denied. In the first place, Great Britain and Austria are both members of the League, and both were signatories, as was also the German Government, of treaties which provided that the independence of Austria was inalienable except with the consent of the Council of the League of Nations.

Quite apart from this, His Majesty's Government are, and always must be, interested in developments in Central Europe, particularly events such as those which have just taken place, if only for the reason, as I stated in the House only a fortnight ago, that the object of all their policy has been to assist in the establishment of a sense of greater security and confidence in Europe, and that that object, as I said then, must inevitably be helped or hindered by events in Central Europe. Throughout these events His Majesty's Government have remained in the closest touch with the French Government, and the French Government have, I understand, also entered a strong protest in Berlin on similar lines to that lodged by His Majesty's Government. It seems to us that the methods adopted throughout these events call for the severest condemnation, and have administered a profound shock to all who are interested in the preservation of European peace. It follows that what has passed cannot fail to have prejudiced the hope of His Majesty's Government of removing misunderstandings between nations and promoting international co-operation.

It might seem unnecessary to refute rumours that His Majesty's Government had given consent if not encouragement to the idea of the absorption of Austria by Germany, were there not evidence that these are being sedulously put about in many quarters. There is, of course, no foundation whatever for any of these rumours. The statement which I have already made shows clearly that His Majesty's Government emphatically disapprove, as they have always disapproved, actions such as those of which Austria has been made the scene. . . .

(xxviii) *Extracts from Speech by Herr Hitler, March 15, 1938.*[1]

Germans, Men and Women. In a few days within the community of the German people there has been accomplished an upheaval, the extent of which we can, it is true, see to-day but whose significance only later generations will be able fully to estimate. During recent years the heads of the régime which has now been overthrown have often spoken of the special

[1] On the Heldenplatz in Vienna. Baynes, *op. cit.*, Vol. II, pp. 1425–7.

'mission' which in their eyes this country had to fulfil. A leader of the legitimists sketched this mission in detail in a memorandum. According to this memorandum the task of this so-called independence of the country of Austria—an independence based upon the Peace Treaties and dependent upon the favour of foreign countries—was to hinder the formation of a really great German Reich and thus to bar the way leading to the future of the German people. Now I proclaim for this land its new mission which corresponds with the command which in times past summoned hither the German settlers from all the shires (*Gauen*) of the Old Reich. The oldest East Mark of the German people shall henceforth be the youngest bulwark of the German nation and thus of the German Reich.

Through the centuries in the disturbed periods of the past the assaults of the East have broken on the frontiers of the Old Mark. Through the centuries in the long future the Mark shall be the iron guarantee for the security and freedom of the German Reich and thus a pledge for the happiness and the peace of our great people. And I know that the East Mark of the German Reich will perform its new task as well as the old East Mark performed and mastered its task in the past.

I speak in the name of the millions of this extraordinarily beautiful German land, in the name of the men of the Steiermark, of the men of Lower and Upper Austria, of the men of Carinthia, of Salzburg, of Tirol, and above all in the name of the city of Vienna when I assure the other 68 millions of German fellow-countrymen in our wide Reich who are listening to me at this moment that this land is German, that it has understood its mission and will fulfil it, and that no one shall ever outdo it in loyalty to the great community of the German people.

Our task will now be through work, through industry, through common effort, and through standing together to solve the great social, cultural, and economic problems, and above all to develop Austria more and more and build it up as an outpost of National Socialist sentiment and of National Socialist strength of will. . . .

These years of the period of suffering have but strengthened in me my conviction of the value of the German Austrian within the framework of the great community of our people. Further, the wonderful order and discipline of this tremendous happening is a proof of the force of the idea which inspired these men. Thus at this hour I can make to the German people the greatest announcement of the realization of a purpose that I have ever made: as the Leader and Chancellor of the German nation and the German Reich I now announce before the bar of history the entry of my homeland into the German Reich. Germany and its new member, the National Socialist Party and the army of our Reich, Sieg Heil!

(xxix) *Extracts from Speech by Herr Hitler, March 18, 1938.*[1]

. . . I have already explained in my speech on 20 February that it is hardly possible to obtain a completely satisfactory regulation of the relations between peoples and territories in Europe: that is to say that it is not our view that it should be the aim of a national Government to realize on every side, whether through protests or through interventions, territorial claims which, though supported by the argument of national necessities, could yet in the end lead to no general national justice. The countless enclaves of peoples which are to be found in Europe make it in part simply impossible to find a frontier delimitation which will everywhere do equal justice to the interests alike of peoples and of States.

But there are State constructions which are so obviously stamped with the character of conscious and willed national injustice that in the long run their preservation is only possible through the employment of the most brutal violence. Thus, for example, the formation of the new Austrian rump State was a measure which necessitated the naked violation of the right of self-determination of some $6\frac{1}{2}$ millions of Germans. And this violation of right was admitted with cynical frankness. For the well-known inventors of the right of self-determination, of the independence and freedom of peoples, for the pious governesses of the world with their universal interests who otherwise profess themselves to be so deeply concerned for the maintenance of justice on this earth it meant nothing at all that through the Peace 'Diktats' the wishes of $6\frac{1}{2}$ million human beings were throttled and that these millions were compelled to accept this rape of their right of self-determination and to suffer this unnatural separation from the great common motherland. . . .

Here the fulfilment of the wish to return to their Fatherland is refused because inopportune for the democracies; even the bare hope for such a return is expressly branded as a crime. . . . But right must be right even where Germans are concerned, and can one wonder that, where this right is persistently refused, peoples should at last find themselves compelled to resort to self-help to secure their rights? Nations are a creation after the will of God and endure eternally, but the League of Nations is a highly doubtful construction of human incapacity, of human greed and self-interest. And one thing is certain: just as the nations have lived for countless millennia when there was no League of Nations, so the time will come when the League of Nations has long since ceased to be, but in spite of that the peoples will continue to exist through further millennia. The League will only have significance as a force making for liberty if it brings its morality into agreement with that higher morality which corresponds to a justice which is the same for all—and therefore is a superior form of justice. . . .

Germany has once more become a World Power. But what Power in the world in the long run could calmly stand by and see before its very door

[1] In the Reichstag. Baynes, *op. cit.*, Vol. II, pp. 1428–36.

millions of the same people as those composing its own population suffering the cruellest ill-treatment? There are moments when it is impossible for a self-conscious people any longer to remain merely passive spectators! . . .[1]

I begged Herr Schuschnigg to spare German Austria, the German Reich, and himself a situation which in the end must lead to most serious conflicts. With this end in view I proposed a way which might lead to a gradual internal lessening of tension and, as a consequence, to a gradual reconciliation not only between the Austrians themselves, but also between the two German States. I made it clear to Herr Schuschnigg, however, that this would be the last attempt so far as I was concerned and that I was determined in the event of the failure of this attempt to protect the rights of the German people in my homeland by those means which always from time immemorial on this earth alone remain when human judgment bars the way to the command of ordinary justice. For no people with any sense of honour[2] has as yet died on behalf of democratic forms, and least of all in those democracies where talk is loudest. . . .

On Tuesday 8 March the first statements reached me about a plan for a plebiscite. These statements appeared so fantastic and untrustworthy that they were regarded as mere rumours. Then on the evening of Wednesday through a truly astounding speech we were informed of an attack[3] not only on the terms agreed upon between us but more than that—an attack upon the majority of the Austrian people. . . .[4] Those who should say 'No' would be marked men, while for those who said 'Yes' every opportunity was given to falsify the result of the voting; in other words: Herr Schuschnigg, who knew very well that he had behind him only the minority of the population, sought through an unexampled election fraud to create for himself the moral justification for an open violation of the obligations to which he had agreed. He wished to gain a mandate for a further and still more brutal oppression of the overwhelming majority of the German Austrian people. . . .

I was now determined to put an end to further oppression of my homeland. I therefore immediately took such steps as seemed necessary to avert from Austria the same fate as Spain had suffered. The ultimatum of which the world suddenly began to complain consisted simply of the determined assurance that Germany would not tolerate any further oppression of her German Austrian fellow-countrymen and at the same time of a warning not to enter on a path which must of necessity have led to bloodshed.

That this was the right attitude to adopt was proved by the fact that within three days the entire homeland hastened to meet me when I carried out the intervention which had now become unavoidable, while not a single

[1] Professor Baynes states that Hitler then gave an account of the interview with Schuschnigg in Berchtesgaden which is almost identical with that which appears on p. 70.

[2] German: *kein anständiges Volk.* I think this implies my rendering in this passage. (Note by Professor Baynes.)

[3] German: *Attentat:* perhaps one should translate 'a murderous attack'. (Note by Professor Baynes.)

[4] Professor Baynes states that Herr Hitler then repeated his criticism of the plebiscite. See pp. 70–71.

shot was fired, not a single victim fell—a result which must, I imagine, have caused not a little regret to our international pacifists. If I had not answered the wish of the Austrian people and its new National Socialist Government, then conditions would most certainly have arisen which would later have still made it necessary for us to intervene.

I wished to spare this beautiful country endless misfortune and suffering. For when once hatred begins to burn, reason is clouded. There can then be no just weighing of guilt and its expiation. National exasperation, personal vengeance, and the lower instincts of egoistic passion unite in raising the torch of war and in their frenzy seek their victims without any thought of justice, without any consideration of the consequences.

Herr Schuschnigg perhaps did not think it possible that I could make up my mind to intervene. He and his adherents can thank God the Lord for my intervention. For in all probability it is only my resolution that has saved his life and that of ten thousand others—a life that after their complicity in the deaths of countless Austrian victims of the Movement they no longer deserve to live, but which the National Socialist State in its moderation, as sovereign victor, grants to them.

What prouder satisfaction in the world can there be for a man than to have led the folk of his own homeland into the greater community of his people! And you can all realize my feelings of happiness when I consider that it was no cemetery, no waste of ruins that I had to win for the German Reich, that I would give to the Reich an unravaged land and a delighted people. I have acted in the only way which could enable me to accept responsibility for what I have done as a German standing before the history of our people, before the past and the living witnesses of the community of our people, before the holy German Reich and before my beloved homeland. Behind this decision which I have taken stand now 75 million people and before it stands henceforth the German army.

It is almost tragic that before an action which in its profoundest significance meant simply the removal of a tension in Central Europe which, as a permanent condition, had become intolerable, our present-day democracies stand disconcerted in complete incomprehension. Their reactions were in part beyond understanding, in part insulting. A number of other States had, it is true, from the first declared that they were not concerned in the matter or had expressed their hearty approval. This was the case not only with most of the smaller European countries, but also with quite a number of large States. I will mention only the dignified and understanding attitude of Poland, the friendly and warm-hearted approval of Hungary, the declarations, inspired by hearty friendship, of Yugoslavia together with the assurances of sincere neutrality on the part of several other countries.

I cannot, however, close the enumeration of friendly opinions without recording at greater length the attitude adopted by Fascist Italy. I felt it to be my duty to explain the reasons for my action in a letter to the leader of the great Fascist State who is united to me personally in ties of close

friendship and to assure him in particular that after this event not only will the sentiments of Germany towards Italy undergo no change, but that, precisely as in the case of France, so with Italy Germany regards the present frontiers as permanently fixed (*als gegebene*). I wish in this House to express to the great Italian statesman in the name of the German people and in my own name our warm thanks. We know what the attitude of Mussolini has meant for Germany in these days. If any strengthening of the relations between Italy and Germany were possible, they have been now so strengthened. From a community of interests, from a common outlook on the world (*weltanschaulichen*), for us Germans there has arisen a friendship which nothing can break. The country and the frontiers of this friend are for us inviolate. I repeat my words: I shall never forget this attitude of Mussolini, and the Italian people can rest assured that behind my word there stands the German nation!

Thus on this occasion, too, the axis which unites our two countries has proved of the highest service to the peace of the world. For Germany desires only peace. Germany desires to wrong no one, but Germany itself will in no circumstances suffer a wrong: Germany is ready to defend to the last at any time her honour and her freedom. . . .

(xxx) *Extracts from Letter from the German Government to the Secretary-General of the League of Nations, March 18, 1938.*[1]

Berlin, March 18, 1938.

Acting on instructions from the German Government, I have the honour to bring to your notice the following Law of March 13, 1938, regarding the reunion of Austria with the German Reich. . . .[2]

On the date of the promulgation of this law, the former Federal State of Austria ceased to be a Member of the League of Nations.

(*Signed*) VON MACKENSEN,
Secretary of State,
Ministry for Foreign Affairs.

(xxxi) *The Plebiscite Campaign, March 22–April 9, 1938.*

(a) *Extracts from Speech by Dr. Goebbels, March 22, 1938.*[3]

. . . This disloyal attitude[4] inevitably led to the outbreak of the people's anger, which had with difficulty been restrained until then. In these circumstances internal political dissensions, the outcome of which was not to be foreseen, were bound to occur. The menace of civil war lay ahead. . . .

[1] Translation printed in the *League of Nations Official Journal*, March–April 1938, p. 237.
[2] The text of the law followed. See pp. 73–74.
[3] Opening the campaign, in the Sportpalast, Berlin. *Frankfurter Zeitung*, March 24, 1938. Translation. Only very much summarized versions of this speech were published.
[4] Of Dr. von Schuschnigg. Dr. Goebbels had accused him of intending to break the Berchtesgaden Agreement.

We did not invade Austria. It was the Seyss-Inquart Government which sent out a call to us. It called us in, not to tyrannize over the people, but to protect them from their persecutors. The Führer could not fail to answer this call. . . .

What the Führer had foreseen came to pass. The Austrian people held different opinions from those of its former Government, which it denounced as tyrannical, and welcomed the Führer as its saviour. . . .

The question is often asked: why does the Anschluss still need a plebiscite, since there can be no German in Austria or the rest of the Reich who could say No to the union? Can anything express the real feeling of the people more clearly than the jubilant reception of the Führer on the part of the Greater German Reich? No, certainly not. For us this voice of the people is ample proof. . . . If we did not hold this plebiscite there were certain seekers after truth in Paris, in London, in Moscow, who would probe into the matter and, for years to come, would be tireless in their attempts to persuade the world that we had taken Austria by force. . . . If the nations are to determine their own destiny, then Austria too shall say Yes or No. We are convinced that the Austrian people will vote for the Reich and against the Versailles dictated peace by an overwhelming majority. . . . We do not want Austria to go alone to the poll.[1] From now on, German Austria is to have everything in common with the Reich, including its vote for the Reich. This election will thus become truly historic.

(b) *Extracts from Speech by Herr Bürckel, German Commissioner for the Plebiscite, March 24, 1938.*[2]

German men and women: Six months ago I addressed the Reich Germans of this city in this hall on the occasion of the Harvest Thanksgiving Festival. The Federal Chancellor made a statement at that time which seems to me a suitable point of departure for my speech to-day. Herr Schuschnigg described my presence as an 'unfriendly act' on the part of the Reich, because I bore the responsibility for the struggle in the Saar. What did he mean by this? What confession did his statement imply?

German men and women: In the Saar there are none but Germans. . . . The struggle in the Saar turned on the question: Will blood make its voice heard, or shall it yield before material or any other offers? Very soon there were two fronts: one, strong and proud, which obeyed the call of the blood, and the other, weak and spiritless, which entered the field against its own blood. In Germany the system which the League of Nations still upheld in the Saar had broken down, and National-Socialism had taken its place. So some people made a reservation. 'True,' they said, 'we are Germans, but we will not go home so long as our own system is banned in Germany.' Thus the return to the Reich was made conditional on the

[1] Dr. Goebbels' answer to those who might ask why Germany as well as Austria was to participate in the plebiscite.

[2] In Vienna, inaugurating the plebiscite campaign. *Reichspost*, March 25, 1938. Translation.

supremacy of a particular system; that is, the concept of blood was made subordinate to other elements of political power. . . . What happened in the Saar? Hundreds of thousands who, until that time, had acclaimed a political system foreign to their race, were unable to resist the call of the blood, and without knowing how or why it happened, they ranged themselves with a front which held the other side in contempt. Allegiance to the ties of blood was felt to be honourable, and any other allegiance shameful. The last Federal Chancellor of Austria admitted, by the statement with which he greeted me, that he was sorry that the struggle of the Saar had been won, and that if he had been a Saarlander he would not have been one of those who heard the call of the blood. . . .

In the Saar it was the Jews and Bolsheviks who led the struggle, and in Austria it is forces professing the same or a similar allegiance. . . . Can there be any freedom for these people which is not bound up with Germany? If so, they should have the courage to admit that this freedom of a so-called German means that he declines to be a German. That is the only explanation of the question which Herr Schuschnigg proposed to put to the Austrian people, namely: 'Are you in favour of a free and independent Austria?' The question which was asked in the Saar was similar: 'Are you in favour of a free and independent Saar?' The interrogator was the same in both cases: Democracy. . . . Is it possible to betray a nation in the name of freedom, and can there be any freedom which is not bound up with the nation? When Germany and Austria crashed in 1918, the cry for freedom was raised by the same forces which have now once again tried to commit treason in freedom's name. How did that freedom work in practice? The individual was allowed to persecute, to engage in strikes and lock-outs, desecrate our dead, and even betray our country. These were his liberties. The result of the exercise of these liberties was that the whole nation never knew an hour's peace from the moment when we came into possession of these so-called liberties.

What conclusion should we draw from this? That freedom is always bound up with the community, and that it is the weal and woe of the community alone which determines the freedom of the individual. . . . Freedom in our sense of the word is no other than the obligation to loyalty and devotion to the community. That alone is its ultimate significance. The community, again, owes its existence to the acknowledgment of its own blood-ties. A freedom which refuses to acknowledge those ties is therefore nothing but a lie and a betrayal. . . .

In a German Austria there will be no one left but free Germans. Our race, our Reich, our honour need for their protection German freedom alone, and this will now be established in Austria, even at the risk that the Jewish exploiters of their own democratic liberties will be forced to leave Vienna. I venture to make this remark because we all feel that the Jewish occupation of Vienna, with the peculiar type of freedom which it represents, constitutes a stronger factor than the population of Vienna really deserves.

One has only to walk through this beautiful city and read the door-plates of the lawyers and doctors, or to set out to discover an Aryan place of business, or to scrutinize the lists of legal or administrative officials, in order to realize the need for an extensive curtailment of Jewish freedom in Vienna, which is so marked even from the material point of view. Every system has the Jews that it deserves. I should like to supplement that observation by saying that every nation deserves just so much Jewish freedom as it chooses to tolerate. I hereby promise that when the relation between Jewish freedom and presumption on the one hand and the upholding of German rights on the other has been regulated—and it will in all circumstances be regulated—I will then adjust it the more thoroughly to obtain a proper balance.

What if Herr Schuschnigg had framed his question honestly in these terms: 'Are you in favour of upholding the power of the Jews in Austria? Do you continue to recognize the dictates of Versailles and St. Germain? Will you be loyal to me as executor of this task, and let me withhold your Germany from you, a German? Should you say no to my demand, I shall continue to carry on my campaign of extermination against you. Then, according to the law under which I took office, I must continue to be your executioner.' . . .

I will not evade Herr Schuschnigg's second question on the notorious death-certificate of democracy: 'Are you in favour of a social Austria?' . . . The very word 'social' comes from the storehouse of democratic catchwords. It has much to do with almsgiving. Perhaps, when Herr Schuschnigg used it, he was thinking of the thousands of poor devils who line the streets here to beg for a bite of bread. Herr Schuschnigg has certainly long been 'social'—very much so—for there have long been beggars here, and their numbers have grown and grown. And the more beggars there were, the more socially minded did Herr Schuschnigg become. . . . In place of this irresponsible, meaningless term 'social', we have Socialism with its obligations. To us, Socialism does not mean providing for beggars, but preventing men from becoming beggars by giving them work. The greatest good possessed by man is the healthy capacity for work. . . . That is why the Führer did not begin with a demand for the distribution of alms, for higher wages and profits, but simply for work. Work is the primary consideration, even though wages and profits can never be divorced from it, since people must live. The essence of Socialism lies in holding a correct balance between the two.[1] . . . I venture, in view of the past, to guess that Herr Schuschnigg would, in the last resort, even have preferred a Bolshevik Austria to a National-Socialist German Austria. . . . If he really wanted to prevent Bolshevism, he should have given Socialism its due and made it a reality. The support that comes from internal strength can be derived only from the community. There can be no Socialism without community.

[1] Herr Bürckel went on to contrast the economic achievements of the Nazi régime with the economic difficulties of Austria.

But community rests on the recognition of a common blood. The conceptions of Socialism and blood are therefore inextricably bound up with one another. . . .

But, one or another of you may say, I wanted that too, but I went the wrong way about it. What will become of me now? To that I will give a clear answer. Many good German soldiers in the army of the Reich and in that of the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy went to the war. They did their duty manfully. . . . They held out for four years. Then came the collapse; they went home, listened to the wiles of Marxist agents, and perhaps themselves trod Marxist paths. Can you imagine the Führer, himself a plain soldier from the Front, and your own comrade, saying: I reject you for all time, you are traitors? The Führer did not, and does not, wage war on German men and women who have gone astray, but on a principle which is hostile to the nation and to life, and on such supporters of that principle as are already irrevocably lost to their own nation. . . .

I can see pretty clearly what the position in Austria was. Here too the old system and Marxism were inseparable concepts, just as democracy, capitalism, and Marxism, despite external differences, are at bottom essentially the same. . . .

What conclusions can be drawn from these considerations with a view to future action?

(1) We hold out our hand to all men of good will, and above all to those who have been the victims of misfortune and of unscrupulous agitators. . . .

(2) We intend to make good the discrepancy which exists in the economic sphere and in that of social policy between this country and the rest of the Reich.

I am happy to be able to announce that our Hermann Goering will, in this building next Saturday, announce to you the economic programme. You will then be able to compare the economic programme of a Schuschnigg with the constructional programme of the National-Socialist leaders, and to judge what a Socialistic attitude means as contrasted with the foolish so-called social talk and twaddle. . . . The time of workers' strikes and employers' lock-outs is over. . . . The places of work of both employers and workers can no longer be turned at will into a ring for the struggle between their respective interests. The interests of both must be subordinated to those of the nation as a whole, which means that the people as a whole will decide, through the Führer, on the relations between the two. . . . One thing is certain: Marxism and money have brought dissension among the people; we are going to reunite them. . . .

I will now deal with Herr Schuschnigg's last question: 'Are you in favour of a Christian Austria?' Just as unscrupulously as they juggle with the words 'free' and 'social', so do they misuse religion, the most sacred possession of the people, for their dirty work. . . . Herr Schuschnigg's question is already answered if one just looks at the practice of this particular Christian. The Creator gave you the same blood as us. That was reason

enough for Herr Schuschnigg—acting in the name of God—to hound those who were conscious of that blood within them, and in whom their blood raised its voice, from prison to prison, and when they had been reduced to the utmost despair to kill them—in the name of God. Let the world decide whether there could be a greater or more noxious blasphemy than to invoke the name of God for the destruction of His own work. . . . I am convinced that Herr Schuschnigg confused God with the devil.

I will state our attitude towards Christianity for the benefit of all those who are loyal to their Creator and therefore take religion seriously. The nation is the work of Providence. The State cannot force any conception of Providence on its citizens. But it is possible to serve Providence, by serving its visible creation. The visible creation of Providence is the nation. Providence has entrusted the law to the safe keeping of this visible creation. The fulfilment of this law is the object of our work. It is therefore a matter of course that we should adopt a positive attitude towards the faith that prays for that for which we work, namely, for our nation. If, now and then, the relation between the Church and the Party has led to discussion on both sides, the cause, in my opinion, is not to be found in Christianity or in National-Socialism, but in those persons on both sides who disseminate or take their stand on views which neither of their founders would sanction. . . . Let National-Socialism concern itself with national matters, and let the Church confine itself exclusively to the cure of souls. If both show good will, this cannot fail to conduce to the good of the nation. Christ Himself divided men's obligations when he said: 'Render unto Cæsar the things which are Cæsar's, and unto God the things which are God's.' And that decision, which we recognize, must be the end of the matter. I note with gratitude that the prelates of Austria are to issue a statement of their attitude with special reference to the coming plebiscite.

If, as the day approaches, the House of Habsburg should send out a warning: 'Do not commit a sin against your religion', we shall know exactly what this solicitude about religion amounts to. . . . I can tell the two or three aristocratic wire-pullers of this Legitimist charity organization that they are the only people in Austria for whom we have no use whatever. An assortment of arrogant freaks, notorious idlers, and profiteers can have no place in a State in which all are workers and nothing else. Let Otto the Last take his departure with the last of his Court lackeys, accompanied by that very appropriate air, 'I dance with you into heaven'.

Yesterday *Paris-Soir* stated that the number of Jewish suicides in Austria had reached 1,700. The Jew who wrote this is well aware of the falsehood of his statement, for he very well knows that when his fellow Jews try to shoot themselves, they mostly hit their own shadows. I should like to call these gentlemen's serious attention to the fact that the treatment of the Jews in Austria in these days has been noble compared with what they have done to the people. . . .

But, to combat these lies, there arose—as if by a divine miracle—a man.

On his banner Fate inscribed the great battle-cry, 'Blood, Honour, Freedom' . . . . Yet not once in the whole of his hard-working life did he forget his Austria. He now stands here in Vienna, in your midst, with his flag, whether the world likes it or not. . . . Come face to face with one another, you from the Saar and you from the Danube. Look into each other's eyes—those same German eyes—and clasp hands. . . . Around you the whole nation is assembled—the worker, the peasant, the soldier, the Catholic, the Protestant—all without exception—and will hear your sacred oath: 'Not all the devils in hell can ever part us again!'

·One people, one Reich, one Führer!

(c) *Extracts from Speech by Herr Hitler, March 25, 1938.*[1]

[*Hitler's account of his interview with Schuschnigg at Berchtesgaden*]

. . . I said to him: 'Herr Schuschnigg, you are oppressing a country. You have no right to do so. This country is my homeland as much as it is yours. How comes it that you are continually doing violence to it? I am ready to stand with you before the people at an election. Both of us will stand as candidates. The people shall decide.' He objected that that was impossible on constitutional grounds. But I warned him to seek a peaceful way of lessening the tension, as otherwise no one could guarantee that a people's tortured soul would not cry aloud. And besides I could not let there be any doubt that on the frontiers of Germany no more fellow-countrymen could be shot.

And I tried to make clear to him in all seriousness that this was the last way which perhaps might lead to a peaceful solution of this crisis. I left him in no doubt that, if this way should fail, in one way or another matters would not end there. I begged him to have no doubt that I was serious in my intention to place the help of the Reich at the service of my oppressed fellow-countrymen and not to doubt my resolution if, through deserting this way, a crisis should arise. He did not believe the seriousness of my assurances and for this reason, one may suppose, he broke the agreement.

To-day we have the proofs of that. We have found the letters in which on 19 February—one day before my speech in the Reichstag—he writes that on his part the whole affair would be purely a tactical move in order to gain time so that he could wait until the situation abroad should be more favourable. He therefore counted on being able at a more propitious hour to stir up foreign countries against Germany. In order to give a moral foundation to his scheme this man then invented this ridiculous comedy of a plebiscite on which the clearest light is thrown by the fact that we were able to confiscate broad-sheets and placards in which eight days before the plebiscite the figures of the voting were published! It was an unheard-of fraud in a country in which for many years there had been no election, where no one could vote. It was clear that if this new fraud should be a success,

[1] At Königsberg. Baynes, *op. cit.*, Vol. II, pp. 1437–46.

then the world, cold as ice, would have declared: 'Now this régime is legitimated!'

And against this the German people in Austria at last began to rise; it turned against its persecutors. It revolted. And now I had to intervene in its behalf. And so I gave the order to answer the wish of this people: I let the forces march! . . .

I admit openly that at times, in view of the terrible persecutions, the thought might even come to one that it was only right if the people did at last wreak its vengeance on its torturers; but in the end I decided to prevent that. For I saw one thing: amongst our opponents there are men who are so depraved that they must be counted as lost to the community of the German people, but on the other hand there are many blinded and mad folk who have only run with the rest. Perhaps their eyes have been thoroughly opened. And above all, who can guarantee that, when once madness has begun, private passions will not begin to rage as well, that private scores will not be settled under the watchword (*Motto*) of a political act?

We will be quit of those of our opponents who are incurable through the normal means of our State. Part of them will without our help go where all the European 'worthies' of this stamp have assembled of recent years. And we are glad that some of them have gone already. I can but hope and expect that the rest of the world which feels so deep a sympathy with these criminals will be at least magnanimous enough to turn this pity into practical assistance. On our side we are quite prepared to put all these criminals aboard luxury ships and let these countries do with them what they will. We have in the overwhelming joy of these days forgotten all desire for vengeance. . . .

Certain foreign newspapers have said that we fell on Austria with brutal methods: I can only say: even in death they cannot stop lying. I have in the course of my political battle won much love from my people, but when in these last days I crossed the former frontier of the Reich there met me such a stream of love that I have never experienced a greater. Not as tyrants have we come but as liberators: an entire people rejoiced. . . .

Here not brutal violence, but our Swastika has conquered. As these soldiers marched into Austria, I lived again a song of my youth. I have in days past sung it so often with faith in my heart, this proud battle-song: 'The people arises, the storm breaks loose.' And it was in truth the uprising of a people, and the breaking loose of the storm. Under the force of this impression I decided not to wait until 10 April but to effect the unification forthwith. . . . The people in Austria must have the opportunity of arising and I wish to see whether it will not choose the son of its homeland and the leader of the German nation. . . . For we National Socialists swear that, as it was in the past, so to-day: That which we once possess we surrender—never! Where our banner has once been planted in the earth there before it stands a living wall of Germans! . . .

That which has happened in these last weeks is the result of the triumph

of an idea, a triumph of will, but also a triumph of endurance and tenacity, and, above all, it is the result of the miracle of faith: for only faith has availed to move these mountains. I once went forth with faith in the German people and began this vast fight. With faith in me first thousands, then hundreds of thousands, and at last millions have followed after me. With faith in Germany and in this idea millions of our fellow-countrymen in the New Ostmark in the south of our Reich have held their banners high and have remained loyal to the Reich and to the life of the German people. And now I have faith in this 10 April. I am convinced that on this day for the first time in history in very truth all Germany will be on the march. . . .

And on this day I shall be the Leader of the greatest army in the history of the world; for when on this 10 April I cast my voting-paper into the urn then I shall know that behind me come fifty millions and they all know only my watchword: One People and one Reich—Deutschland!

(d) *Extracts from Speech by Herr Hitler, March 28, 1938.*[1]

. . . I have talked good German with him![2] He thought that he could confound the Germany of to-day with the Germany of the past. It was the worst mistake of his life. . . . A miracle has happened in the history of Germany: In three days a people rises, in two days it breaks in pieces a régime and in one day it greets its liberator. That is the greatest victory of an idea. On the day when this man's trick should have taken place he and his State were no longer there! After the Peace Treaties Austria had possessed neither a mission nor an economic basis for her future existence. Those who under the watchword 'Freedom for the peoples' had broken States in pieces had thereby doomed ten millions to a loss of freedom. . .

This new German ideal cannot be confined within limits: it cannot be measured out in doses. Formerly in Germany this ideal, starting from a tiny cell, spread its waves abroad and it has ever brought new folk under its spell. Who can wonder that this ideal flies far over the frontiers of a Reich, a State construction—that this ideal casts its spell upon Germans wherever they may be? . . . What is more natural than that suddenly the memory of their own birth in Austria should with irresistible force come to life within this people, that the whole people should now recognize its mission, that its only wish should now be to return to the land whence it came? . . .

I have performed my duty. And now I ask that every German man and every German woman on this 10 April shall likewise play their part. On 13 March Great Germany was created and on 10 April that creation will be confirmed.[3]

[1] In the Sportpalast, Berlin. Baynes, *op. cit.*, Vol. II, pp. 1447–8.

[2] Dr. von Schuschnigg.

[3] Professor Baynes adds: From the English reports of the speech one may add from Hitler's account of the Berchtesgaden interview: 'Had I not the right to say to him "Listen to me. You are sowing the wind and one day you will reap the whirlwind. Do not deceive yourself. The time is past when you can hope to beat these men down with murder and death!"'

'I gave to this man the chance of his life to make good the wrongs he had done. He chose another way and this brought his fate on his own head.'

(e) *Extracts from Speech by Herr Hitler, April 3, 1938.*[1]

I am so happy to be here at this time, for a dream of my youth and the longing of my life are fulfilled. . . . It is not formalities which count: above everything else the individual German must rise supreme as the eternal substance of our people. . . . After the World War I resolved to build up Germany once again on the strength of the masses, on the millions of the German people. I went back to those from whom I had come. I went back to my comrades—straight back to the people. It was there that I began to teach, there that at that time I began to win men to a new idea, the idea of an eternal national and social ideal—to subordinate one's own interests to the necessary interests of the whole society—an idea which constrains everyone to take his stand on behalf of this community and if need be to throw his own life into the scale. . . .

I am a German, I believe in this Germany of mine, I believe in my people, and I will not suffer that any alien force shall ever set limits to this my faith. . . . There can never be any true independence under foreign protection or at the wish of the foreigner: an independence which must be protected by the foreigner there is not and there cannot be. I would rather go to ruin together with my people than accept such an independence. . . . [The rulers of Austria had been but][2] the docile serfs of the will of the foreigner, seeking to uphold with violence and with terrorism an independence which had been forced upon the country against the will of the people. . . .

[In his description of his interview with Schuschnigg he added to former accounts the statement that] he had said quite definitely that as soon as the Chancellor gave any fresh order for Germans to be shot on account of their beliefs (*Gesinnung*) at that moment German regiments would cross the frontier. . . .

[After saying that] German Austria had now found its true mission—to be the bulwark and support of the German Reich, the East Mark of the Germans . . . [Hitler acknowledged the friendly and sympathetic attitude of Italy]: I have already laid stress upon the fact that we shall never forget this, and a German's word holds good unconditionally (*bedingungslos*). Yugoslavia and Hungary have adopted the same attitude; we are fortunate in possessing four frontiers which relieve us from the anxiety of having to protect them with military force. . . .

(f) *Extracts from Speech by Herr Hitler, April 5, 1938.*[3]

. . . How could folk be so infatuated as to think that a whole people could remain blind to the rise of Germany and on the other hand how could they imagine that I should be blind or deaf to the sufferings of this land? What is more natural than that a man should love his great fatherland above all else in the world yet cannot forget the country from which he himself came?

[1] At Graz. Baynes, *op. cit.*, Vol. II, pp. 1451–3.
[2] The passages in square brackets are connecting links summarized by Professor Baynes.
[3] At Innsbruck. Baynes, *op. cit.*, Vol. II, pp. 1453–4.

Only one who himself possesses no character can presume such lack of character in another that he should break his oath where the fate of his own homeland is at stake. I should not deserve the love, the confidence, and the loyalty of so many Germans of our old Reich if I myself should have no loyalty and love for my homeland. I have shared all the sufferings which my homeland had to endure. . . . On 10 April the whole world will know: on 13 March a man unified a people—a month later the people approved the man.

My fairest work is that I have joined this country, my homeland, to the German fatherland and fairer still that I could restore seven million people to the Reich.

(g) *Extracts from Speech by Herr Hitler, April 9, 1938.*[1]

I desire particularly to address those who in this hour do not feel that they can give their approval and confidence to the new Germany or still less to me or who think that they must stand apart in the face of this truly great world-historical decision. I want to speak as a man who is himself completely guiltless of all that which Germany has suffered in the past. . . . And then after the War when I found my native land again, divided, powerless, defenceless, deserted by all then I, the nameless soldier, formed the decision: after I had obeyed all these years—I would speak, I would tell of that which alone could lead to a resurrection of Germany.

For every people there is only one help possible: the help which lies in itself. But for that there is a condition: the people must come together into a single closely united body, for only from such a unity can come the strength to win salvation. . . .

I believe that it was God's will to send a boy from here into the Reich, to let him grow up, to raise him to be the leader of the nation so as to enable him to lead back his homeland into the Reich.

There is a higher ordering and we all are nothing else than its agents. When on 9 March Herr Schuschnigg broke his agreement then in that second I felt that now the call of Providence had come to me. And that which then took place in three days was only conceivable as the fulfilment of the wish and the will of this Providence.

In three days the Lord has smitten them! . . . And to me the grace was given on the day of the betrayal to be able to unite my homeland with the Reich! . . .

I would now give thanks to Him who let me return to my homeland in order that I might now lead it into my German Reich! To-morrow may every German recognize the hour and measure its import and bow in humility before the Almighty who in a few weeks has wrought a miracle upon us!

[1] In Vienna. Baynes, *op. cit.*, Vol. II, pp. 1457–9.

(xxxii) *Declaration of the Austrian Bishops, March 27, 1938.*[1]

Preface to the Solemn Declaration of the Austrian Bishops in the Matter of the Plebiscite.

After thorough consideration, we the bishops of Austria have decided, in view of the great historic hours through which the Austrian people are living, and in the consciousness that the thousand-year-old longing of our people for union in a Great Reich of Germans has found its fulfilment in our days, to issue the following appeal to all our faithful people.

We can do this all the more confidently since the Führer's Commissioner for the Plebiscite in Austria, Gauleiter Bürckel, has made known the sincere direction of his policy, which is based on the motto 'Render unto God the things which are God's, and unto Cæsar the things which are Cæsar's.'

For the Church Province of Vienna:
THEODOR CARDINAL INNITZER,
Archbishop M.P.

For the Church Province of Salzburg:
SIGISMUND WAITZ,
Prince Archbishop.

SOLEMN DECLARATION.

We, the undersigned bishops of the Austrian Church, make this declaration with the deepest conviction and of our own free will, on the occasion of this great historical event in German Austria:

We recognize with joy that the National-Socialist movement has achieved and is achieving outstanding work in the sphere of national and economic reconstruction as well as in social policy for the German Reich and people and particularly for the poorest sections of the people. We are also convinced that the danger of an all-destroying and godless Bolshevism was averted by the labours of the National-Socialist movement. These labours will in future be accompanied by the heartfelt blessings of the bishops who will exhort the faithful in this direction.

On the day of the plebiscite it will be for us bishops a national duty to declare ourselves, as Germans, for the German Reich, and we expect also from faithful Christians a sense of their debt to their race.

THE ARCHBISHOPS AND BISHOPS OF AUSTRIA.

(xxxiii) *Extracts from Broadcast by Admiral Horthy, Regent of Hungary, April 3, 1938.*[2]

In recent years Hungary, within her narrow frontiers, has been an island of peace and order. We who live here were not alone in thinking this; our

[1] Read in all Catholic churches in Austria. *Völkischer Beobachter*, March 28, 1938. Translation from the *Survey of International Affairs* for 1938, Vol. I.

[2] *Pester Lloyd*, April 4, 1938. Translation.

opinion was shared by all our foreign visitors. But during the last few days many people have been overcome by a sense of insecurity, and indeed anxiety. I have therefore thought it well to clarify the situation and give some guidance to public opinion.

The cause of this unrest and excitement is difficult to grasp in the light of cold reason, for there is actually no ground for it. . . . Everyone, surely, who regards the recent events with a clear head and a seeing eye must know that the reunion of Austria with Germany has no other significance for us than that one of our good old friends, who had been placed in an impossible position by the Peace Treaties, has become united with another good old friend and faithful comrade in arms: with Germany, whom history has shown to be always an utterly reliable ally who has ever been true to her word in her dealings with her friends. That is the whole matter. From our point of view nothing else has happened. A great international event such as this, coming with apparently unexpected suddenness, naturally causes some excitement. It is no wonder that it should have induced a state of rapture in some, while others have been plunged into deep distress by the overthrow of their cherished memories. Otherwise we are not affected by this union. For one thing, its suddenness was merely apparent. It is the outcome of a century-old aspiration of the German race, and was bound to happen sooner or later, if only because the Austrian people had never been used to such narrow boundaries or to having no say in international affairs.

That this event should have had such repercussions within our frontiers is probably due to the fact that those who like fishing in troubled waters took the opportunity to create a state of unrest favourable to their own aims. But such an attempt is vain. The circulation of alarmist news may produce momentary agitation; but no one will be allowed to disturb peace and order in this country with impunity. Of that let everyone be assured. . . .

The League of Nations has lost its former significance in world politics. The task of an ideal League of Nations would have been to make a new settlement, for peace cannot thrive on the soil of injustice. As the League has not up to now fulfilled this task, the process of making the new settlement has been begun without its aid. Only those who clearly understand the circumstances, who know the facts, and who are acquainted with all the circumstances—those, in fact, who hold the threads in their hands—can judge the situation aright. The general public cannot know what is happening and what is not. It is therefore wisest for them to put their trust, as I do, in the responsible Government, which cannot be supposed to be unacquainted with the situation. . . .

I have thought it necessary to say all this in order to secure calm in the future, and also to give a warning to any persons who may be seeking to instigate unrest and dissension in whatever direction, and to point out the seriousness of the consequences. . . . I neither recognize nor tolerate any but Hungarian aims or any but lawful means of attaining them. I rely

upon the sobriety and patriotism of the Hungarian people, and am confident that, so long as we are united, we may count upon God's help.

(xxxiv) *Closing of British and American Legations in Vienna.*

(a) *First Note from the British Government to the German Government, April 2, 1938.*[1]

I have the honour to inform your Excellency on the instruction of his Majesty's Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs that his Majesty's Government in the United Kingdom have decided to withdraw their Legation in Vienna and replace it by a Consulate-General. It is intended to carry through this change about April 15. Mr. D. St. G. Gainer, C.M.G., O.B.E., at present his Majesty's Consul-General in Munich, is designated for the post of his Majesty's Consul-General in Vienna. In these circumstances I have the honour to request that the *exequatur* be granted to Mr. Gainer in his new capacity; for this purpose I append his credentials.

(b) *Second Note of same date.*

With reference to my Note of to-day's date, with which I have apprised the German Government of the decision of his Majesty's Government to replace his Majesty's Legation in Vienna by a Consulate-General, I have the honour to inform your Excellency, on the instructions of his Majesty's Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, that his Majesty's Government in the United Kingdom must, as a matter of course, reserve their standpoint on those questions relating to treaties and other matters which arise from the fact that Austria has ceased to exist as a sovereign independent State.

I shall therefore have the honour to transmit a further communication to your Excellency on these questions at another moment.

(c) *Note from the United States Government to the German Government, April 6, 1938.*[2]

I am directed by my Government to inform Your Excellency as follows:

On March 17, 1938, the Minister of the Republic of Austria, Mr. Edgar Prochnik, informed the Department of State that, as a result of the developments which had occurred in Austria, that country had ceased to exist as an independent nation and had been incorporated in the German Reich; that therefore the Austrian mission to this country, of which he had been the head, had been abolished; and that the affairs of the mission had been taken over by the Embassy of Germany. The German Ambassador has informed the Department of State that he has assumed the functions hitherto performed by the Minister of Austria.

The Government of the United States finds itself under the necessity as a practical measure of closing its Legation at Vienna and of establishing a

[1] Handed by Sir Nevile Henderson to Herr von Ribbentrop in Berlin. *The Times*, April 4, 1938.
[2] U.S. State Department, Press Releases, Vol. XVIII, No. 445.

Consulate-General. In the circumstances I am directed by my Government to request provisional consular status for Mr. John C. Wiley, Consul-General; Mr. John H. Morgan and Mr. John H. Lord, Consuls, and Mr. G. Frederick Reinhardt and Mr. Thomas R. Flack, Vice-Consuls.

Accept (etc.).

(xxxv) *Negotiations between Great Britain and Germany concerning Austrian loans.*

(*a*) *Statement by the Rt. Hon. R. A. Butler, Under-Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, May 16, 1938.*[1]

On 23rd March His Majesty's Embassy in Berlin were informed that the German Government desired to revise the Anglo-German Payments Agreement of 1st November, 1934, in order to meet the commercial questions arising from the inclusion of Austria in the Reich. On 12th April the German Government were informed in reply that His Majesty's Government were prepared to enter into discussions which would cover both the trade and financial interests of the United Kingdom. It was stated that His Majesty's Government assumed that the German Government accepted full responsibility for all financial liabilities of the former Austrian Government in respect of its external indebtedness. The German Government have now verbally informed His Majesty's Embassy that they are willing to make the problem of Austrian foreign indebtedness one of the subjects of the negotiations which are due to begin on 24th May. His Majesty's Government, for their part, are prepared to take the opportunity afforded by the negotiations to discuss this matter with the German Government, but I ought to make it clear that they consider that the German Government should negotiate arrangements on an international basis providing for payment of all issues of Austrian Government loans.

(*b*) *Extract from Statement by the Rt. Hon. Sir John Simon, Chancellor of the Exchequer, July 1, 1938.*[2]

[*Germany and Austrian loans*]

. . . I am very glad to say that the British and German Delegations which have been negotiating a revision of the Anglo-German Payments Agreement to take account of the incorporation of Austria in the German Reich have arrived at a settlement to-day. The basis of this settlement is that, without prejudice to the question of legal liability, the German Government will reimburse the United Kingdom Government any sums paid in respect of their guarantees of the Austrian Guaranteed Loans and assure the full service of bonds of these loans owned by British holders on the 1st July, 1938.

[1] In answer to a question in the House of Commons. *Hansard*, May 16, 1938, col. 6.
[2] In the House of Commons. *Hansard*, July 1, 1938, cols. 2364–5.

The settlement also confirms the principles of an arrangement reached between the German representatives and the German Long-Term Creditors Committee regarding the future service of other German and Austrian long-term debts. Under this arrangement the service of the following German and Austrian loans will be:—

For the Dawes Loan and the Austrian 7 per cent Loan of 1930—5 per cent interest and 2 per cent cumulative sinking fund.

For the Young Loan and the Saarbrücken Loan—4½ per cent interest; and 1 per cent cumulative sinking fund, beginning after two years.

The service of the German Government 4 per cent Funding Bonds, and also of Austrian Government Credit Anstalt Bonds owned by British holders will continue in full.

In respect of the other medium and long-term debts of Germany and Austria, there will be a temporary settlement under which, during the next two years, coupons, dividends, etc., will be paid in cash at 50 per cent of their nominal amount, with a maximum of 4 per cent.

The Standstill Agreement relating to Banking Debts is not affected.

As regards trade, agreement has been reached for a revision of the allocation for United Kingdom exports out of the sterling proceeds of German exports to the United Kingdom on a sliding scale which should enable the level of United Kingdom exports to the Greater Reich to be maintained as heretofore. The German Government have agreed that a larger proportion of this allocation will be used for the purchase of finished goods; but if the sterling proceeds of German exports left at the disposal of the German Government are inadequate to meet their financial obligations to the United Kingdom, it will be open to the German Government to approach His Majesty's Government with a view to a reduction of the allocation for United Kingdom exports. Finally, the two Governments have undertaken to enter into further negotiations with a view to increasing the mutual trade and to improving the trade relations between the two countries.

The formal agreements giving effect to these arrangements are being signed and will take effect from to-day. . . .

(xxxvi) *Negotiations between the United States and Germany concerning Austrian loans.*

(*a*) *Note from the United States Government to the German Government, April 6, 1938.*[1]

In view of the announcement made to the Government of the United States by the Austrian Minister on March 17, 1938, my Government is under the necessity for all practical purposes of accepting what he says as a fact and accordingly consideration is being given to the adjustments in its own

[1] U.S. State Department, Press Releases, Vol. XVIII, No. 445.

practices and procedure in various regards which will be necessitated by the change of status of Austria.

In this connexion I have to notify the German Government that the Government of the United States will look to it for the discharge of the relief indebtedness of the Government of Austria to the Government of the United States under the Debt Agreement signed May 8, 1930, and the Moratorium Agreement signed September 14, 1932, between the Government of the United States and the Government of Austria.

This debt was incurred by the Government of Austria for value received through the purchase of flour under the authority of the Act of Congress approved March 30, 1920, which authorized the United States Grain Corporation to sell flour on credit to relieve populations in countries of Europe or countries contiguous thereto, suffering for the want of food. It was first represented by an obligation of the Government of Austria dated September 4, 1920, in the amount of $24,055,708.92, which with other obligations of a similar tenor issued at the same time in favour of several other Governments was by the express terms thereof a first charge on all the assets and revenues of Austria. On June 9, 1923, the Secretary of the Treasury of the United States, under special authority conferred by joint resolution of Congress approved April 6, 1922, subordinated the lien of this obligation upon the assets and revenues of Austria to the lien of the Austrian Reconstruction Loan of 1923, which has since been redeemed, and of the so-called Czechoslovakian Conversion Loan, upon certain revenues of the Government of Austria. On July 2, 1930, the Secretary of the Treasury, under special authority of an Act of Congress approved February 4, 1929, subordinated the lien of the Austrian relief bonds held by the United States to the lien of the Austrian Government International Loan of 1930. Except as thus subordinated to prior liens pursuant to the Acts of Congress of April 6, 1922, and February 4, 1929, the Austrian relief obligations held by the United States are expressly secured by a first lien on all the assets and revenues of Austria.

In addition to the sums owed this Government from the Austrian Government, consideration is required for the various dollar obligations of Austrian borrowers which are in private hands. The Austrian Government itself borrowed in the American market in 1930, the issue being part of the Austrian Government International Loan of 1930 and being secured by a first charge upon the gross receipts of the Austrian Customs and Tobacco Monopoly, subject at the present time only to the charge on these revenues in respect of the Czechoslovakian Conversion Loan. Furthermore, substantial amounts of bonds publicly issued in the American market by several Austrian political subdivisions and corporations, payable in dollars, are owned by citizens and residents of the United States.

On these dollar bonds in private hands, the Austrian Government and the other Austrian debtors have been making regular payments pursuant to the terms of the obligations. This Government will expect that these

obligations will continue to be fully recognized and that service will be continued by the German authorities which have succeeded in control of the means and machinery of payment in Austria. The welfare of numerous American citizens is directly affected and this Government will appreciate assurances on the subject.

(*b*) *Note from the United States Government to the German Government, June 9, 1938.*[1]

In pursuance to instructions received from my Government, I have the honour to bring to Your Excellency's attention that according to advices received from the Foreign Bondholders Protective Council, the June 1, 1938, monthly service instalment on the Austrian Government international loan of 1930 has not been paid. In this connexion I have the honour to refer to my note of April 6 notifying your Excellency that the Government of the United States will look to the German Government for the discharge of the relief indebtedness of the Government of Austria to the Government of the United States and pointing out that the lien of this relief indebtedness upon the assets and revenues of Austria has been subordinated by the United States to the lien of the Austrian international loan of 1930 upon the same assets and revenues.

While no reply to this note has been received, indications were given on the occasion of the presentation of the Embassy's *aide-mémoire* of May 16 that your Excellency's Government was taking the position that having regard to former precedents of international law and to the principles applied therein it was not under a legal obligation to take over the external debts of the Austrian Federal Government.

The Government of the United States does not wish to omit, on the occasion of the failure of the German Government to make the contractual monthly payment due June 1 on the Austrian Loan of 1930, in spite of the express charge which it enjoys on the assets and revenues of Austria taken over by the German Government, to state its dissent from the indicated position of the German Government as to its legal responsibilities in the premises, and to express the hope that Germany may yet undertake the payments incumbent on it both under international law and under equity.

It is believed that the weight of authority clearly supports the general doctrine of international law founded upon obvious principles of justice that in case of absorption of a State, the substituted sovereignty assumes the debts and obligations of the absorbed State, and takes the burdens with the benefits. A few exceptions to this general proposition have sometimes been asserted, but these exceptions appear to find no application to the circumstances of the instant case. Both the 1930 loan and the relief loans were made in time of peace, for constructive works and the relief of human suffering. There appears no reason why American creditors of Austria should be placed in any worse position by reason of the absorption of

[1] U.S. State Department, Press Releases, Vol. XVIII. No. 455.

Austria by Germany than they would have been in had such absorption not taken place. The United States Government, therefore, while recognizing that the German Government is at present engaged in negotiations with numerous Governments covering this and related questions, regrets that the service of the loan, affecting many American holders, should have been interrupted, reasserts its own position, and requests that as early reply as possible may be made to the note of April 6, 1938.

(c) Note from the United States Government to the German Government, October 19, 1938.[1]

Under instructions from my Government I have the honour to communicate to your Excellency the following:

The failure of the German Government to reply to my notes of April 6 and June 9,[2] regarding the cessation of service upon Austrian dollar bonds still comes persistently to the front in the United States as a disregard of just rights of the bondholders and an inequitable consideration of an American interest. During the six months that have elapsed my Government has entertained the hope that the German Government would be considerate of the welfare of the numerous American citizens directly affected and resume service on these debts. This hope has been increased by the fact that the German Government is currently making payments on the service of similar Austrian obligations in the hands of British, French, and other nationalities. Its disappointment at the continued neglect of the German Government is therefore all the greater.

My Government takes this occasion to call attention to the fact that it permits payments of every variety to be made from its territories to residents of Germany without hindrance or impediment, including payments on obligations held by German citizens. It also believes itself to be correct in stating its knowledge that various German dollar bonds selling in the American market at extremely low prices because of lack of payment continue to be repatriated by Germany, exchange being made available for that purpose. The German Government must recognize that a continuation of this situation is certain to intensify a feeling of injustice and discrimination.

My Government hopes that the German Government will not further delay informing American investors of its intentions in regard to these issues.

(d) Note from the German Government to the United States Government, November 17, 1938.[3]

In reply to your communication No. 216 of 1938 relative to service on the Austrian dollar loans, I have the honour to inform your Excellency as follows:

[1] Delivered by the American Ambassador in Berlin to the German Foreign Office. U.S. State Department, Press Releases, Vol. XIX, No. 479.

[2] See pp. 98–101.

[3] Handed in to the American Embassy in Berlin by the German Foreign Office. U.S. State Department, Press Releases, Vol. XIX, No. 479.

Replying to your note No. 37 of April 6, 1938, I had promised you in my letter of April 23, 1938, that I would revert to the matter as soon as the discussions with the internal authorities were brought to a close. In the meantime, the Embassy has been informed several times orally of the German opinion respecting the Austrian Government debts. When the *aide-mémoire*, May 16, 1938, was submitted, Ministerial Director Wiehl informed Secretary of Embassy Heath of the declaration which the German Government gave the English Government on May 12, 1938. In accordance with this declaration the German Government after a careful study of the pertinent procedures and principles based on international law, was not of the opinion that it was under any legal obligation to assume the foreign debts of the former Austrian Federal Government; for that reason it was not in a position to give the desired assurances that interest and amortization instalments on these debts would continue to be paid; however, it repeated its willingness to include the problem of the Austrian foreign debts in the coming negotiations with the Royal British Government.

In a conversation on July 15, 1938, which dealt with the contents of your note of June 9, 1938—No. 103—you were told, Mr. Ambassador, by State Secretary Freiherr von Weizsaecker that the German Government, supported by historical procedures, took a generally negative stand with regard to the debts of the Austrian Government, since they were brought about in order to support the incompetent Austrian State artificially created by the Paris treaties.

Later on the question was again the subject of conversations between you, Mr. Ambassador, and Reich Minister of Economics Funk and State Secretary Brinkmann, and again between Mr. Wiehl and Mr. Heath on August 5, 1938. During this conversation Mr. Heath was informed that the German Government would await the outcome of the negotiations with the main creditor countries before reply to your notes. At that time the negotiations with England and France had been concluded, while those with Holland and Switzerland were expected. In the meantime, a conclusion has been arrived at with Holland also; the negotiations with Switzerland are, however, still pending.

In view of these several oral statements, I must decidedly protest against the fact that in your communication of October 19, the circumstance that your two previous notes had not yet received any written reply should be termed a disregard of the just rights of the American bondholders, an inequitable consideration of an American interest and continued neglect. On the contrary, the German Government has been seeking a way which would make it possible for it, in spite of its fundamental rejection of any legal obligation, to give consideration to the American creditors of certain Austrian Government debts in a similar manner as that meanwhile arranged for various other creditors. It has not been possible, however, to find such a way as yet, for the following reasons:

Your communication of October 19 refers to the payments which the

creditors of certain Austrian Government loans in England, France, and several other countries receive on the basis of agreements concluded meanwhile with these countries. These agreements, however, were only possible because of the fact that trade with all these countries results in a considerable export surplus for Germany from which foreign exchange for these payments can be drawn and because special provisions could be agreed upon which guaranteed that the trade surplus would always permit the withdrawal of such foreign exchange. On account of the extremely passive condition of German trade with the United States, which already requires an outlay of considerable amounts of foreign exchange to pay for German imports from the United States, a similar treaty adjustment for payments to American creditors can naturally not be made.

The German Government has made investigations as to whether it might not be possible to make some other adjustment in favour of the American creditors. So far the investigations have not led to any solution; but they are being continued. The German Government would welcome it if the American Government would also undertake similar investigations, and in such a case it would be prepared to enter into negotiations with the American Government also regarding a solution acceptable to both parties.

Accept, etc.

(*Signed*) WOERMANN.

(*e*) *Extracts from Note of the United States Government to the German Government, November 25, 1938.*[1]

I have the honour to inform your Excellency that I am instructed by my Government to make the following reply to the Foreign Office note of November 17 which was itself a reply to the American Ambassador's note of April 6. . . .[2]

In the Ambassador's note of June 9, my Government took cognizance of the reported position of the German Government that it is not under a legal obligation to take over the external debts of the Austrian Federal Government, and stated its dissent from the position of the German Government as to legal responsibilities of the latter in the premises. My Government hereby for all legal effects and having particular regard to its status as creditor in respect of the relief indebtedness of the Government of Austria, reaffirms its position as to the responsibility of the German Government for the payment of the indebtedness of the Government of Austria, and its intention to look to the German Government for payment thereof. This inter-governmental indebtedness, incurred to obtain food for the Austrian people at a time of distress and lack of means or ordinary credit for the most necessary payments, has not disappeared or been annulled by the fact of the taking over of these assets and revenues by the German Government.

[1] Delivered by the American Ambassador in Berlin to the German Foreign Office. U.S. State Department, Press Releases, Vol. XIX, No. 479.

[2] The passages omitted from the Note summarize the previous correspondence.

With respect to other funded indebtedness of the Austrian Government, note is taken of the statement in the communication under acknowledgment. . . .

The United States Government has also observed the offer of the German Minister of Finance published in the *Deutscher Reichsanzeiger und Preussischer Staatsanzeiger*, No. 249, October 25, 1938, which refers to an extensive list of bonds of the Austrian Government and after stating that the capital and interest service of these bonds is suspended after October 2, 1938, offers to indemnify holders by exchanging 4½ per cent bonds of the German Government, payable in Reichmarks, for the Austrian Government bonds, at specified rates, e.g. 262 Reichmarks par value of the German Government issue for each $100 par value of bonds of the American *tranche* of the Austrian Government loan of 1930. Insofar as concerns bonds of this issue, which is the only issue now outstanding floated (in part) in the United States and payable in dollars, it appears that this offer of indemnification is open to holders irrespective of their nationality or residence provided that they deliver the Austrian Government bonds to a German credit institution before January 31, 1939, under cover of a form-letter obtainable from the credit institution.

It appears therefore that with respect to bonds of the Austrian Government which are held by citizens or residents of the United States, the German Government while disclaiming legal responsibility is prepared to make *de facto* provision for payment as a charge on the German Government, and that it has caused the suspension of capital and interest payments by the agencies charged therewith prior to October 2, 1938. This confirmation of the position that holders of the bonds of the Austrian Federal Government must look to the German Government for the discharge of these obligations might reduce the question of legal responsibility to an academic question were adequate provision, acceptable to the bondholders, made for the payment of the obligations. Unfortunately, under the foreign exchange laws and practices of the Reich, the Reichmark securities of the German Government tendered by the offer of October 24, 1938, as the terms of the offer are interpreted by my Government from the published text, could be accepted by residents of the United States only at the cost of a prohibitive sacrifice of the market value and income yield of securities they hold, while the German Government states in its note under acknowledgment that it has not been able to find an adjustment providing for payments in the United States comparable to the provisions made for other foreign holders of Austrian bonds.

The Foreign Office note does not specifically mention the treatment of dollar bonds of Austrian political subdivisions and corporations. It is presumed that under the German laws extended to Austrian territory the respective debtors continue to pay the Reichsmark equivalent of contractual interest and amortization payments into the *Konversionskasse*, but it is not known whether any provision whatever has been made with respect to the

rights of individual American holders of the obligations, and my Government has been unable to answer inquiries of this sort. Holders of these securities, as well as holders of the Austrian Government Loan of 1930, had been receiving full interest service in dollars up to the time of the absorption of Austria into the German Reich.

My Government notes the statement in the note of November 17 that the German Government is continuing its investigations as to whether it might not be possible to make in favour of the American creditors some adjustment of a different type from those made with other countries. It sincerely hopes that these studies may produce in the near future a positive result so that the American holders of Austrian securities will not long remain the only important group of holders of Austrian bonds for which no provision for payment has been made.

In connexion with this matter I am instructed to suggest that the German authorities charged with the study of the foreign indebtedness of Germany must by this time be well informed as to the amounts of Austrian dollar obligations now owned by holders in German territory. The estimates available to the United States Government indicate that the subtraction of such amounts and of the amounts held in other countries with which Germany has payments agreements would show that the transfer of bond service to American holders would not be a large or difficult problem. It would cost little for the German Government to provide payments for the bonds of the Austrian Government actually outstanding in American hands such as it already provides for its own dollar bonds in the United States.

My Government has frequently stated its position with reference to the negotiation of adjustments of defaulted foreign bonds. It is not its practice in such situations to conduct adjustment negotiations with foreign debtors for American bondholders or other private creditors. It uses its good offices when it appropriately can to promote and facilitate such negotiations between the creditors and the debtors. It most seriously protests and objects to acts or policies of foreign Governments which discriminate against American creditors and give other foreign creditors more favourable treatment than Americans.

My Government has received numerous complaints from its citizens who have suffered through the sudden interruption of service to Austrian bonds, and the ensuing uncertainty and absence of any recourse either for information or for payment. It hopes that the matter has now so far developed that the German Government will feel that it need no longer postpone effective attention to their legal and equitable claims.

III. THE DISMEMBERMENT OF CZECHOSLOVAKIA

FOR the previous history of the relations between Czechoslovakia and Germany, as well as the relations between the Czechs and the Germans within the country, reference should be made in particular to the *Survey* for 1936, pp. 469–501, the *Documents* for that year, pp. 354–93, the *Survey* for 1937, Vol. I., pp. 444–59, and the *Documents* for the same year, pp. 350–81. It will be seen from these that the existence of the German minority in Czechoslovakia had, since the foundation of the Republic, given rise to a problem, just as did the existence of racial minorities in other European States of mixed population. Although the Sudeten Germans had certain definite grounds for complaint,[1] they enjoyed 'the distinction of being not only the largest but also one of the least badly treated of all the German minorities which had been placed by the peace settlement under non-German rule'.[2] The reasons why their problem attracted more attention than that of other similarly placed minorities were, first, the size of their group in relation to the total population of the State;[3] secondly, the fact that they were culturally advanced and had, in the Austro-Hungarian Empire, belonged to the dominant race; thirdly, the fact that the liberal and democratic régime established by President Masaryk allowed them a greater freedom to express their grievances than many other racial minorities elsewhere possessed; but above all, the existence across the frontier of the German Reich, to whose population they were racially akin though politically they had never formed part of it.

The Sudeten German question became an acute one after the coming into power of the National-Socialist régime in Germany. One reason for this was that the Sudeten Germans were at this time suffering particularly severely from the effects of the general economic depression. This was primarily due to economic forces over which no Government, whatever its national composition, would have had control; but the Sudeten Germans believed that it was due to a deliberate policy on the part of the Czechs.[4] Secondly, the frenzy of emotional racialism which had swept over Germany affected a large section of the Sudeten German population too, and gave their already strong nationalism a dynamic and irreconcilable character. But the third and most important factor was Herr Hitler's ambition to dominate Europe; for this required the destruction of the obstacle constituted by the Czechoslovak State with its relations with the Western Powers and Soviet Russia. It was because the internal controversy between Czechs and Germans offered Herr Hitler a means of disrupting the Republic that this controversy became an international factor in the European struggle for power. This is the reason why the present volume includes a number of documents which would not normally be included in a collection dealing with international affairs. The internal problem of Czechoslovakia had its own reality, but it was secondary to the international problem. It is possible that documents relating to this aspect of the question may exist which have not yet been made public, and that they may throw new light on the reasons for the policy followed by the different Powers in 1938. For the present, these can only be estimated in the light of the public pronouncements of the statesmen of the various countries.

[1] See *Survey* for 1936, pp. 486–91.

[2] *Survey* for 1936, p. 472.

[3] The population of Czechoslovakia according to the 1930 census consisted, in round figures, of:

Czechs	7,447,000
Germans	3,231,600
Slovaks	2,309,000
Magyars	691,900
Ruthenians	549,000
Poles	81,700
Total	14,310,200

[4] See *Survey* for 1936, pp. 487–91.

The documents which follow are those which relate to the calendar year 1938; those which concern what might then have seemed to be the final extinction of Czechoslovak independence will appear in the volume for 1939. For convenience in reference, the documents relating to 1938 have been divided into four sections, each of which is preceded by a separate introductory note. The periods are: (1) up to the crisis of May 21; (2) the negotiations during the summer; (3) the September crisis; (4) the post-Munich period.

1. Up to the Crisis of May 21

When 1938 opened, relations between Czechoslovakia and Germany had for some time been strained.[1] The Berchtesgaden interview between Herr Hitler and Dr. von Schuschnigg was recognized as an ominous sign, and the fact that this applied to Czechoslovakia as well as to Austria was confirmed by the passage in Herr Hitler's speech of February 20, referred to in the preceding section,[2] in which he claimed the right to protect the ten million Germans living in two countries on the German frontier.[3] Dr. Hodža, the Czechoslovak Prime Minister, commenting on this declaration in his speech of March 4,[4] said that Herr Hitler's claim to protect German minorities which had not the means of securing their own right to freedom did not apply to Czechoslovakia, where all citizens, of whatever nationality, enjoyed the rights of citizenship and freedom of conscience. If, however, Herr Hitler had nevertheless been referring to Czechoslovakia, it must be made quite clear that Czechoslovakia would not in any circumstances brook interference in her internal affairs, but would defend herself to the utmost against any such attempt. Dr. Hodža welcomed Mr. Chamberlain's confirmation of the stability of British foreign policy; Czechoslovakia did not desire a formal pact with Great Britain, but 'an identity of interests, and the recognition of that identity, are frequently of more importance to peace than formal pacts'.

At this point it may be useful to recall what were the treaty relations which existed at this time between Czechoslovakia and other countries. The treaties regulating her relations with France and Germany formed part of the body of treaties concluded at Locarno.[5] The Franco-Czechoslovak Treaty of Guarantee of October 16, 1925, which was identical with that signed at the same time between France and Poland, stated that each of the two countries 'undertake to lend each other immediately aid and assistance' if a failure to observe the undertakings simultaneously arrived at between them and Germany was 'accompanied by an unprovoked recourse to arms'.[6] The treaty between Germany and Czechoslovakia, which again was identical with that between Germany and Poland, was a treaty of arbitration; it provided for the settlement of all disputes between the parties by peaceful means.[7] During the discussions which preceded the Locarno Conference, Mr. Austen Chamberlain had said that the British Government was not prepared to undertake any new commitments, apart from the maintenance of Germany's existing frontiers in the west, in addition to those derived from the Covenant of the League of Nations.[8] The treaty between Czechoslovakia and Soviet Russia was concluded on May 16, 1935,[9] and except as regards the protocol of signature, was identical with the Franco-Soviet Pact of May 2, 1935.[10] It stated that if either country were threatened by aggression on the part of a European State, they would give one another immediate aid and assistance. The protocol of signature added: 'les deux gouvernements reconnaissent que les engagements

[1] See *Survey* for 1937, Vol. I, pp. 444–8. [2] See pp 4–14. [3] See pp. 12–13.
[4] See pp. 113–17. [5] See *Survey* for 1925, Vol. II, pp. 25–66. [6] *Ibid.*, pp. 451–2.
[7] *Ibid.*, pp. 446–50. [8] See *Survey* for 1925, Vol. II, p. 36.
[9] See *Documents* for 1935, Vol. I, pp. 138–9.
[10] See *Documents* for 1935, Vol. I, pp. 116–19; also *Survey* for 1935, Vol. I, pp. 79–82.

d'assistance mutuelle joueront entre eux seulement en tant que se trouveraient réunies les conditions prévues dans le présent traité et que serait prêté de la part de la France assistance à la partie victime de l'agression.' Czechoslovakia was also allied with Rumania and Yugoslavia in the 'Little Entente'; under the three bilateral treaties by which this alliance was constituted in 1920 and 1921,[1] the parties undertook to assist one another in the event of unprovoked attack by Hungary. The various statements made during 1938 in confirmation of the obligations arising out of these treaties are mentioned later.

On March 5, President Beneš gave an interview to a representative of the *Sunday Times* in which he discussed the question of the minorities in Czechoslovakia.[2] He gave statistics to defend the Government against the charge that it had not provided the Sudeten Germans with adequate educational facilities, but admitted that as regards the grant to the German population of posts in the civil service in proportion to their numbers, there was still leeway to be made up, though every effort was being made.

The annexation of Austria by Germany placed Czechoslovakia in a position of obvious danger; her western provinces, in which the capital and the most important industrial districts were situated, now formed an exposed salient surrounded on three sides by German territory, and, as Mr. Churchill pointed out in the House of Commons on March 19, Germany had secured control of the whole of the communications of South-Eastern Europe by road, river, and rail. Both the public and the Government, however, maintained great calm, and the Press followed the official advice given to it to refrain from any comment which Germany might regard as provocative.

The German Government itself gave Czechoslovakia various reassurances at the time of the annexation of Austria. Field-Marshal Goering told the Czechoslovak Minister in Berlin that the Government would earnestly endeavour to improve relations between the two countries; German troops marching into Austria had strict orders to keep at least fifteen kilometres from the Czechoslovak frontier. Herr von Neurath (who, it will be remembered, had by then been replaced as Foreign Minister by Herr von Ribbentrop) also gave an assurance that Germany still considered herself bound by the Arbitration Treaty of October 1925. Mr. Chamberlain, on March 14, informed the House of Commons of these statements made by Germany,[3] and Lord Halifax communicated them to the House of Lords on March 16.[4] More detailed accounts of what took place, including the fact that Field-Marshal Goering gave M. Mastny, the Czechoslovak Minister in Berlin, his word of honour that Germany had no evil intentions towards Czechoslovakia, will be found in the French Yellow Book.[5]

Other countries also reaffirmed their obligations towards Czechoslovakia or defined their position with regard to her. The principal statements of this kind, including some given before the *Anschluss* had actually taken place, were as follows: For Great Britain, Mr. Chamberlain made a considered statement in Parliament on March 24.[6] He explained why the Government had decided not to undertake a specific commitment with regard to Czechoslovakia. But, he added, 'where peace and war are concerned, legal obligations are not alone involved, and, if war broke out, it would be unlikely to be confined to those who have assumed such obligations'. He made a somewhat similar statement, in which Czechoslovakia was not mentioned by name, on April 8;[7] in this he expressed disagreement with those who believed that if Great Britain declared clearly

[1] See *Survey* for 1920–23, pp. 283–91. [2] See pp. 117–20. [3] See p. 120.
[4] See *Documents* for 1938, Vol. I, pp. 39–40.
[5] *Documents Diplomatiques*, 1938–9. Published by the French Ministry for Foreign Affairs. See pp. 2–7.
[6] See pp. 121–23. [7] See *Documents* for 1938, Vol. I, p. 59.

in advance in what circumstances she would go to war, it would prevent war breaking out. With regard to France, M. Delbos had given an assurance on February 26 'que nos engagements envers la Tchécoslovaquie seraient, le cas échéant, fidèlement tenus',[1] and M. Chautemps had confirmed it on the same date.[2] Soviet Russia's readiness to fulfil her obligation to come to the aid of Czechoslovakia provided that France did so was confirmed by M. Litvinov on March 17,[3] M. Kalinin on May 11, [4] M. Troyanovsky on May 25,[5] and M. Litvinov on June 23.[6] It was on March 18 that the Soviet Government sent Notes to the British, French, and United States Governments[7] suggesting a conference on collective action to prevent aggression. This suggestion was not adopted: Mr. Chamberlain explained his reasons on March 24.[8] Yugoslavia's obligations under the Little Entente Treaties—which, as was said above, were of a limited character—were reaffirmed by Dr. Stoyadinović on March 16.[9]

The effect of the annexation of Austria on the German population of Czechoslovakia was immediate. It was generally believed that the armies of the Reich would march into the Sudetenland at once; and Herr Henlein's party, which had been seriously weakened in the preceding year by scandals among its membership,[10] gained a new accession of strength, partly from those whose enthusiasm for German nationalism had been stimulated, partly from those who wished to make their peace while there was still time. The attitude of the Sudeten German representatives in the Czechoslovak Parliament became more aggressive. Before long the Activist Parties, i.e. the three non-Henleinist German parties (the German Agrarians, German Christian Socialists, and German Social Democrats) which had for the past twelve years been collaborating with the Government, went into opposition. The German Social Democratic Party, unlike the other two, did not join Herr Henlein's party, but declared that it stood for the independence and integrity of the State while opposing the Government on the question of German rights.

Dr. Hodža, in a broadcast to the nation on March 28,[11] expressed satisfaction at Mr. Chamberlain's statement of March 24. He then announced that the Government's minority policy would now enter on a new phase; the Government was considering the adoption of a Minorities Statute which would codify all the measures relating to the national minorities in a comprehensive form. He did not, however, foreshadow concessions of a sufficiently radical kind to satisfy the Sudeten German Party in its present mood. On the following day Herr Kundt, the parliamentary leader of the Party, demanded autonomy for the German districts, as well as the immediate holding of the local government elections which had been postponed in October 1937 as the result of the disturbances at Teplice Šanov.[12] The Slovak Clerical deputies (who were less than half the total number of Slovak deputies), also demanded autonomy, while declaring their loyalty to the State; they were supported by a Magyar deputy. A demand for autonomy was also made on behalf of the small Polish minority.

On April 16 President Beneš made an Easter appeal[13] in which he reaffirmed the ethical principles of democracy, and called on all parties to co-operate in a spirit of conciliation to solve their problems. On the same day he announced an amnesty for all but the most serious political offences. Soon after, the Government announced that the postponed elections would be held in a number of areas on May 22, and in others on May 29 and June 12.

Negotiations between the Government and the Sudeten German Party had by this time been begun, but had made no progress at the time when the Sudeten German

[1] See Vol. I, pp. 210–11.
[2] See Vol. I, p. 214.
[3] See Vol. I, pp. 314–15.
[4] See present volume, p. 139.
[5] See Vol. I, p. 315.
[6] See Vol. I, p. 320.
[7] See Vol. I, p. 312.
[8] See Vol. I, pp. 47–8.
[9] See Vol. I, p. 297.
[10] See *Survey* for 1937, Vol. I, pp. 454–5.
[11] See pp. 123–26.
[12] See *Survey* for 1937, Vol. I, pp. 454–5.
[13] See pp. 127–29.

Party held its annual congress at Karlsbad on April 24. At this meeting Herr Henlein made a speech[1] in which he defined his demands, and did so in a way that brought the whole question on to new ground. In the course of his speech, which was of very great length, he said that the Sudeten Germans had been denied the right of self-determination when the Republic had been created, and complained that the Czechoslovak Government had not fulfilled its pledges concerning the treatment of its national minorities. Protests had been made to the League, but in vain. The chief tangible grievances which he mentioned were that Czech was the official language and that no other had an equal status, that Germans were excluded from the civil service, and that the non-Czech peoples did not receive their fair share of State contracts and subsidies. He declared that the experiment of 'Activism'[2] would never be repeated. He claimed to represent over 90 per cent of the Sudeten German community, and made a significant reference to the sympathy felt by the seventy-five million Germans in the Reich for the Sudeten Germans. The problem, he said, was no longer an internal, but a European one. The Czechs must renounce the idea of a Czech national State if the Germans were to be included in it; if they nevertheless wished to have such a State, 'then only without us!' The Sudeten Germans repudiated the status of a minority; the proposed Minorities Statute would not satisfy them as it would perpetuate the existing situation. Then he went on to questions of foreign policy. He demanded a revision of the 'erroneous historical myth' that it was the mission of the Czechs to form a Slav bulwark against German expansion, and of the outlook which placed them among the enemies of the German people.

Herr Henlein then formulated his demands in the form of the 'Eight Points.'[3] These were summary and somewhat obscure in their phrasing; their precise implications, and the extent to which they were compatible with the stability of the Republic, are not altogether easy to estimate from their text. Obviously, however, the one which gave rise to the greatest difficulty was the eighth—freedom to profess the German political philosophy, i.e. National-Socialism. For this philosophy implied a racial loyalty, centred in the Reich, which would take precedence over loyalty to the Czechoslovak State; and it was based on anti-democratic principles which meant the suppression of opposition opinion, and were thus incompatible with the whole ethical basis of a democratic State.

Herr Henlein concluded with an open profession of National-Socialist faith, which, he claimed, Sudeten Germans could hold without thereby setting themselves in opposition to the fundamental laws of the State. This was in contradiction to his earlier statements, for up to the time of the annexation of Austria he had always said that his party was not a National-Socialist one.[4]

The speech was received with vigorous disapproval by the Czechoslovak Press, and tension within the country increased. May Day was marked by great demonstrations by the Henleinists on the familiar Nazi model, and by counter-demonstrations in other parts of the country, and even by non-Henleinist elements, especially the Social Democrats, in the Sudeten German districts.

The increasingly dangerous character of the situation was causing concern in other countries. M. Krofta, the Czechoslovak Foreign Minister, stated in an interview on April 25[5] that relations with Germany were entirely normal and that there had been no direct interference in Czechoslovak internal affairs. On April 27 M. Daladier and M. Bonnet visited London, and one of the subjects discussed was the Czechoslovak situation, though the *communiqué*[6] said little more than that complete agreement had been reached. On May 7 the British and French Ministers

[1] See pp. 130–37. [2] See p. 109. [3] See p. 136.

[4] See Professor Seton-Watson's account of his conversations with Herr Henlein in 1935 and 1936. R. W. Seton-Watson: *Munich and the Dictators*, Methuen, London 1939, foonote on p. 56.

[5] See p. 138. [6] See Vol. I, pp. 228–9.

at Prague visited M. Krofta;[1] the former expressed Great Britain's desire to help in the solution of the German question in Czechoslovakia in the spirit of Mr. Chamberlain's statement of March 24,[2] and both expressed the hope that the Government would go to the farthest limit in order to settle the question. M. Krofta replied on May 15 with an assurance that the Government would do everything in its power to satisfy the German and other minorities. For this purpose the drafts for the Nationalities Statute (as the Minorities Statute was henceforth called) were revised so as to include measures which would involve amendments to the Constitution, and the Government announced on May 13 that they were ready to begin negotiations on it with the parties concerned.

Herr Henlein paid a visit to London on May 12–14; he saw for the most part prominent persons who did not hold an official position but who stood for a policy of resistance to German and Italian aggression. His object appears to have been on the one hand to convince British opinion that his views were moderate, and on the other to form a first-hand impression of the extent to which he had to fear opposition from Great Britain. He went to Germany before returning home, and again on May 19, and it was believed that on at least one of these occasions he visited Herr Hitler.

There were a certain number of violent incidents in the Sudeten districts in the weeks preceding the elections. In the German Press, which gave highly coloured accounts of them, the whole onus for these was placed on the Czechs; but on May 12 the German Social Democratic leader, Herr Jaksch, appealed in Parliament for protection against the terrorization of non-Henleinist Germans by Herr Henlein's party.[3]

Negotiations with the Sudeten German Party were begun on May 17, and on May 20 Dr. Hodža made a statement to the editors of the newspapers of the Coalition parties[4] in which he said that the Government was aiming at a radical solution of the nationality question on the principles of self-administration and proportionality. He also referred to the Slovaks; the new Nationalities Statute would extend and supplement the measure of self-government which they already possessed; they did not, he said, desire a dual State, but a common Czechoslovak State in which they had the right of local self-government. On the same day the Government invited Herr Henlein to take part in the negotiations on the Nationalities Statute; but on the preceding day he had, notwithstanding the imminence of the elections, gone on a visit to Germany.

Tension at the approach of the week-end of May 21–22 was increased by two factors. The first was a whispering campaign in the Sudeten districts that Herr Hitler was to march into the country on the Sunday. The second was that there were persistent rumours of abnormal troop movements in Germany near the Czechoslovak border. The British Ambassador in Berlin, Sir Nevile Henderson, was instructed to make inquiries on this subject on May 20; a full account of the steps taken has been given by Sir Nevile Henderson himself.[5] The denials received by him, and also by the Czechoslovak Government, did not, however, entirely reassure Prague; and on the night of May 20–21 a partial mobilization, sufficient to provide for the manning of the frontier defences, was quietly and efficiently carried out. Only one incident occurred, but this unfortunately resulted in the death of two Sudeten Germans at Eger, who disregarded a police order

[1] See p. 139.

[2] See pp. 121–22.

[3] Mr. Alexander Henderson, who was in Czechoslovakia during this period, states that the Czech police were given orders at this time to avoid the use of force at almost any cost. Alexander Henderson: *Eyewitness in Czecho-Slovakia*, Harrap, London, 1939, pp. 55–6. In the same book he gives an account, based, as he says in his preface, on personal investigation, of conditions in the Sudetenland and of the methods of National-Socialist propaganda.

[4] See pp. 139–42.

[5] Sir Nevile Henderson: *Failure of a Mission*. Hodder & Stoughton, London, 1940, pp. 134–9.

to halt. The Czechoslovak Government, as Mr. Chamberlain stated in the account of the crisis which he gave to Parliament on May 23,[1] took the conciliatory action of informing the German Minister of the incident and telling him that disciplinary action would be taken against those responsible.

The partial mobilization had a tonic effect on public opinion in Czechoslovakia; to the Henleinist extremists it came as something of a shock, since they appear to have been counting on Herr Hitler's unopposed entry. In the capitals of Europe the danger of war was thought on May 21 to be very serious. Sir Nevile Henderson twice saw Herr von Ribbentrop, and warned him 'that France had definite obligations to Czechoslovakia, and that, if these had to be fulfilled, His Majesty's Government could not guarantee that they would not be forced by events to become themselves involved'.[2] The Ambassador records the 'reprehensibly bloodthirsty language' used by Herr von Ribbentrop on this occasion. M. François-Poncet, the French Ambassador, also saw Herr von Ribbentrop. M. Daladier subsequently said[3] that though the decree ordering mobilization had been on his table during the May crisis, there was nothing unusual in this as it was always ready; the important thing was to avoid the necessity of making use of it.

President Beneš, in a speech at Tabor on May 21,[4] appealed for calmness and strong nerves in this critical time. The Government was preparing measures which would guarantee the nationalities their rightful political, economic, and cultural status, so that they could feel themselves as equals among equals, and that Czechoslovakia was their home. The Sudeten German Party, however, stated on the same day that they could not negotiate on the Nationalities Statute until peace and order, as well as all rights of freedom of speech and assembly, were secured in the Sudeten districts.

It is still uncertain what exactly were Herr Hitler's intentions at the time of the May crisis. The views expressed in some sections of the foreign Press that he had received a set-back, and that firm action by Czechoslovakia and the Western Powers had prevented a war, are not supported by any clearly established facts. The only thing about which there is no doubt is that Herr Hitler was roused to fury, whether by what actually happened or by the interpretation put upon it by the foreign Press. He expressed this without restraint in his speeches of September 12,[5] when he said that the May crisis was the reason for his orders that the German air force and army should be immediately enlarged, and the fortifications in the West completed, and of September 26;[6] 'This 21 May,' he exclaimed, 'was intolerable,' and he described the reports of German mobilization as an insolent lie. Herr von Ribbentrop also referred to the matter in his speech of November 7,[7] and the Hungarian Minister, M. de Kánya, on November 12,[8] said that the Czechoslovak mobilization in May 'naturally caused such a reaction in Berlin that it may be said without exaggeration to have sealed the fate of Czechoslovakia'.

The elections on May 22 passed off without incident, and Herr Henlein secured 91·4 per cent of all the German votes cast in the German districts. The crisis appeared to be over, and there was a belief in Great Britain and France that there was for the present no further danger. Mr. Chamberlain told the House of Commons on May 23[9] that the British Government, in full co-operation with the French, had represented to the Czechoslovak Government the necessity of taking precautions to avoid incidents, and of reaching a comprehensive settlement; they had also expressed to the German Government their earnest desire that that Government would co-operate with them in facilitating agreement.

[1] See pp. 145–46. [2] Sir Nevile Henderson, *op. cit.*, p. 136.
[3] See *Documents* for 1938, Vol. I, p. 215. [4] See pp. 142–44.
[5] See pp. 195–96. [6] See pp. 25–27. [7] See pp. 21–22.
[8] See pp. 353–58. [9] See pp. 145–46.

(i) *Extracts from Speech by Dr. Hodža, Prime Minister of Czechoslovakia, March 4, 1938.*[1]

Relations between peoples and States are at present passing through a period of change, the often almost dramatic course of which is a cause of anxiety to the public opinion of Europe. We believe that on this occasion also it is a transitory phase, and that with real good-will the European nations will be able to find a way out which will ensure lasting peace and bring about a stable equilibrium in Europe. We judge all the phenomena of international life with calm from the standpoint of our fundamental moral, economic, and defensive preparedness, and we endeavour at every moment, both in external and internal relations, to fulfil the duties imposed upon us by our national dignity and the interests of our State.

I therefore ask the House to-day to allow me to interpret the standpoint taken by the Czechoslovak Government on the most urgent questions of foreign policy. . . .

[*The Little Entente*]

We note with satisfaction that all our international agreements, to which we continue to give our adherence, maintain their vitality. Only through a complete lack of objectivity or ignorance of the political events of the last fifteen years could it be maintained that the Little Entente had not fulfilled its mission. The historical and psychological strength of the Little Entente, as well as of its economic links, have fully justified the expectations which have been and still are placed in this diplomatic device for the promotion of peace not only by its members, but by all pacifically-minded people in Europe. In agreement with the other two members of the Little Entente we shall strengthen its potentiality as a whole by further agreements on particular subjects, which are now in a fair way to be concluded.

[*Relations with France and Great Britain*]

It is with feelings of deep satisfaction and cordial agreement that the Czechoslovak public has received the most recent statements by the Prime Minister and Foreign Minister of the French Republic, which give renewed proof of the already historic fact that co-operation between that noble country, France, and the Czechoslovak Republic becomes firmer as the international crisis becomes more clearly evident. I take this opportunity of emphasizing on behalf of the Czechoslovak Government what a valuable contribution Franco-Czechoslovak co-operation makes to the promotion of peace by its clear and decided character, which has been maintained during the most recent period. The friendly understanding reached on the occasion of M. Delbos's visit to Czechoslovakia affords a valuable starting-point for international co-operation. The pacts made by the French Republic with

[1] At a joint session of the Chamber of Deputies and the Senate. *Prager Presse*, March 5, 1938. Translation.

Soviet Russia and with Czechoslovakia have proved their worth as an instrument of pacific policy.

Satisfaction was felt by both the Czechoslovak Republic and a large proportion of European opinion at the latest statement by the English Prime Minister, in which he associated himself unreservedly with that made on June 25, 1937,[1] by the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, Mr. Eden, who recently resigned. This latest expression of the stability of British policy is undoubtedly one of the most decisive elements of European peace. Czechoslovakia has no desire either for formal pacts or for a special agreement with the British Empire. She is simply concerned to know whether London realizes the fact that peace and the relief of tension in Central Europe are a general and therefore also a British interest. Such an identity of interests, and the recognition of that identity, are frequently of more importance to peace than formal pacts. . . .

[*Relations with other Countries*]

Our consistent adherence to already existing friendships does not in any way prevent the Czechoslovak Government from endeavouring to remove the obstacles which stand in the way of co-operation with some of our neighbours, but rather strengthens its intention to do so.

We are happy to note our good relations with the Danubian countries and the progressive advance towards normality in our relations with countries with which these were unsatisfactory. This development is clearly a progressive factor in Europe.

Italy naturally retains the leading position granted to her under the Rome Protocols, in accordance with her enhanced status as a Great Power. . . .

In the Danube Basin inter-State *rapprochement* is proceeding according to the principles of equality of rights, non-interference, and co-operation. In the organization of economic co-operation satisfactory progress is now being made on all sides. Up to the present this progress had consisted in perfecting the network of commercial pacts, with the result that the system is now complete, both from the Czechoslovak standpoint and that of the Danubian area as a whole. The particular progress to which I allude here resides in the fact that recognition of exceptions to the most-favoured-nation clause is proceeding satisfactorily.

[*Relations with Germany*]

Our relations with the German Reich need clarifying. During the past six months there have been exchanges of opinion between the competent diplomatic authorities of Germany and the Czechoslovak Republic with the object of avoiding aggressiveness on the part of organs of publicity, and in particular the Press, on either side, and of observing in all discussions bearing upon our mutual relations that attitude of objectivity and good-will which is, or should be, the greatest pride of journalism in a civilized world.

[1] See *Documents* for 1937, pp. 34–5.

This exchange of opinions has had and continues to have favourable results, though admittedly not on the scale demanded by the good-neighbourly relations between the German Reich and our own State which are desired by all our people without exception. The readiness of the Czechoslovak Government, provided that its attitude is reciprocated, to work lastingly and consistently for the end of Press warfare follows from the traditional principle of Czechoslovak policy that international undertakings must be carried out at all costs.

We have, furthermore, successfully concluded certain economic negotiations with Germany and do not doubt that the exchange of opinions on other questions will be carried out in a spirit of mutual understanding. The events of the past week might, however, have brought this exchange of views and the negotiations between ourselves and Germany on individual problems on to dangerous ground. With reference to the speech of the German Chancellor on February 20,[1] we must be the more circumspect in estimating the present relations between the Republic and the Reich in view of the fact that on March 1 the Chief of Germany's air force, Field-Marshal, Prime Minister, and President of the Reichstag supplemented this statement by a further one.[2]

In his speech of February 20 the Chancellor said that ten million members of the German nation were living in two States on Germany's frontiers.[3] It is historically correct that over three million persons of German race have their home in Czechoslovakia. Czechoslovakia is one of those countries in which large areas are permeated by a population of a different national origin. The Peace Conference could therefore hardly do otherwise, after the World War, than confirm a situation of many hundred years' standing.

It is simply a matter of course that Czechoslovakia—with full consciousness of the import of such a statement—should assert emphatically that her frontiers are absolutely inviolable. The German Chancellor did not call this in question, for he himself defintely said, 'We realize that a frontier settlement pleasing to all is scarcely possible in Europe.' But another question arises. The Chancellor said that the interests of the German Reich include the protection of German nationals who are citizens of other States but have not the means to secure for themselves the right to general human freedom, political freedom, and freedom of opinion within the frontiers of other States. The German Chancellor's declaration need not, in our opinion, be taken to refer to Czechoslovakia for the very simple reason that it certainly cannot be said of citizens of German nationality in Czechoslovakia that they have not the means to secure for themselves the right to general human freedom, political freedom, and freedom of opinion. One reason for this is

[1] See pp. 4–14.

[2] The relevant passage ran: 'You know, soldiers of the Air Force, that when the Fuhrer in his speech to the Reichstag proudly asserted that we would no longer suffer ten million German people to be outraged beyond our frontiers, that you, if necessary, must answer for that assertion to the last man.' This passage was omitted from all German printed reports of the speech, but was transmitted by British Press correspondents in Germany.

[3] See pp. 12–13.

that, as is implicit in the conception of State sovereignty, the Czechoslovak State, in a spirit of comprehension and co-operation, has secured, still secures, and will continue to secure to all its citizens of whatever nationality the rights of citizenship and freedom of conscience. In view, however, of the Chancellor's reference to ten million Germans living in two States on Germany's frontiers, the notion may arise that in the protection of his Reich he has in mind also the Germans in Czechoslovakia. A standpoint thus formulated would signify interference with the internal affairs of our State. The first requisite for the regulation of international relations is clarity and the total absence of ambiguity. We should do ill service to the future development of Central European affairs in general, and most of all to our relations with Germany, if we did not state very clearly that Czechoslovakia and her people cannot, must not, and will not brook interference with their internal policy in any circumstances. Should the German Chancellor's statement be intended as an attempt at such interference in our affairs—an attempt incompatible with the principle of the recognition of the sovereignty of other States—the Czechoslovak Government would sincerely regret it; for this would be the first attempt of the kind made since the restoration of our independence, and would come at the very moment when Czechoslovakia is making serious constructive efforts to regulate her relations with Germany on a basis of orderly co-operation and absolute non-interference with internal affairs on either side. Any ambiguity or lack of clearness regarding this particular part of Europe would therefore constitute a grave danger, for Central Europe is one of those parts of Europe where—to use the German Chancellor's words—'conciliation and the relief of tension are essential in the interest of peace. The Czechoslovak Government therefore allows no one to doubt that the people of this State would defend to the utmost every attribute of their independence, should they be jeopardized.

Our people has lived through centuries of obstinate struggle for its existence as a nation and a State. . . . We seek peace, but the present situation compels us to say that should destiny present us with the necessity of defending ourselves, Czechoslovakia will defend and continue to defend herself to the very utmost, relying on the maturity achieved in her technical and moral development. At a time like the present, mutual outspokenness is a duty. Clearness of speech means good will, sincerity, and peace. Ambiguous speech would mean uncertainty, mistrust, and unnecessary disputes, which would mean unrest not only for us and our neighbours, but for the whole of Europe.

The home of the German population which settled in our territory long ago lies in the Czechoslovak State. It is therefore the task of this State, and this State exclusively, from the time of the recovery of its independence, so to regulate its relations to this population that they themselves feel it as an abiding truth that their abiding home is in Czechoslovakia. The Czechoslovak Republic has taken up this task, which it has already been carrying out sincerely and consistently for a number of years, partly because a just

policy regarding nationalities is a matter of course for our people, and partly because it has spontaneously, on the basis of its sovereignty, established by its Constitution a legal situation which corresponds both to this object and to the international obligations which we assumed in Geneva when we signed the Minorities Treaties on September 10, 1919. . . .

It should once again be clearly stated that there are more barriers of a psychological than of a political nature between Germany and Czechoslovakia. Our people, themselves imbued with national feeling, can understand the national feelings of any other nation. But while our people are able to understand this psychological element, it is essential that the population of the German Reich should also show comprehension of the workings of the soul of the people of our Republic after the long decades, the long centuries of the old régime. What is needed in international relations is to clear the air of everything which hinders confidence between nations. The spirit of the new age demands this of us. Once there is good will on both sides, the pulling down of psychological barriers must begin. Czechoslovakia is a State whose people have never flinched before efforts, however great, which might lead to what the Chancellor has called relief of tension. An agreed settlement would be incomparably more advantageous to all concerned than crises and friction.

We are thus opposed to any attempt to interfere with our State sovereignty, but welcome productive co-operation on the basis of equality and non-interference.

The Czechs and Slovaks have throughout their past history upheld truth and fought for justice. In the common State which we created twenty years ago, we do not propose to betray the aims for which we have striven in past centuries. The collective will-power of our population makes us stronger to-day than ever before in our history. In accordance with the meaning of our past history and the intellectual and moral qualities of our people, we are, with all our strength, building our reconstructed State as a real home for all its ethnic constituents. We do not only give them the hope of satisfaction for their cultural, social, and economic requirements; we guarantee them the full measure of human and civic liberties which only a truly modern State can afford to its citizens. . . . In the course of a thousand years we have not known fear, and neither are we afraid to-day; for we are assured of the unity of the hearts and minds of all classes of the nation and of co-operation with that section of Europe which, like ourselves, desires not forcible intervention but calm and peace.

(ii) *Extracts from Statement by Dr. Beneš, President of the Czechoslovak Republic, March 5, 1938.*[1]

For us there is only one great internal problem, that of minorities, and of the German minority in particular. How we have treated the three million

[1] In an interview given to a representative of the *Sunday Times*. *Sunday Times*, March 6, 1938.

Germans in our country—twenty-two per cent of our population—I shall later explain. But I wish first to make it clear beyond all doubt that our treatment of the minorities and the relationship between the Government and the German parties here constitutes an internal issue which can never be the subject of direct official negotiation or discussion with a foreign Power. To admit the contrary would be to admit the right of a foreign nation to interfere in the internal affairs of this country; that we can never allow. It would not be a contribution to peace in the future, because such an intervention could afterwards be repeated on any occasion. It would provoke only lasting trouble in our international relations. . . .

We will always remain faithful to, and will never denounce, the minority treaties. For their fulfilment we hold ourselves accountable to the League of Nations. In the second place, we recognize the moral right of Europe to take an interest in our minorities, because public opinion in Europe has the right to control in all countries everything which can be important for the peace of Europe. Thirdly, we are prepared to place at the disposal of our friends, France and Great Britain in particular, any information they may desire concerning our minorities. Moreover, if a general settlement can be reached between the Great Powers of Europe to which all concerned must contribute, then Czechoslovakia is prepared, as always, to make her contribution too. . . .

An understanding between the Great Powers would be most welcome here and would greatly ease Central European difficulties. Any improvement of relations with our neighbours cannot fail to lead to beneficial consequences inside this country and generally throughout Europe. It is for that reason that we are watching with close interest the efforts being made by Great Britain and Italy to settle their differences. We would most cordially welcome a successful conclusion of these conversations. . . .

We do not believe war to be imminent. But we are prepared to defend our democratic ideals—ideals nurtured in Paris, London, Brussels, and Washington—and our territorial integrity, if necessary by force. We shall never use our well-equipped army for any other purpose than the fulfilment of obligations based on the principles of the Covenant. We are a profoundly pacific country. We will, of course, never abandon the Western Powers with whom we are linked by a common democracy. We hope they will not abandon us. . . . We are a Western country, bound to the evolution of Western Europe. . . . That does not mean that we forget our economic relations with Germany and our vital interest to be in good political relations with that country. We respect their internal conditions and should never try to interfere in them. Czechoslovakia is financially and economically strong and sound. Our military strength and our industrial resources are second only to those of the Great Powers. Our geographical position in Europe is important. Our mission is to contribute to the maintenance of European equilibrium and the pacific collaboration of all Central European nations.

Throughout the years of revolution and turmoil that have followed 1919, Czechoslovakia almost alone emerged unscathed. The Constitution of 1919 was unchanged. Politically and economically the country was in equilibrium. At the close of the Great War almost eighty per cent of the industry of the Austro-Hungarian Empire passed into their hands. That industry used to have a free market in what is now Austria, Hungary, Yugoslavia, Rumania, and Greece. To-day there are tariff barriers against these industries. But new markets have been developed throughout the world. Industrial wealth is not concentrated in the hands of the few. There is now practically no real class warfare. Strikes there may be, but almost invariably they are quickly settled by the mediation of the Government. Debts, both at home and abroad, and all financial obligations have been scrupulously honoured. During the years of the economic crisis there was a deficit on the Budget. To-day there is a surplus. In spite of an increase in public debt, the annual burden is less than before, owing to reduction of interest rates. Only ten per cent of the Budget is allotted to the service on internal and foreign loans.

There are three criteria whereby my country's policy on this issue may be judged:

1. The situation in fact of the German minorities;
2. Comparison with German minorities in other countries;
3. The psychological feeling among the Germans themselves.

On the first issue we have fulfilled all we have undertaken under the treaties, but we have done more than this. Take the case of schools. I shall quote only a few examples. Our Germans form 22 per cent of the population. But in the Budget of 1938 24 per cent of the State University grants is allotted to the German University in Prague, and 29 per cent of the technical school grants to the German technical schools in Prague and Brno. As for elementary schools, there is one Czech school for every 815 Czechs and every 127 Czech children; but there is one German school for every 862 Germans and every 115 German children. In other words, the Germans, with their smaller families, have the advantage of smaller classes in the schools than do Czechs. Without making any criticism of conditions in other countries, I should like to point to this fact: the Germans of Czechoslovakia have in Czechoslovakia, according to the official statistics, one school for every 862 people, but in Prussia there is only one school for every 1,112 people.

On February 18 last year our Government adopted the principle that Germans should be employed in the State services proportionately to their numbers in the population. I fully admit that we have leeway to make up in this respect. I admit that, instead of twenty-two per cent, from twelve to fourteen per cent only of our officials are German. There were many reasons for this. But we are doing our best to improve the proportion. One of our difficulties is to find suitable candidates with a knowledge of both

Czech and German. And do not forget that in the Cabinet there are three German Ministers out of a total of fifteen.

There can be no dispute that our Germans are much better treated than the German minorities in other countries. But this does not mean that all German parties in our country are satisfied. For a political party in opposition, dissatisfaction is partly a question of tactics, of feelings, of propaganda, etc.

The interviewer then asked whether it was impossible to satisfy German aspirations by some form of federal autonomy

You sometimes hear this suggested on the analogy of Switzerland. Here I will only say two things. In the first place, Switzerland has evolved in five centuries. We have only twenty years behind us. Secondly, our Germans are split up into six 'islands' along the frontier over a distance of almost 2,000 kilometres. The federal solution is impossible for us. We do not discriminate between our German and Czechoslovak parties. We simply apply the procedure of a Parliamentary régime. But our Opposition parties are developing, I think and hope, in the direction of still greater moderation. That is true, too, of the German Opposition Henlein party. To-day this evolution is not yet finished. . . .

(iii) *Extract from Statement by the Rt. Hon. Neville Chamberlain, Prime Minister, March 14, 1938.*[1]

. . . The Czech Government have officially informed His Majesty's Government that though it is their earnest desire to live on the best possible neighbourly relations with the German Reich, they have followed with the greatest attention the development of events in Austria between the date of the Austro-German Agreement of July, 1936, up to the present day. I am informed that Field-Marshal Goering on March 11 gave a general assurance to the Czech Minister in Berlin—an assurance which he expressly renewed later on behalf of Herr Hitler—that it would be the earnest endeavour of the German Government to improve German-Czech relations. In particular, on March 12, Field-Marshal Goering informed the Czech Minister that German troops marching into Austria had received the strictest orders to keep at least fifteen kilometres from the Czech frontier. On the same day the Czechoslovak Minister in Berlin was assured by Baron von Neurath that Germany considered herself bound by the German-Czechoslovak Arbitration Convention of October, 1925. . . .

(iv) *Extracts from Speech by the Rt. Hon. Neville Chamberlain, Prime Minister, March 24, 1938.*[2]

. . . I now turn to the situation with which we are more particularly concerned this afternoon. His Majesty's Government have expressed the view that recent events in Austria have created a new situation, and we think it

[1] In the House of Commons. *Hansard*, March 14, 1938, cols. 50–51.
[2] In the House of Commons. *Hansard*, March 24, 1938, cols. 1403–7.

right to state the conclusions to which consideration of these events has led us. We have already placed on record our judgment upon the action taken by the German Government. I have nothing to add to that. But the consequences still remain. There has been a profound disturbance of international confidence. In these circumstances the problem before Europe, to which in the opinion of His Majesty's Government it is their most urgent duty to direct their attention, is how best to restore this shaken confidence, how to maintain the rule of law in international affairs, how to seek peaceful solutions to questions that continue to cause anxiety. Of these the one which is necessarily most present to many minds is that which concerns the relations between the Government of Czechoslovakia and the German minority in that country; and it is probable that a solution of this question, if it could be achieved, would go far to re-establish a sense of stability over an area much wider than that immediately concerned.

[*Military Commitments*]

Accordingly, the Government have given special attention to this matter, and in particular they have fully considered the question whether the United Kingdom, in addition to those obligations by which she is already bound by the Covenant of the League and the Treaty of Locarno, should, as a further contribution towards preserving peace in Europe, now undertake new and specific commitments in Europe, and in particular such a commitment in relation to Czechoslovakia. I think it is right that I should here remind the House what are our existing commitments, which might lead to the use of our arms for purposes other than our own defence and the defence of territories of other parts of the British Commonwealth of Nations. They are, first of all, the defence of France and Belgium against unprovoked aggression in accordance with our existing obligations under the Treaty of Locarno, as reaffirmed in the arrangement which was drawn up in London on 19th March 1936. We have also obligations by treaty to Portugal, Iraq, and Egypt. Those are our definite obligations to particular countries.

There remains another case in which we may have to use our arms, a case which is of a more general character, but which may have no less significance. It is the case arising under the Covenant of the League of Nations which was accurately defined by the former Foreign Secretary when he said:

> 'In addition, our armaments may be used in bringing help to a victim of aggression in any case where in our judgment it would be proper under the provision of the Covenant to do so.'

The case might, for example, include Czechoslovakia. The ex-Foreign Secretary went on to say:

> 'I use the word "may" deliberately, since in such an instance there is no automatic obligation to take military action. It is moreover right that this should be so, for nations cannot be expected to incur automatic military obligations save for areas where their vital interests are concerned.'

His Majesty's Government stand by these declarations. They have acknowledged that in present circumstances the ability of the League to fulfil all the functions originally contemplated for it is reduced; but this is not to be interpreted as meaning that His Majesty's Government would in no circumstances intervene as a member of the League for the restoration of peace or the maintenance of international order if circumstances were such as to make it appropriate for them to do so. And I cannot but feel that the course and development of any dispute, should such unhappily arise, would be greatly influenced by the knowledge that such action as it may be in the power of Great Britain to take will be determined by His Majesty's Government of the day in accordance with the principles laid down in the Covenant.

The question now arises, whether we should go further. Should we forthwith give an assurance to France that, in the event of her being called upon by reason of German aggression on Czechoslovakia to implement her obligations under the Franco-Czechoslovak Treaty, we would immediately employ our full military force on her behalf? Or, alternatively, should we at once declare our readiness to take military action in resistance to any forcible interference with the independence and integrity of Czechoslovakia, and invite any other nations, which might so desire, to associate themselves with us in such a declaration?

From a consideration of these two alternatives it clearly emerges that under either of them the decision as to whether or not this country should find itself involved in war would be automatically removed from the discretion of His Majesty's Government, and the suggested guarantee would apply irrespective of the circumstances by which it was brought into operation, and over which His Majesty's Government might not have been able to exercise any control. This position is not one that His Majesty's Government could see their way to accept, in relation to an area where their vital interests are not concerned in the same degree as they are in the case of France and Belgium; it is certainly not the position that results from the Covenant. For these reasons His Majesty's Government feel themselves unable to give the prior guarantee suggested.

But while plainly stating this decision I would add this. Where peace and war are concerned, legal obligations are not alone involved, and, if war broke out, it would be unlikely to be confined to those who have assumed such obligations. It would be quite impossible to say where it would end and what Governments might become involved. The inexorable pressure of facts might well prove more powerful than formal pronouncements, and in that event it would be well within the bounds of probability that other countries, besides those which were parties to the original dispute, would almost immediately become involved. This is especially true in the case of two countries like Great Britain and France, with long associations of friendship, with interests closely interwoven, devoted to the same ideals of democratic liberty, and determined to uphold them. . . .

So far as Czechoslovakia is concerned, it seems to His Majesty's Government that now is the time when all the resources of diplomacy should be enlisted in the cause of peace. They have been glad to take note of and in no way underrate the definite assurances given by the German Government as to their attitude. On the other side they have observed with satisfaction that the Government of Czechoslovakia are addressing themselves to the practical steps that can be taken within the framework of the Czechoslovak constitution to meet the reasonable wishes of the German minority. For their part, His Majesty's Government will at all times be ready to render any help in their power, by whatever means might seem most appropriate, towards the solution of questions likely to cause difficulty between the German and Czechoslovak Governments. In the meantime, there is no need to assume the use of force, or, indeed, to talk about it. Such talk is to be strongly deprecated. Not only can it do no good; it is bound to do harm. It must interfere with the progress of diplomacy, and it must increase feelings of insecurity and uncertainty. . . .

(v) *Extracts from Broadcast by Dr. Hodža, Czechoslovak Prime Minister, March 28, 1938.*[1]

. . . I come before you to-day to thank you in the name of the Government for your just interpretation of our statement of March 4.[2] You have rightly understood the needs of the day. Your calm resolution has confirmed the readiness of our friends and allies to help, and strengthened general confidence in the policy of the Czechoslovak Republic. We are glad to say that the statement has found acceptance abroad, not only in official quarters but also among the general public and particularly among the broad masses of the people in the democratic countries. The reaction of official quarters in Berlin took the form of an official assurance that Germany had no intention of interfering with our internal affairs. During the critical days in Austria, also, the responsible representatives of the German Reich repeatedly gave us emphatic and fully binding assurances that Germany had no intention of attacking the Czechoslovak Republic. Moreover, the German Government gave the British Government confirmation of the substance of these assurances.

[*Mr. Chamberlain's Statement of March 24*]

It is clear from the statement made by the Prime Minister of Great Britain, Mr. Chamberlain, on March 24,[3] that British policy is working consistently along the lines forecast in the Czechoslovak Government's statement of March 4. We said then that identity of interests and the recognition of that identity are frequently of more importance to peace than formal pacts. The British Prime Minister fully endorsed our view. He did not merely

[1] *Prager Presse*, March 30, 1938. Translation.
[2] See pp. 113–17.
[3] See pp. 120–23.

affirm Great Britain's continued interest in Central Europe, but emphasized it in these words: . . .[1]

It can therefore be affirmed quite soberly and as a considered opinion that Czechoslovakia's security in the system of European collaboration has been strengthened. Our declaration of March 4 has evidently been rightly interpreted, not only at home but throughout Europe and particularly in England. The British Prime Minister's whole statement was certainly a great achievement in the interest of European consolidation. History may one day recognize the service he has rendered to peace at this juncture. But the Government of the Republic would draw special attention to one important circumstance. The British Prime Minister, in his speech of March 24, expressed his particular interest in our Government's minorities policy. . . .[2]

[*Minorities Policy*]

It should be noted particularly that the British Prime Minister's interest in our minorities policy is based firmly on international law, especially as laid down in the Minorities Treaty signed on September 10, 1919, at St. Germain-en-Laye. Czechoslovakia therefore notes the Prime Minister's speech with satisfaction.

I am aware, and can well understand, that many of you do not agree with our minorities policy as revised on February 18, 1937. Even the former German Activists have felt bound to criticize it for its omissions and inadequacies. It is, however, interesting to recall the definite statement printed in the organ of the German Christian Socialists on March 25 of this year, at the moment of their joining the Opposition: 'It is still true that since February 18, 1937, valuable results have been achieved, thousands of our fellow-nationals having been given work, bread, and assistance.'

Many of our Czech Nationalists have also had serious doubts about our policy of February 18. Yet it is clear to-day that it is precisely our traditional minorities policy, revised on that date, which has justified the confidence of those who now give such vigorous, whole-hearted support to the cause of our State security. The Government of the Republic will therefore consistently pursue the settlement of our national relations within the framework of the Constitution. If our achievement in this direction is to have permanent validity, we must first have a proper evaluation of the new internal political situation, caused now and in the future by the withdrawal from the Government, and thus from the Government majority, of a section of the German Activists. These were formerly our colleagues in the Government and in the legislative bodies, and they bore an equal share of responsibility with us. Even though they have now fallen away, we shall try to interpret their crisis in a spirit of good will.

[1] Dr. Hodža quoted the passage which appears on p. 122, lines 34–42.
[2] Dr. Hodža quoted the passage which appears on p. 123, lines 1–12.

We Czechs and Slovaks are sincere in our own democratic nationalism, and we try to form a realistic view of the development which has changed the map of Europe and the balance of European power in a region adjoining our country.

The high tide of German nationalism has swept other different elements in the attitude of many of our German political groups into the background. Yet if we take a sober, critical view of the new position of Germans in the Republic we cannot deny that, for a long time past, the measures dealing with minorities policy have been the object of reciprocal outbidding and rivalry between the German political parties. There is no walking on such uncertain ground.

We are entering upon a new period in our minorities policy. Let it be clear to all from the outset that any minority settlement in Czechoslovakia is based on fixed assumptions, namely our State sovereignty, our Constitution, and our policy of no denationalization—neither of Germans, Magyars, Russians, Poles, nor, naturally, of Czechs and Slovaks. All Czechoslovak citizens are under the protection of the State and the Government in whatever part of the Republic they live. The Government will not submit to pressure in any circumstances or in any form, be it economic, moral, or political.

We must, however, confess that our minorities policy still suffers from a certain lack of proportion. Czechoslovakia has been, and is, large-minded and generous towards the Germans on major issues, but dilatory in minor details. Our Germans have their full share—in some cases more than their share—of universities, secondary and elementary schools. . . . There are whole areas in our Republic which up to 1918 had no German elementary, let alone secondary schools. It was the Republic which provided an educational system and so secured to the Germans whole areas which they had been in danger of losing under the former régime. The Republic thus generously gave the Germans the cultural requisites for their nationalism.

The time has come to embody in one comprehensive statute all existing minority measures, whether contained in the basic laws of the Constitution, in the Language Act, or in other detailed legislative and administrative measures, so as to form a systematic whole. We are entitled to say that we in Czechoslovakia have the relatively most perfect system of minority rights; but because we have not yet codified them, ill-wishers are able to suggest to the uninformed world at large that our minorities cannot breathe freely—or if they can, only since February 18, 1937. It is therefore right and meet that the valuable work of our minorities policy should now be completed from the point of view of form. The Czechoslovak Government is accordingly considering a Minorities Statute for the Republic which will put an end to the widespread propaganda directed against our policy of good will and honest endeavour.

After the British Prime Minister's historic statement, which is so valuable a contribution to the clarification of the European situation and thereby to

Czechoslovakia's situation, no one will think of accusing us of formulating our minorities policy under pressure from abroad. Looking back on the political procedure of the last two disturbed years, I can conscientiously say that if an attempt has been made abroad to influence our policy we have not given way to it, neither have we any intention of departing from this course. We are acting and shall act in a way corresponding to our own will and our State sovereignty in co-operation with the elements existing in our country and in accordance with our treaty obligations.

And now a word to our own ranks. The Government's statement of March 4 was fully approved by an overwhelming majority of the public. The legislative bodies, and after them, almost without exception, all the organizations of our public life . . . hastened to declare their approval of the calm and collected, but at the same time fearless and resolute attitude which the Government of the Republic had expressed. I address you now that one phase of the European crisis has been successfully passed, and I thank you, all of you, because you have helped to show the world that at a critical time our people are neither small-minded nor weak. The Government of the Republic now have the strong feeling that they have someone to rely on. The consciousness of our strength, calm, and collectedness, our love of peace, and also our courage and readiness, have secured for us, both at home and in Europe, a position which may justly be said to be stronger than it was before the present crisis. Particularly gratifying at this time of crisis has been, and is, the attitude of the broad masses of our people: agriculturists, workers, the middle classes, all categories of officials, and the greater part of the bourgeoisie and the intelligentsia. I intentionally mention these classes of society in order that everyone should realize that the more secure a person's social position is and the more favourable his material circumstances, the more clearly is it his duty to show at least as much firmness as our workers, our rural populations, our handicraftsmen, and our officials. If here and there a defeatist leaves the ranks of our nation's moral solidarity, he shuts himself out for good and all. Let this simple warning suffice: strong and firm are our nation and our State, strong and firm is their Government.

I will conclude by saying that no international danger threatens us. There is no danger of a conflict in our neighbourhood; throughout Europe the situation is such that a peaceful settlement can and must be reached. . . .

Czechoslovakia has a mission in this sensitive spot of Europe; it is to organize agreement and co-operation between nations. This mission is to-day an elementary interest for ourselves, for Central Europe, and for Europe as a whole. We shall honourably fulfil this mission, and we shall continue to conduct the affairs of our State with a strong sense of inner security and with the consciousness that we are steering a firm course.

(vi) *Extracts from Speech by Dr. Beneš, President of the Czechoslovak Republic, April 16, 1938.*[1]

To-day we are holding the customary celebrations of the Red Cross Peace anniversary. We proclaim a three days' truce throughout the Republic: that is, the cessation of all political, social, and national conflict. . . . This we do in the spirit of the motto of the President, which is inscribed on the Republic's coat of arms: 'Truth will prevail.' Peace and truth, truth and peace—how closely the two are linked! No peace without truth, no truth without peace. . . .

Our motto, 'Truth will prevail', which applies primarily to what is true in social life—in ethics and in men's interrelations in society—is based upon what are for us unalterable ethical principles. It demands that we should always look upon our fellow-man as the object to which we dedicate our actions, never as the means or tool of our aims and aspirations; that we should regard every human being and his soul as ethically our equal, and no one person, class, or nation as standing on a higher level and the rest as inferior. It demands that each one of us should, in all human intercourse with men, parties, or nations, give proof of the Kantian absolute will-to-good, of objectivity, tolerance, honesty, and practical human sympathy. Only by acting upon these principles, which I regard as eternal truths for humanity and which invariably triumph in the end, . . . can we avoid war, revolution, and civil revolt. Only by reliance on them can the views and interests dictated by party, class, or national standpoints be discussed in reasoned, unprejudiced, sober debate at which, by means of statement, adjustment, revision, and mutual concessions final agreement may be reached.

The motto does not however imply that we should remain passive until the course of events shows how things have shaped themselves. It calls for active defence of the truth. A man in danger of being enslaved and robbed of his human dignity, and having tolerance, objectivity, and good will denied him, has a right to defend himself. This applies similarly to every society, nation, or State. . . .

To-day the nations of the world are rent by factions and men are arming on all sides. Among our neighbours there have been changes which have had a very marked effect on European policy, particularly in Central Europe. Ideological differences between the political and social régimes in Western, Central, and Eastern Europe have increased the tension. Civil strife, both social and political, in individual European States shows the extent of these social, economic, and cultural upheavals in our present stage of development. We cannot, therefore, close our eyes to the outstanding fact confronting us to-day that we have, since the late war, been passing through one of the greatest political, social, economic, and cultural revolutionary processes in European history. Will the end of this process be a

[1] At the Easter Red Cross festival in Prague. *Prager Presse*, April 17, 1938. Translation.

new great European or world war? All Europe is asking the question to-day. I am not blind to the seriousness of the situation. I do not intend to soothe you, even temporarily, by disseminating unfounded official optimism. Every responsible statesman and politician must be aware of the gravity of the present situation, and direct and prepare his State accordingly. All this we are doing. . . . But while we are in fact prepared for every eventuality . . . we endeavour to avoid anything that might increase international tension between the Great Powers. We honestly seek and fervently desire a genuine and permanent understanding with all our neighbours. There are on our side no objections or obstacles to this. We believe, in particular, that an understanding may be reached between ourselves and Germany in view of the latest pronouncements of her responsible statesmen concerning us. Our composure during the recent happenings around us was appreciated and has undoubtedly contributed to the maintenance of international peace. We are making every effort to uphold social justice at home and so secure calm and internal cohesion, economic stability and ordered finance. We decline to associate ourselves with any ideological front whatsoever. We also emphatically decline to be classed as members of such a front by anyone. We are still of opinion that peace can be maintained only if individual régimes show complete respect for one another and no State interferes directly or indirectly with the internal affairs of another State.

I know that the universal armament preparations are such as to call for the most serious attention, but I know on the other hand that these very preparations show how terrible a conflict would be and what all Europe stands to lose by it. Any conflict, even one originating in a local quarrel at no matter what point in Europe, is bound to become a general one under present conditions. It is difficult at this moment to think otherwise. But we steadfastly believe that the forces of peace in Europe are, in all States without exception, stronger than it would appear. I therefore do not even now regard war as pre-ordained by fate, neither do I accept the idea that Europe is obliged to enter upon an armed conflict. It is our sacred duty to be prepared for one, but we must at the same time work whole-heartedly to prevent it and our internal policy is directed towards that end.

The general social and political revolutionary process in Europe to-day takes on different aspects in different countries according to their particular circumstances, their individual domestic weaknesses or difficulties. . . . In Spain we have internal social-political revolution and civil war; in France, social problems and class antagonism. In Germany the process takes the form of national unification and a radical change in the whole social structure of the Reich in conformity with the National-Socialist plan, while other States have serious political and constitutional crises. With us it is the problem of nationalities, notwithstanding the liberality, really far-reaching in comparison with what exists anywhere else, which we have already shown in our policy in this respect.

We see, therefore, that there is nothing abnormal about our difficulties in the present general state of Europe. They are part of the general European crisis, of the present phase of general development. . . . I should like everyone to understand this. It is not merely a question of long-standing and sometimes petty nationalist feuds, or reconciling the psychological grievances of Czechs and Germans and smoothing out their undoubtedly genuine political differences as regards Czechoslovak nationalities policy. All that plays a part, and must be settled. But there is more at stake. Our common fatherland will, by maintaining unshaken the traditional democratic Pan-European policy inherent in the structural and cultural principles of the State, find a just solution of its local and national problems and, what is more, help in solving the present general moral, social, and political European crisis and preserving peace in Europe as a whole. This, as I see it, is our obligation to Europe to-day.

I wish therefore that all these questions arising between the Czechoslovaks and our other nationalities—particularly between Czechs and Germans—should be discussed objectively so that a solution acceptable to both sides may be sought on the lines of conciliation and compromise in a spirit of friendly moderation. I feel that this problem should be approached earnestly and sincerely in the spirit of to-day's festival: the spirit of peace, good-will, objectivity, tolerance, mutual respect, and equality, and, above all, honestly with 'fair play' on both sides. Passion, agitations and ill-feeling would lead us nowhere at this juncture.

The Czechoslovaks are, like the Germans in our Republic, mature factors in European culture. It is their duty and should be their ambition to set a good example to the whole world, by showing that national differences can be solved in a just and reasonable manner in the interests of a common centuries-old fatherland. . . .

I now turn to all our citizens without distinction of party: to Czechs and Slovaks, Germans and Magyars, Ruthenians and Poles. . . . Let us all, on the occasion of this Easter festival of peace and resurrection, celebrate the twentieth anniversary of the Republic in a spirit of true conciliation and co-operation and earnestly strive to solve all future disputes likewise in the spirit of good-will, truth, and conciliation for the sake of European appeasement and of peace. . . . Let us not be carried away by the nervous excitement and passions of the moment or believe that something, I know not what, is about to happen among and around us. Neither within the State nor outside it will events take place which could shatter or damage our international relations, living conditions, or internal political development.

The Government are moving in full agreement towards a definite goal. Let us have confidence . . . that the Republic with its democratic régime . . . will bring us peace, liberty of political and religious conviction, work and wages, and a happier life for ourselves and our children. . . .

(vii) *Extracts from Speech by Herr Henlein, Leader of the Sudeten German Party, embodying the 'Eight Points', April 24, 1938.*[1]

[*Sudeten German Grievances*]

. . . A year ago, in Aussig, I announced the introduction of Bills for the protection of our national community (*Volkstum*), which were to be the first concrete starting-point for a positive solution of the nationality problem in this State, which was becoming increasingly dangerous. On April 27, 1937, my colleagues introduced these Bills in the Legislature. But although a year has passed since then, these Bills have not been dealt with either by the Czechoslovak Parliament or by the Government. These concrete proposals too were ignored, according to the old tactics, although there had long been no justification for the hope that the nationality problem of this State would one day solve itself—perhaps through the withering away of the Sudeten German branch of the German tree of life. . . .[2] It is by no means my intention to-day to repeat my declaration of readiness to come to an agreement, as I do not wish to expose myself to another rebuff. I shall confine myself to a renewed statement of the whole problem, and to drawing the attention of world public opinion to its importance and difficulty. . . .

When we stood at the front in the World War, we soon ceased to care about the old Austrian State or the House of Habsburg; what we cared for was the protection and security of our German home and its inhabitants. . . . Then came 1918, the collapse after the Great War, and everything was thenceforward to be different. A people which was alien to our native districts set up, after the collapse, the exclusive claim to our homeland. . . .[3]

It is true that the legislature has enacted laws of general application, but in practice they cease to be applied without distinction because the Government and administration allow them to be applied with 'free discretion'. Besides, the administration is subjected to pressure from the Czech nationalist organizations and is not objective in official matters. In this way, freedom of trade and free competition is prevented precisely in the case of those persons for whose benefit the Minorities Treaty[4] was concluded. The protection of liberty guaranteed by Article 2, paragraph 1 of the Treaty is not in practice afforded to all nationalities. The subjection of justice to political influences and the arbitrary action of the Czech police prevent the principle of the protection of freedom from being actually applied. The principle of equality for all citizens of the State, laid down in Article 6, paragraph 1,

[1] *Konrad Henlein's Rede in Karlsbad.* Schriften des Deutschen Instituts für Aussenpolitische Forschung. Berlin, 1938. Translation.

[2] Herr Henlein then mentioned his previous attempts to arrive at a settlement, which, he said, had been ignored.

[3] Herr Henlein went on to protest against the Treaty of Versailles in the name of the principle of the self-determination of peoples, and to accuse the Czechoslovak delegation at the Peace Conference of falsifying the population statistics and the Czechoslovak Government of not fulfilling its pledges as regards national minorities.

[4] Of September 10, 1919.

and in the first sentence of Article 8, is in practice constantly violated. For there is no equality for all citizens in Czechoslovakia. This is shown by the very fact that the Czechs regard themselves as the sole ruling nationality (*Staatsvolk*), and try to degrade the other nationalities, such as the Sudeten Germans, whose numbers exceed the population figures of several European States, to the status of insignificant minorities. It also follows from the fact that the Czech language has been declared the official language, and that no other language enjoys an equal status, although in Bohemia, for example, the proportion of Czechs to Germans is about two to one. Another instance of the violation of the principle of equality is the fact that the non-Czech peoples are not only, as has already been shown, systematically excluded from the civil service, but are also placed at a most serious disadvantage in the allocation of contracts by the State, and in the granting of subsidies. The violation of the principle of equality is also shown by the persecution of non-Czech citizens because of their national and political views, although freedom of opinion is guaranteed by the Constitution. I shall have more to say about this later. . . .

[*Origins of the Czechoslovak Republic*]

The Constitution was drawn up by a so-called Revolutionary National Assembly, which was not authorized for the purpose by public general elections, but developed out of a purely Czech Committee, the so-called '*národni výbor*'. It consisted entirely of Czech and a few Slovak representatives. The other racial groups of the new State, which included 4½ million persons or 34·5 per cent of the entire population of the State, were not represented at all in this Revolutionary National Assembly. The Constitution thus did not result from a free decision of the entire population of the State, but only from one section. . . .

In this connexion I must also correct a statement in the memoranda[1] and the Preamble to the Treaty of St. Germain: It is there alleged that Czechoslovakia was formed by the voluntary combination of the peoples of Bohemia, Moravia, and Silesia, as well as Slovakia, to form a united and independent State. But it is important to note that the Germans, Poles, Magyars, and Ruthenians, i.e. 4·5 million people, were never asked whether they agreed to their inclusion in the Czechoslovak Republic. The Sudeten Germans, in particular, after the collapse of Austria, claimed the right of self-determination for themselves; on the basis of this uncontested right they formed separate provincial governments for Bohemia and for Moravia-Silesia, and declared their desire for independence before the world. A few weeks after the proclamation of Czechoslovakia the Sudeten German territory was occupied by Czech troops against the will of the Sudeten German community. Those who were at that time in charge of the newly constituted State did not attempt to negotiate with the Sudeten Germans. In view of these circumstances the German representatives, after their election to the

[1] The memoranda submitted by the Czechoslovak delegation to the Peace Conference.

National Assembly (which was now for the first time a legally constituted legislative body), on June 1, 1919, made political declarations. The declaration of the German Parliamentary Association included the following passage:

'When, on March 4, 1919, the entire population of the Sudeten German districts, without distinction, expressed its desire for national freedom by manifestations in favour of sending its national representatives to the National Assembly of German Austria, the voice of the Sudeten German community was stifled in blood. . . .'

But just as the voice of the Sudeten Germans was not heard in the peace negotiations, so also this desperate cry of the Sudeten German community of March 4, 1919, was not heard by the Peace Conference, and its rights were not taken into account in the dictated Peace Treaty of St. Germain. . . .

The fact that notwithstanding these declarations, and although it constituted a bare majority only, the Czech people regards the State as created for its exclusive benefit and wants to rule it as though it were a purely Czech national State was naturally bound to lead to the most acute national and political tension. . . .

[*Protests to the League*]

The Sudeten German community has in the course of years presented no less than 22 protests and memoranda to the League of Nations through its authorized representatives. Not a single one of these came before the Committee of Three, not a single one came before the Council, and not a single one received satisfaction. The Sudeten German community, profoundly disappointed by this, has recognized that such action is useless. From now on it will send no more protests to the League, but will have to try other means of securing its rights.

[*'Activism'*]

It has, however, not only appealed to the League, but has endeavoured, within the State itself, to secure its rights. . . . The whole world is acquainted, thanks to Czech propaganda, with the attempt of the Sudeten German parties which has found its place in history under the name of 'Activism', and which came to an end not long ago. . . . But this attempt, which was continued by the Germans for twelve years in spite of continued humiliations and in spite of the absence of even slight results, could not move the Czechs to come to an understanding with the Sudeten German community. . . . The Activist attempt to reach an understanding was wrecked by the unmeasured arrogance of the Czechs, by the ideology of the Czech national State, and by the anti-German mentality of the Czech parties which controlled the State. Let it be noted in the Czech camp and throughout Europe that the Sudeten German community will never repeat such an 'Activist' attempt. . . .

[*Strength of Henlein's Party*]

I, too, have repeatedly held out my hand to the Czechs with a view to comprehension and co-operation. In my readiness to collaborate in finding a radical and comprehensive solution for the increasingly intolerable national problem of this State, I have indeed gone further than my duty dictated. But instead of responsiveness and readiness, I was met on the Czech side only with scorn, derision, and contempt.

For years it was believed in the Czech party and Government camp that the movement which I lead owed its strength solely to a temporary political situation, and that one day it would disappear as rapidly as it has grown up. I believe that the recent developments in the Sudeten German camp have given to this frivolous hope an unambiguous answer and one which can no longer be ignored. To-day I can declare before the world that more than 90 per cent of the whole Sudeten German community is in my movement, and is ready to carry through to the end its fight for its rights with every means at its disposal. . . .

I should like to emphasize that I do not underestimate the difficulties which exist on the Czech side. The Czechs must first change their mentality and their political conception before they can appear qualified to collaborate with the other nationalities and national groups of the State in establishing a just settlement and thus solving the problem of Czechoslovakia. And this not only on our account, but also on that of the other nationalities. For twenty years the Czechs have also tried to establish their unconditional political ascendancy over the other nationalities of this State, and even over their brother-race, the Slovaks. . . . The suffering and distress which the economic conflict waged against us by the Czechs has caused makes the importance of the problem for peace still clearer.

For the dangerous nature of the Czechs' ruthless attempt to make themselves master of all the other nationalities in this State could not indefinitely remain unnoticed by the Powers which are interested in the peace of Europe. Above all this was true when the creation of Greater Germany and her rise in Central Europe had made clear the urgency of a solution of the problem of Czechoslovakia on broad lines. In view of the profound racial consciousness which to-day inspires the entire German people, it should surprise no one that the 75 million Germans in the Reich should feel an ever livelier sympathy with the fate of the great Sudeten German national group. To-day, however, it cannot be a matter of indifference not only for Germany, but also for Europe as a whole, whether the politically and legally oppressed Sudeten German community secures its rights or not. . . .

[*Repudiation of Minority Status*]

To-day it has become clear to everyone that the internal and external development of the State requires a radical transformation, for this problem is no longer an internal one, but a European one. This transformation must involve a complete renunciation of the idea of the Czech national State.

The development of the State during the last twenty years should have taught the Czech people that they cannot have a Czech national State, if we are to be included in it. If, however, the Czech people are anxious to have their national State in spite of all that, then only without us! If, on the other hand, the Czech people want to give up their illusions and carry out a reconstruction of the State in common with the other national groups, then they must realize absolutely and completely that the instrument of minority protection is wholly inadequate for the satisfaction of our claims. We will never be content with the status of a so-called 'minority'. We have for centuries possessed our own homeland, which we have always administered ourselves. . . . We are not a minority with minority rights. If we do not receive the same rights as the Czechs, we cannot continue to acknowledge the same duties. . . . In view of the situation which the Czechs themselves have created, we declare that the maintenance of such an unsound claim to power, so dangerous for the future of Europe, from the outset makes any attempt to find a solution of the nationality problem foredoomed to failure. To solve the nationality problem if at the same time the idea of the Czech national State and the Czech claim to hegemony over the other nationalities and the districts where they are settled is maintained, is an absolute impossibility. On this point there can be no negotiation and no compromise, but only a resolute 'No!' . . . Although in the last few weeks the Government has embarked on an attempt to draw up a so-called 'Minority Statute' in order to evade an honest and radical solution of the problem, I declare at once that this too is doomed to failure. The codification of the previously existing so-called minority provisions of a legal and administrative character in the form of a Statute can in reality mean nothing else than a re-establishment of the deprivation of rights from which we have been suffering for the last twenty years in all departments of national, political, economic, and State life, and thus the perpetuation of injustice and force. It would be senseless to waste more words on such an attempt. . . .

The Government does not even now see that it should be its task to bring about a change in public opinion in the Czech camp and to prepare it for a radical transformation of the State. It would not be so very difficult for the Government to influence Czech opinion, for I am convinced that the ordinary Czech people are at bottom peace-loving and conciliatory. I do not believe that there is hatred and conflict, but I am convinced that they must be freed from their propagandist Press. . . .

The twentieth anniversary of the existence of this State is being celebrated this year; but it must be understood that the Germans, after twenty years of oppression, cannot join in these celebrations. . . . In these twenty years the Czechs have done nothing to win us over to this State, in which we were incorporated against our will. To-day we feel less free than ever, and we know that our whole future is in jeopardy. . . .

[*'Slav Mission' of the Czechs*]

I will ask the Czechs still more questions of decisive importance. How much longer will they go on trying to maintain the dangerous view, which flies in the face of all historical development, that it is the mission of the Czech people, as Slavs, to form a Slav bulwark against the Germans? It is distressing to note that for decades the Czech people has been indoctrinated with a false view of history, and forced into adopting a historic mission which it can never fulfil. . . . Every unprejudiced and sober-minded Czech must admit that the advanced development of the Czech people in economic matters, organization, and culture would be inconceivable without the close contact which has existed for centuries with the German people. If the Czechs proudly call themselves the most progressive and advanced of the Slav peoples, they owe this primarily to their near neighbourhood with the Germans and their innumerable connexions with them. Never, at no time, and in no way has the Czech people had such close intellectual, cultural, and economic ties with any Slav people as it has had with the German people. Let them ask themselves whether they have had more living and more fruitful relations with the Poles, Russians, and Yugoslavs than with the Germans.

[*Demands concerning Czechoslovak Foreign Policy*]

If Czech statesmen seriously desire to enter into a friendly and neighbourly relation with the German people, the following things are unavoidably necessary:

1. A revision of the erroneous Czech historical myth;
2. A revision of the unfortunate error that it was the task of the Czech nation to form a Slav bulwark against the so-called German *Drang nach Osten*;
3. A revision of that international outlook which has hitherto always placed the State in the ranks of the enemies of the German people.

. . . Whether there are at present men among the Czech people who have the courage and authority to lead it on the right path is a question which the Czech people itself will have to answer. But in answering that question the Czech people must realize that the readjustment of its relations with the Greater German Reich is not possible without a simultaneous readjustment of its relation to our national group. . . .

[*Demands concerning treatment of Sudeten Germans*]

The Czech people has had twenty years in which to regulate internal conditions to the satisfaction of all the nationalities. At the end of these twenty years it must be said that in three respects its statesmen have failed to fulfil what might have been expected of them:

1. They have not kept the promises voluntarily made in their memoranda to the Peace Conference;

2. They have not fulfilled their obligations under the Treaty of St Germain;

3. They have not carried out the obligations laid down by the Constitution.

In place of the equality of all citizens they have put the inequality of all the nationalities. In place of equality of civil and political rights they have granted less rights to the non-Czech peoples. In place of free development for all nationalities they have put national, political, and cultural oppression of the non-Czech peoples. Instead of true democracy they have established the dictatorship of the Czech majority, bureaucracy, and police. . . .

We Germans shall feel ourselves oppressed so long as we may not do the same as the Czechs. Everything which is allowed to the Czechs must also be allowed to us. In a word—we want to live as free men among free men.

[*The Eight Points*]

If there is to be peaceful development in the Czechoslovak State, . . . it is necessary that the following constitutional and legal order should be established:

1. Establishment of full equality of rights and of status between the German national group and the Czech people in the State.

2. Recognition of the Sudeten German national group as a legal personality in guarantee of this equality of status in the State.

3. Determination and recognition of the German-inhabited territory.

4. Setting up of a German autonomous administration in the German-inhabited territory for all departments of public life in so far as the interests and affairs of the German national group are concerned.

5. Enactment of legal measures for the protection of those citizens of the State who live outside the defined limits of the territory inhabited by their nationality.

6. Removal of injustices inflicted upon Sudeten Germans since 1918 and reparation of the damage suffered owing to these injustices.

7. Recognition and application of the principle: German public officials in the German territory.

8. Full freedom to profess German nationality and the German political philosophy (*Weltanschauung*).

In view of recent internal and external political developments and the consequent increase in the power and prestige of the Sudeten German cause, I should have been entitled to increase my demands. I do not do so, because I want to prove to the whole world that the Sudeten Germans are willing, despite bitter experience, to make a genuine, serious contribution towards preserving and strengthening the foundations of peace by moderating their demands. It now rests with the heads of the State and the Czech people to produce an equally earnest proof and to talk rather less but do rather more about peace. . . . It would be an error for Czech policy to rely

solely upon its alliances with France and Russia without itself making a decisive contribution to securing the peace of Europe. . . .

[*Profession of National Socialist Faith*]

I must describe it as an aberration of the worst kind that the ruling parties carried ideological terrorism to the point of making use of the organization of the State in order to remove parties which had other ideas than theirs, thus equating party interests with the interests of the State. Thus, in 1933, the German National-Socialist Labour Party of Czechoslovakia was dissolved and the German National Party put in its stead. . . . The reasons which were given for the attack on the German National-Socialist Labour Party of Czechoslovakia leave no room for doubt that nervousness had been aroused by the development which led to the spiritual and intellectual renaissance of the German people through National-Socialism. Since then, however, everyone has had to admit that German National-Socialism is a political philosophy which has not only led the German Reich to renewed strength, but has also penetrated and organized the whole life of the German nation. It could and can do this only because it corresponds to the nature of the Germans. In it the German finds his conception of life and of morality realized after years of vain longing. Apart from the question of frontiers, the Sudeten German community, as a part of the German people, with which it has always been and is now indissolubly united, could not and would not stand aloof from a philosophy which all Germans in the world to-day delight to profess. We in particular, as a German community fighting for its jeopardized existence, can subscribe only to a political philosophy whose highest law is that of the community. This is a matter of conscience, and freedom of conscience is guaranteed to all citizens by the Constitution. We claim that freedom, without thereby setting ourselves in opposition to the fundamental laws of the State. . . . Like Germans throughout the world, we profess the National-Socialist fundamental conceptions of life, which correspond to our whole way of feeling and thinking, and in accordance with which we desire to shape the life of our national group within the framework of the law. . . . Czech ideological terrorists will hate us and wish to persecute us on account of this open profession of German National-Socialist views. But true democrats on the Czech national side will understand and respect our confession. . . . It will depend on the insight and the will of the Government and of the Czech people whether, on the twentieth anniversary of the foundation of the State, the present intolerable conditions are still to exist for us Germans, or whether the Czech contribution to European peace will be made. We do not want war, either at home or abroad, but we can no longer tolerate a situation which for us means war in peace. . . .

(viii) *Statement by M. Krofta, Czechoslovak Foreign Minister, April 25, 1938.*[1]

C'est avec joie que nous saluons la conclusion de l'accord anglo-italien et la reprise des négociations entre Paris et Rome. A maintes reprises, j'ai exprimé à nos amis français notre désir de voir se réaliser ce rapprochement. En ce qui concerne la Tchécoslovaquie, nous n'avons jamais eu aucun froissement direct avec l'Italie, et si nous n'avons pas procédé plus tôt à la reconnaissance de l'Empire, c'est que nous ne voulions pas avoir l'air de devancer la France et l'Angleterre. Nous avons donc attendu qu'elles aient elles-mêmes renoué la négociation avec Rome. La décision que nous venons de prendre dans ce sens, nous l'avons d'ailleurs prise en plein accord avec Paris, car l'amitié française et la collaboration avec la France restent, plus que jamais, le principe fondamental de notre politique étrangère.

La détente des derniers jours ouvre de nouvelles perspectives à une co-operation pacifique entre l'Italie et les États danubiens. Il ne s'agit pas de faire une politique anti-allemande à laquelle ni le gouvernement de Rome ni nous-mêmes nous ne nous prêterions. Notre but, au contraire—et bien que la réalisation en soit devenue plus difficile du fait de l'Anschluss—est d'arriver avec le Reich à une collaboration constructive, impliquant l'active participation de l'Italie, de la Petite-Entente, de la Hongrie, de la France et de l'Angleterre. Il est clair, par exemple, que cette dernière pourrait jouer un rôle très utile en intensifiant ses échanges économiques avec la région danubienne.

Quant à nos relations actuelles avec le Reich, je tiens à relever qu'elles sont absolument normales, que les affaires courantes sont réglées à la satisfaction des deux parties par la voie diplomatique ordinaire, que le gouvernement de Berlin ne s'est jamais immiscé directement dans nos affaires d'ordre intérieur et observe sur ce point une attitude tout à fait correct. Pour le moment, il n'y a pas de négociations en cours visant la conclusion d'un pacte quelconque ou d'un accord plus général.

En dépit des exigences élevées par la Pologne, en relation avec les développements de la politique allemande, nous faisons également tout notre possible pour arriver à une amélioration de nos rapports avec ce pays. Quant à la Petite-Entente, qui est aussi touchée par les récents événements, nous avons la conviction qu'elle reste une nécessité de la politique européenne. En ce qui concerne enfin la Société des nations, bien qu'elle soit affaiblie, nous lui resterons fidèles. Ces rencontres périodiques entre personnalités responsables du maintien de la paix sont, en effet, plus indispensables que jamais et, tout comme la France, nous estimons qu'il faut sauvegarder à tout prix le principe du règlement pacifique des différends internationaux tel qu'il a été proclamé à Genève.

[1] At Prague, in an interview given to a representative of *Le Petit Parisien*. *Le Petit Parisien*, April 26, 1938.

(ix) *Communiqué issued by the Czechoslovak Government on the Visits of the British and French Ministers in Prague, May 7, 1938.*[1]

M. Kamil Krofta, ministre des affaires étrangères, a reçu, cet après-midi, M. B. C. Newton, ministre de Grande-Bretagne, qui l'a assuré de l'intérêt amical du gouvernement britannique et de son désir d'aider le gouvernement tchécoslovaque dans ses efforts pour résoudre la question allemande en Tchécoslovaquie, en satisfaisant les revendications raisonnables de la population allemande, conformément à la déclaration faite par M. Neville Chamberlain, premier ministre, le 24 mars.

Une intervention analogue a été faite auprès de M. Krofta par M. de Lacroix, ministre de France, qui a recommandé, au nom de son gouvernement, une solution de la question allemande en Tchécoslovaquie compatible avec l'intégrité de l'État.

Les deux ministres ont exprimé l'espoir de leurs gouvernements de voir l'État tchécoslovaque aller, en réglant cette question dans le cadre indiqué, jusqu'aux dernières limites de ses possibilités.

(x) *Statement by M. Kalinin, President of the Supreme Council of the Soviet Union, May 11, 1938.*[2]

The Soviet Union has invariably fulfilled all its treaties concluded with other States in all their consequences, and will do so in this case also. It will, if called upon, fulfil to the last letter all its obligations to Czechoslovakia and France. The Soviet Union possesses ores, iron, petrol, foodstuffs, cotton; everything, in fact, that is necessary for the conduct of any war whatsoever. France does not possess all these things in the same quantities. If the pact of friendship between the Soviet Union, France, and Czechoslovakia were as firmly established as we could wish, it would also influence England to follow a different course in her policy, and the pact would have greater international significance and weight.

(xi) *Extracts from Statement by Dr. Hodža, Prime Minister of the Czechoslovak Republic, May 20, 1938.*[3]

[*Negotiations with National Minorities*]

During the visit of the French Foreign Minister, M. Delbos, I said that our State has a special mission because in it different nationalisms, and in particular German and Czech nationalism, are in contact and in conflict with one another. Czechoslovakia has to choose between the possibility of a clash between these opposing elements and the possibility of such a settlement of the nationalities problem in our State as would automatically bring

[1] *Le Temps*, May 9, 1938.
[2] In Moscow, in reply to M. Skaunic, Czech Labour Delegate to the Russian May Day celebrations. *Die Zeit*, May 12, 1938. Translation.
[3] To the editors of the Coalition newspapers. *Prager Presse*, May 21, 1938. Translation.

about an institutional, permanent, and agreed solution of this great Central European and indeed European problem. It goes without saying that we have long since taken our stand upon the organization of peace and justice in the State. Our solution must be fundamental and integral—no half-measures. As I have already said on other occasions, the ultimate settlement of the nationalities question in Czechoslovakia will be based on two principles which are inherent in our democracy: self-administration and proportionality. The principle of proportionality . . . means justice in so far as this can be supported by any mechanism. . . .

The Government stands firmly by its declarations of March 4 and 28,[1] which were endorsed by public opinion. This means defence if it should be necessary, but it also means due consideration for what is demanded by our Constitution on the one hand and the present situation on the other.

Our people have never lived under idyllic conditions. The only period in their history which could be called idyllic would be the first fifteen years of our Republic after the revolution. But that idyll, as we know, is ended, and we are back in a period of struggle. This means that our people must hold themselves in constant readiness for the struggles ahead. . . . We shall stand firm in all circumstances; we must exert our utmost efforts and be able, as we have in the past, to hold our own in technical and intellectual achievement. We are a capable and industrious nation. Our industry, our labour, our agriculture are good, and we are good sportsmen, which is perhaps symbolical. . . .

Allies and alliances are a guarantee, but that is not the whole story. If we, in this section of Europe, can fulfil our mission by organizing these nationalities and national groups of which our State is composed, we shall be indispensable, because we shall represent a general European interest. If, however, we should prove incapable of maintaining order and discipline here, and of organizing our population of fifteen million people, while securing for them the maximum of contentment, then the authority of our State would be shaken. We have to meet severe competition in economic, technical, and cultural matters, and we must not succumb to foreign ideologies. We intend to fulfil our mission and to be a State organization embracing not only Czechs and Slovaks, but all those who for historical and geopolitical reasons are grouped round us.

No State and no Government has ever been situated as we are. We find ourselves in close proximity to an elemental process unique in world history: the nationalism of a people of seventy-five millions has reached its zenith and has entered on a phase in which it is passing from its rationalist origins into the emotional sphere. This stupendous historical process is not to be administered out of existence.

The Czechoslovak Government is thus confronted with the most responsible of all its tasks. Its way of dealing with it will be to formulate itself the principles and methods of national justice, but at the same time to set

[1] See pp. 113–17 and 123–26.

its face ruthlessly against any attempt at terrorization, oppression, and subversion, from whatever quarter it may come, and to uphold the authority of the State. For that reason there will be no conflagration on Czechoslovak soil, and for that reason any provocation and any mob violence will be punished according to law.

We stand on the threshold of the negotiations with our German and all our other minorities, and they have been prepared for by informative preliminary conversations. Our methods will be very thorough. The Government has prepared an integral solution which strikes deep into the whole structure of our State administration—our local government system, the management of our cultural institutions, and so on—for it is firmly determined to carry out its domestic and European obligations.

[*The Sudeten Germans*]

The negotiations with the Sudeten German Party signify a gradual transfer of responsibility to that Party, a responsibility of which it is fully conscious. If rights are emphasized, it must be remembered that rights are always counterbalanced by duties. If I demand that a particular form of State should give me, in its institutions, a guarantee of particular rights, then I at the same time assume the obligation to do my part in the fulfilment of that State's mission. That is a foregone conclusion and the only permanent solution of the problem. It means consolidation, and untroubled future development and work.

[*The Slovaks*]

. . . I regard it as a self-evident duty to respond to this expression of good-will by fulfilling the inner content of this agreement.[1] The basic measure taken in this direction was the establishment of an autonomous provincial administration in 1927; this is now, according to the Government proposals, to be extended and supplemented by the creation of a provincial education board. . . . In the Pittsburgh Agreement, a Slovak provincial assembly is demanded. This does not, however, mean a demand for dualism in the organization of the State and a separate Slovak legislature. If those who participated in the Pittsburgh negotiations . . . had wanted to provide for a dual organization of the State they would, as American citizens, certainly have known how to formulate such a demand and express it without ambiguity. But they did not speak of United Czechoslovak States, but of a common Czechoslovak State, and therefore no one is entitled to attribute to them the object of creating any kind of dualism. I believe that they intended to refer to the kind of local autonomous administration which the English call local government, which does not mean the division of the whole body of the State into two. The proof of this is their unambiguous declaration concerning a common Czechoslovak State. . . .

In many ways the Republic now accords the Slovaks considerably more

[1] The Pittsburgh Agreement of June 30, 1918.

than the Pittsburgh Agreement provided for. Our attitude to the Pittsburgh Agreement can therefore *a priori* not be one of rejection. Moreover, the authors of the agreement themselves wisely added that details would be settled by the legal representatives of the Czechs and the Slovaks. Therefore no mobilization against the agreement is necessary. All must unite in a spirit of good-will in finding a final solution for the Slovak problem. . . .

(xii) *Extracts from Speech by Dr. Beneš, President of the Czechoslovak Republic, May 21, 1938.*[1]

[*External Affairs*]

. . . These are anxious moments for our State—the most serious we have known since the World War. We must therefore see to it that we so conduct ourselves to-day as to avoid all the errors of the past. This means calmness, strong nerves, a clear aim, and unbroken contact both with the developments close around us and those in Central Europe and Europe generally. It means that we must not let there be discord and disunity among us, but that we must hold together and build up our sovereignty and national unity to the utmost extent possible. . . . It means, finally, that we must have no fear of the days before us but be prepared for good or evil as it comes.

. . . If our State has passed through more anxious moments in recent years than in the past, the cause must be sought in the general European situation, the changes in Western Europe and the German Reich, the revolutionary events in certain parts of Europe, the differences between the Great Powers on the African and Mediterranean question, and certain events which concern us directly such as the Austro-German *Anschluss*. You are aware that there has been talk for two years past of the possibility of another European war. I have often, in the last two years, expressed the hope that it will be possible to avoid a new war, and trust that we shall avoid it. To-day I reiterate this hope. . . . An important change has occurred in Central Europe in the matter of Austria, which has undoubtedly shaken Europe, but at the same time a permanent Franco-British agreement has been reached which may certainly be regarded as a stabilizing element in Europe. The recently concluded Anglo-Italian Agreement, and the negotiations for a Franco-Italian *rapprochement*, may, I hope, despite the difficulties which have arisen during the last few days, lead to at least some relief of tension in the conflict over Spain between the three Great Powers in the West. . . . The recent negotiations between the Heads of the Italian and German Governments in Rome must also be regarded as a stage reached in the equalization of the balance of power in Europe which will lead ultimately to a certain stabilization of conditions.

Further developments in Europe may therefore be watched with some degree of hope. I would underline this particularly in the case of Czechoslovakia, even though we, like the rest of Europe, are busily strengthening our

[1] At Tabor. *Prager Presse*, May 22, 1938. Translation.

defences, are determined to defend our State to the last extremity, and are convinced that our defence will be successful.

[*Nationalities Policy*]

Against this we have to set certain internal difficulties in connexion with external affairs. The Austrian *Anschluss* has caused some excitement among our Czech and German populations—as is only natural in view of our geographical position and the great interests at stake for our own State. This excitement still exists to some extent and is only slowly dying down. Some agitation has also been caused in the last few months by the internal political developments among our Germans, namely, the secession from the Government of the two Activist parties, their union with the Sudeten German party and, recently, the attempts made by that party to force acceptance of their demands. As President of this State I look upon these things, not from the standpoint of this or that party or nationality, but from that of the State as a whole. That our State was and is one of the most liberal-minded in Europe as regards national affairs is borne out by a comparison of its nationalities policy with that of the great majority of European States. This is why Czechoslovaks feel that attacks from inside or outside the country on our nationalities policy are unjust. . . .

We are a highly-developed State; our nationalities are politically and economically mature; and we have powerful and important neighbours. Our Government and our political parties take all these things into account quite realistically and reasonably. . . . We shall consider the future organic development of our nationalities policy quite realistically in the present somewhat changed circumstances. At the same time we must every one of us understand that we cannot sacrifice the general interests of the State in so doing.

The Government is preparing some very important legislative measures which will improve Czechoslovakia's present nationalities system and confirm the equal treatment and the existing political and moral equality of all the citizens and nationalities of the State. Their rightful political, economic, and cultural status will be guaranteed in accordance with their numbers, strength, and percentage of the total population, and this will guarantee that they can maintain and fully develop their nationality in all circumstances, and feel themselves to be equals among equals, who are at home in this State and live in it fully as their home.

The Government will give concrete expression to these principles in the form of proposals which will be discussed, it is hoped, within the next few days with the representatives of all the parties and nationalities concerned. It will then, after hearing their views and weighing the conclusions to be drawn from the exchange of views, lay the whole question before Parliament for discussion to be dealt with according to the normal procedure. This undertaking by the Government is in keeping with our democratic policy and the spirit of our Constitution. . . We are quite certain that we shall carry it to a successful conclusion. . . .

I know that doubts exist in certain radical Czech circles as to whether these measures are justifiable and right from the State point of view. I know, too, that there are radicals on the other side; I am quite aware of both; but as President of the Republic I call upon both sides alike to display calmness, moderation, mutual understanding, and forbearance. Policy, in a democracy, cannot be dictated by one party to another. It can only be arrived at by agreement, compromise, and mutual concessions. It is the Government's task to synthetize the different standpoints and act upon whatever is practicable and well-matured. . . .

The question has been asked—now out of curiosity, now out of apprehension—what form the future internal development of the State will take. For the moment, in order not to be premature, I will confine my reply to two points only: nothing, nothing whatever, can shake or jeopardize our democratic régime, and nothing, nothing whatever, can weaken the permanent co-operation of the present Coalition parties in the Government. These are, in a word, the two factors essential to the survival of our State.

In the last few weeks there have been quite a number of cases of unrest and the undermining of the authority of political authorities and the police, with some instances also of political, party, or national pressure. All this has aroused agitation and tension among the public. As I have said, external affairs have had much to do with this. Our State and our officials have deliberately shown reserve and maintained discipline. . . . But, as the Government rightly pointed out last week, this must not be regarded as weakness on their part. Such things can no longer be permitted. It is time to return to normal life and to restore peace so that the people as a whole may go peaceably about its work again. I am aware that excitement over the elections contributes to this agitation and on that very account I appeal to all men of good-will in this State . . . to practise moderation in the election campaign and never to go beyond certain limits. Our State has been an orderly and peaceful one for twenty years, and we must show Europe that we can remain so in all circumstances.

A democratic régime cannot maintain itself through propaganda. That is contrary to its nature. But it must not underestimate what other régimes can do, nor must it forget that it will not win its battle unless it sees these dangers and can combat them successfully. I believe in our democracy. I know that it can combat these dangers. Did it not overcome them twenty years ago? We must, however, give it stronger support. Our political parties and their leaders, our bureaucracy, and our democratic institutions must spur on their forces to work at still greater speed, with still greater efficiency, and to still greater effect. . . .

(xiii) *Statement by the Rt. Hon. Neville Chamberlain, May 23, 1938.*[1]

[*German-Czech Situation*]

I propose to give first a very brief summary of events of the past few days that have tended to show that the situation in regard to the German minority in Czechoslovakia might be entering on a dangerous phase and then to indicate the action taken by His Majesty's Government.

On May 19 rumours began to gain currency of German troop movements in the direction of the Czechoslovak frontier. The German Government informed His Majesty's Ambassador on the following day that there was no foundation for these rumours, and they gave a similar assurance to the Czechoslovak Government.

On May 20 a number of serious incidents occurred in Czechoslovakia.

On the morning of May 21 the Czechoslovak Government intimated that they were calling up one class for training and for the purpose of maintaining order in the frontier areas. On the same day, an unfortunate incident took place in which two Sudeten Germans lost their lives in an incident near the frontier, the full facts of which are not yet entirely clear. The Czechoslovak Minister for Foreign Affairs informed the German Minister of this incident and told him that disciplinary measures would be taken against those responsible.

On the same day—May 21—His Majesty's Ambassador in Berlin received further assurances from the German Government that stories of German troop movements were completely unfounded.

The Czechoslovak Minister for Foreign Affairs informed His Majesty's Minister in Prague on May 21 that a formal invitation had been sent to Herr Henlein to negotiate on the Nationality Statute, which had been approved on the 19th by the Czechoslovak Government. But on that same day—May 21—it was announced in the Sudeten Press that the Political Committee of the Sudeten German Party had decided to inform the Prime Minister that the party were not in a position to discuss the Nationality Statute so long as peace and order in the Sudeten districts, and, above all, the constitutional rights of freedom of opinion, of the Press and of assembly, were not guaranteed. I now learn, however, that it has been arranged for Herr Henlein to see the Czechoslovak Prime Minister either to-night or to-morrow morning.

In face of this situation, the principal concern of His Majesty's Government has been to use all their influence, wherever it could be effective, on the side of restraint in word and deed, while keeping open the way to peaceful negotiation of a satisfactory settlement.

With that object, they have represented to the Czechoslovak Government the need of taking every precaution for avoidance of incidents and of making every possible effort to reach a comprehensive and lasting settlement by

[1] In the House of Commons. *Hansard*, May 23, 1938, cols. 824–5.

negotiation with the representatives of the Sudeten Party. In this, His Majesty's Government have enjoyed the full co-operation of the French Government.

The Czechoslovak Government have responded to this representation with an assurance that they appreciate the interest which His Majesty's Government have manifested in this question and are fully resolved to seek an early and complete solution.

His Majesty's Government have represented to the German Government the urgent importance of reaching a settlement if European peace is to be preserved, and have expressed their earnest desire that the German Government would co-operate with them in facilitating agreement. His Majesty's Government have at the same time informed the German Government of the advice tendered in Prague and of the assurances received from the Czechoslovak Government.

The German Minister for Foreign Affairs stated that he welcomed the efforts being made by His Majesty's Government and that the German Government fully shared their desire to see negotiations succeed.

At the moment the situation appears to have somewhat eased, and I understand that the elections passed off quietly yesterday without untoward incident.

2. The Negotiations during the Summer

The negotiations between the Czechoslovak Government and the Sudeten German Party which were carried on during the summer were long and difficult. The gap between the parties was a wide one. The Sudeten Germans were not prepared to accept anything short of the Karlsbad programme; the Government, in making its offers, had to consider not only what degree of concession they thought could be made without disrupting the State, but also what the general public opinion of the country could be induced to accept. The critics of the Government have accused them of dilatory tactics; on the other hand, there is much evidence that though many elements among the Sudeten Germans desired to secure autonomy within the Czechoslovak State, their leaders were acting on instructions from Herr Hitler which made an agreed solution impossible. In any case, Lord Runciman, in his report, expressed his belief that the extremists among the Sudeten Germans did not desire such a solution.[1] It may be noted in this connexion that Herr Hitler definitely stated at Znaim on October 26,[2] and subsequently on January 30, 1939,[3] that he had decided on May 28 to take military action against Czechoslovakia by October 2.

The chief preoccupation of the Governments of Great Britain and France—if the matter is regarded purely from the angle of international politics, leaving aside the views which might be held on the rights and wrongs of the Sudeten German question in itself—was to prevent circumstances arising which would involve an act of armed aggression by Germany on Czechoslovakia and thus bring into operation the Franco-Czechoslovak and consequently the Soviet-Czechoslovak Treaty, with the result that there would have been a general war in which Great Britain would certainly have been involved.[4]

The first step taken by Great Britain, apart from the representations which

[1] See p. 219. [2] See p. 19. [3] See Baynes, *op. cit.* Vol. II, pp. 1570–72.
[4] See statements by Mr. Chamberlain and M. Daladier, pp. 279, 281, 307, and 310.

were made to the Czechoslovak Government, and also to the German Government, at various times,[1] was the sending of British observers to investigate alleged incidents on the German-Czechoslovak frontier. The possibility of this was first mentioned in the British Press on May 26, and on the same day Mr. Noel Baker asked in the House of Commons whether the Government would consider sending an impartial commission for this purpose; the reply was that the suggestion would be borne in mind.[2] The idea was favourably received in Czechoslovakia, and the observers, headed by Major Sutton-Pratt, entered on their duties just before the last series of local government elections held on June 12.

In the meantime the negotiations had begun. Herr Henlein had an interview with Dr. Hodža on May 23; after this, however, he took no further personal part in the negotiations, which were conducted on the Sudeten German side by a delegation headed by Herr Kundt. Progress was slow, and on June 7, as the Government had not yet produced its draft Nationalities Statute, the Sudeten German Party submitted a detailed scheme of their own,[3] which, by agreement, was not made public; and on June 15 it was agreed that both this memorandum and the draft Nationalities Statute should be taken as a basis for discussion.[4]

The Sudeten German memorandum was a document of great complexity, and in some respects its implications were by no means clear. It was based on the Karlsbad programme, and consisted of fourteen points, ranging from general theoretical considerations to administrative details. It demanded constitutional recognition of equality of rights not only between individuals, but between national groups (point I); in point of fact it made provision only for equality of rights between nationalities, with no safeguards for individual rights. The State was to be reorganized in new divisions based on nationality (point III), enclaves being made into separate administrative units; at the same time the national group, which was to possess legal personality, would include all members of the nationality living in any part of the State (point II). The matters to be handed over to the separate national administrations (point IV) were very far-reaching, including not only such matters as education, culture, and land questions, but police and social legislation and insurance. Under Point V, the State Assembly would be reorganized, and would have *curiae*, or groups representing the corporate interests of the various nationalities. Point VI was a difficult one for the Government to accept, since it provided that the Presidents of the different national administrations would be *ex officio* members of the Government, and would not be dependent on the confidence of the State Assembly. The administrative organization (point VII) and the rules regarding officials (point VIII) were ingeniously devised but so complicated that it is hard to see how they could have been applied without paralysing the work of government. The language question was dealt with in Point X. Point XII laid down rules for public finance which again appear likely to cause great difficulty in practical working. The last point stated that compensation was to be provided for all injuries suffered by the German national group.

It was announced on June 18[5] that the Government's proposals were expected to be ready for submission to Parliament in June. On June 23[6] the first conference took place between the Political Committee of the Cabinet (a sort of inner Cabinet) and the Sudeten German delegation. Although the proposals of neither side had yet been made public, it was clear from the statements made in the Press that there was a wide divergence between them. President Beneš nevertheless expressed confidence on June 30 that the problem would soon be solved satisfactorily; the Government were prepared to go to the extreme limit of possible

[1] See statements by Mr. Chamberlain and Lord Halifax, pp. 145–6, 167, 169, 275–78.
[2] See p. 151. [3] See pp. 151–62. [4] See p. 162. [5] See pp. 162–63. [6] See p. 164.

concessions.[1] On July 16 it was announced[2] that the Government would hold a few more meetings with the Sudeten German delegation before initiating parliamentary procedure.

Relations with Germany continued to cause anxiety. On June 21 Dr. Goebbels,[3] in a reply to an interrupter which did not appear in the printed version of his speech, made a threatening reference to Czechoslovakia. About the middle of the month the German Press published rumours of Czechoslovak troop movements near the frontier, and said that Czechoslovakia was mobilizing again as it had on May 21. The rumours were categorically denied,[4] and the British observers, who visited the district in question on July 20, found nothing abnormal.

On July 18 Captain Wiedemann arrived in London with a private message from Herr Hitler to the British Government which was officially stated to express the desire for a settlement of outstanding questions. It very probably made reference to Czechoslovakia, but in what terms has not been made public. The question was also presumably discussed by the British and French Ministers during the Royal visit to Paris which followed immediately afterwards; but the *communiqué* on their meeting issued on July 20[5] said nothing except that complete harmony of views had been maintained. Not long after, it became known that there was a proposal to send a mission to Czechoslovakia; Lord Runciman's name was first mentioned in a report from Paris published in the *News Chronicle* on July 25. Exactly when and in what quarter the suggestion was first made does not appear from the documents at present available. The formal announcement of the mission was made in Parliament by Mr. Chamberlain on July 26[6] and by Lord Halifax on July 27.[7] It was stated that Lord Runciman was to go to Czechoslovakia as an investigator and mediator, and that he would be independent of the Government. The statement that he was sent at the request of the Czechoslovak Government was presumably a diplomatic fiction intended to avoid the appearance of foreign interference in Czechoslovak internal affairs. Actually the proposal appears to have been accepted with reluctance; the Czechoslovak Press Bureau stated as late as July 25 that the proposal was under consideration, but that no decision had as yet been taken. Lord Halifax was, however, able to say that it had been favourably received by the Sudeten German Party.

By July 27 the Czechoslovak Government had completed the draft of the first two of the three Bills which were to constitute the Nationalities Statute, i.e. the Nationalities and Language Bills; the first part of the third, the Administrative Reform Bill, was handed to the Sudeten German delegation on the following day. What purported to be the text of the first two was published by certain newspapers, but the Czechoslovak Government stated on July 29[8] that this text was neither accurate nor complete, and that the terms of the Bills had not been finally fixed. In point of fact the course of events was such that they never assumed final form, and no authoritative text was ever published.

In view of the uncertainty of the position and in particular how the negotiations would be affected by the arrival of Lord Runciman's mission, Herr Kundt on July 30 asked Dr. Hodža five questions,[9] to which a reply was given, dated July 31, and received by the Sudeten German representatives on August 3.[10] Dr. Hodža intimated that the negotiations would continue on their existing basis; but in fact both parties agreed on the same day to suspend them for the moment.

Herr Henlein spoke at the German Gymnastic Festival at Breslau on July 29,[11] and said that Germans living abroad took the fulfilment of their duties to the State in which they lived seriously, but at the same time remained 'German national citizens serving voluntarily under the laws of the German nation'.

[1] See p. 164. [2] See pp. 165–66. [3] See p. 163. [4] See p. 164–65.
[5] See *Documents* for 1938, Vol. I, p. 71. [6] See pp. 166–68. [7] See pp. 169–71.
[8] See pp. 171–72. [9] See pp. 173–74. [10] See pp. 174–75. [11] See pp. 172–73.

Lord Runciman, accompanied by his assistants, reached Prague on August 3 and made a brief statement to the Press.[1] The mission set to work at once, studied an enormous mass of documentary material supplied by the various elements concerned, and interviewed representative personalities. They were constantly in touch with the Czechoslovak Government and with the negotiating committee of the Sudeten German Party, but did not meet Herr Henlein himself until August 18.

On August 17, negotiations between the Government and the Sudeten German delegation were suspended because the gap between their respective proposals appeared too wide.[2] Lord Runciman's mission did not relax its efforts to mediate, and the Czechoslovak Government set to work on new proposals which would approach more nearly to the Sudeten German demands. The new offer was known as the Third Plan; its details were never published as it became obsolete before it received final form and was replaced by the Fourth Plan. Dr. Hodža, in an interview given on August 21,[3] gave the public to understand that far-reaching concessions were contemplated.

In the meantime, anxiety had been aroused by the extensive military preparations which were being made in Germany. Mr. Chamberlain, in his speech of September 28,[4] gave an account of these and of the representations made both to the German and to the Czechoslovak Governments. He also mentioned that the French Government took certain measures because of German troop movements near their frontier. Another disquieting feature was the extensive smuggling of arms into the Sudeten German districts from Germany.[5] At the Sixth Rally of Germans from Abroad held at Stuttgart at the end of the month, Herr Hess[6] accused the Czechoslovak Government of oppressing the Sudeten Germans and expressed Germany's sympathy for them. In view of the tense situation and the fact that Parliament was not in session, it was thought desirable to re-state the attitude of Great Britain; accordingly, Sir John Simon, speaking at Lanark on August 27,[7] reaffirmed Mr. Chamberlain's statement of March 24.[8] For France, M. Bonnet, speaking at Pointe de Grave on September 4,[9] briefly reaffirmed the intention of his country to remain faithful to her treaty obligations.

On September 2 Herr Henlein, at the suggestion of Lord Runciman, paid a visit to Herr Hitler[10] to explain the stage reached in the negotiations and to hear his views about the possibility of continuing them on the basis of the offers which had been made. The *communiqué*[11] issued after the meeting merely stated that 'complete unanimity was reached in reviewing the situation'.

According to Mr. Chamberlain's statement,[12] it was in response to the representations made by the British Minister at Prague and by Lord Runciman concerning the importance of reaching a settlement before Herr Hitler made his speech at the Nazi Party Congress at Nuremberg that President Beneš put forward new proposals, which were placed in the hands of the Sudeten German delegation on September 6. The document known as the 'Fourth Plan'[13] represented the Czechoslovak Government's final offer to the Sudeten German Party. This plan, which has not been published before in its entirety, though a summary of it appeared in the *Prager Presse* of September 10, 1938, was communicated to the Royal Institute of International Affairs by the Czechoslovak Government in London, in 1942, together with a commentary explaining that it was drafted at the instance of the French and British diplomatic representatives, that it was intended to meet as completely as possible Herr Henlein's Eight Karlsbad Points,[14] that in the

[1] See pp. 174–75. [2] See Lord Runciman's Report, p. 219. [3] See pp. 175–77.
[4] See pp. 273–88. [5] See Alexander Henderson, *op. cit.*, pp. 102–3. [6] See p. 15.
[7] See *Documents* for 1938, Vol. I, pp. 89–91. [8] See pp. 121–22. [9] See pp. 177–78.
[10] See Mr. Chamberlain's speech of September 28, p. 274. [11] See p. 177.
[12] See pp. 276–77. [13] See pp. 178–84. [14] See p. 136.

Czechoslovak Government's own view the application of the Karlsbad Points would mean the creation of a totalitarian State within the State, and that it was not expected that Herr Henlein's party would accept the offer. This view was not shared by Lord Runciman, who said in his Report[1] that in his view the plan embodied almost all the requirements of the Karlsbad Points, and with a little clarification and extension could have been made to cover them in their entirety. 'Negotiations,' he added, 'should have at once been resumed on this favourable and hopeful basis.'

A leading article which appeared in the *Times* on September 7 contained a passage which, for the first time, publicly suggested the cession of the Sudeten German districts to Germany.[2] The British Government immediately stated that the article did not represent their views; but this could not entirely efface the effect produced on public opinion abroad.

The Sudeten German delegates submitted the plan to their party; according to information supplied by the Czechoslovak Government in London one member exclaimed in consternation, 'Good heavens, he has given us everything!' On September 7 there was an incident at Moravská Ostrava, in which a Sudeten German deputy, Dr. May, was struck by a Czech policeman. According to the German version the policeman knew that Dr. May was a member of Parliament; according to the Czech account the blow was given unintentionally and in ignorance of this fact by a policeman who was trying to separate Dr. May from a Czech with whom he was engaged in a scuffle. The Sudeten German delegation at once stated that in the circumstances the negotiations could not proceed. Major Sutton-Pratt investigated the incident and found that its importance had been greatly exaggerated,[3] and Lord Runciman stated in his Report that he believed it was used to provide an excuse for the suspension if not the breaking off of negotiations.[4] The Government met the demands of the Sudeten Germans for the suspension and trial of the police officers against whom complaints were made, and Dr. Kundt agreed to the resumption of negotiations on September 13.

The Congress of the National Socialist Party, at which Herr Hitler was expected to reveal his intentions, opened at Nuremberg on September 5. On September 10[5] Field-Marshal Goering made a violent attack on Czechoslovakia, and referred to its people as 'absurd pygmies' behind whom stood Moscow. Dr. Goebbels, on the same day, said that Prague was 'the organizing centre of Bolshevist plots against Europe'.[6] There was a striking difference between the tone of these speeches and that of the broadcast given by President Beneš, also on September 10,[7] in which he described his efforts to arrive at a peaceful solution of the nationalities question and appealed to all parties for calm, discipline, and a conciliatory spirit.

Herr Hitler made his speech on September 12.[8] He alleged, in terms of great violence, that the Czechs were outraging and torturing the Sudeten Germans, and that if the latter could not obtain justice and help for themselves, they would get both from the Reich. He also expressed his anger at the crisis of May 21, and described the military measures which he had taken in consequence on May 28. He did not, however, explicitly state what his intentions were, but said that it was the business of the Czechoslovak Government to discuss matters with the

[1] See p. 219.

[2] '. . . if the Sudetens now ask for more than the Czech Government are apparently ready to give in their latest set of proposals, it can only be inferred that the Germans are going beyond the mere removal of disabilities and do not find themselves at ease within the Czechoslovak Republic. In that case it might be worth while for the Czechoslovak Government to consider whether they should exclude altogether the project, which has found favour in some quarters, of making Czechoslovakia a more homogeneous State by the secession of that fringe of alien populations who are contiguous to the nation to which they are united by race . . .'

[3] See Mr. Chamberlain's speech of September 28, p. 277.

[4] See p. 219.

[5] See pp. 189–90.

[6] See pp. 190–91.

[7] See pp. 184–88.

[8] See pp. 191–99.

representatives of the Sudeten Germans. Mr. Chamberlain said on September 28 that the general effect of the speech had been to leave the situation unchanged, with a slight diminution of tension.[1] Immediately on the conclusion of the speech, however, disorders began in the Sudeten districts, and grew into an armed revolt. The Government took prompt measures: *Standrecht*, a régime differing little from martial law, was proclaimed in some districts on September 13[2] and shortly afterwards extended to others; all meetings were prohibited.[3] Order in the districts affected was rapidly restored.[4]

Herr Henlein definitely broke off negotiations with the Czechoslovak Government by relieving the negotiating delegation of their functions on September 14.[5] He fled to Germany on the following day.

(i) *Statement by the Rt. Hon. R. A. Butler, Under-Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, May 26, 1938.*[6]

MR. NOEL BAKER: (by Private Notice) asked the Prime Minister whether His Majesty's Government will propose the immediate despatch of an impartial international commission to the frontier between Germany and Czechoslovakia to investigate the alleged violations of the frontier and other incidents which may arise.

MR. BUTLER: The hon. Member's suggestion is one which His Majesty's Government will bear in mind should it appear likely to be helpful.

(ii) *Memorandum ('The Fourteen Points') presented to the Prime Minister of Czechoslovakia by the Sudeten German Party, June 7, 1938.*[7]

POINT I. *Establishment of Equality of Rights*

The principle of full equality of rights is the foundation of every democratic constitution. The development of the State during twenty years has shown that such equality of rights has not been established either for individuals or for the nations (*Völker*)[8] and national groups constituting the population of the State.

It has been shown that unless the nations and national groups in the State enjoy effective equality of rights, they cannot live together in peace, and it is quite impossible for the State itself to develop in peace. This equality of rights cannot consist merely in the formal equality of individuals before the law; it also requires that it shall be recognized as a principle of the Constitution that not only individuals, but also their nations and national groups, should not be deprived, by the hegemony of a single nation, of equal rights and equal opportunities of development.

[1] See p. 278. [2] See p. 198. [3] See p. 198.

[4] Descriptions of the revolt are given by Mr. Gedye (*op. cit.*, pp. 443–50), and Mr. Henderson (*op. cit.*, pp. 179–86.)

[5] See pp. 198–99. [6] In the House of Commons. *Hansard*, May 26, 1938, col. 1396.

[7] *Die Zeit*, July 20, 1938. Translation.

[8] The word *Volk* as used in present-day Germany does not quite correspond to any English word, whether 'nation', 'race', or 'people'. It stands for the 'people of one blood' regarded as an ideal unity.

A reorganization of the State is therefore unavoidable. Such a reorganization must inevitably begin with the basic elements of the State: population and territory.

POINT II. *Guarantee of the Democratic Principle of the Sovereignty of the People.*

The sole source of all power in the State is the sovereign people (*Volk*). The expression 'people' can only be held to mean, in accordance with the facts of the political situation, the nations and national groups inhabiting the territory of the State. Accordingly the general will of the sovereign people can only arise from the co-operation of these nations and national groups. The Czech nation, the German national group and others are the basic elements of the 'sovereign people'.

They can only be recognized as such basic elements if they are established as legal personalities (*Rechtspersönlichkeit*). For this purpose they must also be given organs which can represent them, which can manage their own affairs for them, and through which they can participate in the general State authority.

The juridical concept of the State's personality therefore requires that both in the structure of the State and in the organization of its population, the nations and national groups should possess legal personality. This is the only way in which it is possible to establish the equality of rights, the equality before the law, and the capacity for action of the nations and national groups. In any other conditions there would be rulers and ruled, which is contrary to the system of the Constitution as it was spontaneously determined by the founders of the State. The legal national personalities must in the nature of things include all the members of the nation living in the State. Corresponding to civil rights and liberties, there must be also the rights and liberties which appertain to national personalities as such, both between themselves and in relation to the State as the common guardian of the law. These basic rights of the nations and national groups must be:

(*a*) Freedom and security for each nation and national group to determine autonomously the possibilities of its development, on a basis of equality of rights, achievements, powers, and capacities.

(*b*) A proper share for each nation and national group in the leadership, organization, and activity of the State.

(*c*) Protection against deprivation of nationality.

(*d*) Guarantee of the right to the unrestricted manifestation of nationality and the right to cultivate a sense of national unity.

POINT III. *National-regional Reorganization.*

In order that these principles may be realized, it is necessary that the territory of the State should be reorganized for the purpose of national-regional decentralization. Just as the State has not only its population but its territory, so the national entities must also be allowed the territorial

spheres of action which naturally belong to them. The unitary State territory must therefore be divided into the Czech, German, Slovak, etc., national territories. This means:

New delimitation of all administrative boundaries in accordance with national boundaries, in respect of all matters of public law, including the sphere of State undertakings and institutions of all kinds.

Enclaves should be delimited in such a way as to form separate administrative units. Reciprocal minority rights should be introduced for citizens of other nationality in each national territory. In fixing the national boundary, reparation should be made for the injury done to the German national group, regard being had to the position in 1918. This new delimitation is to be carried out by a commission on which the nations concerned have equal representation.

POINT IV. *Application of these Principles of Reorganization to Legislation and Administration.*

The application of these principles requires the division of legislation and administration between organs of the State and organs of the autonomous administrations[1] of nations and national groups. It is a principle that the German national group and the Czech nation should be assured of the right to deal with their own national and territorial needs and interests on the basis of the rights of the community as a whole. In addition, the competence of the communes (*Gemeinden*) in local self-government should be restored in accordance with the legal position in 1918. This competence of the communes should also be extended where necessary. The competence of the nationalities' autonomous administrations must include at least:

1. The sphere of self-government of the communes; the economy of the communes, including finance and its supervision both as regards legality and as regards efficiency; the alteration of place-names; the fusion and separation of units of local government and the alteration of their boundaries; the right to entrust the communal authorities with the execution of the functions of national autonomous administration;

2. Police organization for the purposes of public welfare, maintenance of order, and security (*Wohlfahrts-, Ordnungs- und Sicherheitspolizei*);

3. The national land register;

4. Alteration of names;

5. The entire organization of education of all kinds including professional and university education as well as pre-military training and also school inspection and school buildings;

6. All cultural matters including academies for the promotion of learning, museums, archives, the encouragement of the arts, the protection of monuments, and broadcasting;

[1] The German term *Selbstverwaltung* is the normal equivalent of the English term 'local government'; but in this memorandum it is used in a more specific sense expressing the demand of the Sudeten Germans for local autonomy. It has therefore been translated as 'autonomous administration' except where the sense requires 'local government'.

7. Social organization of all kinds including sickness insurance, employment exchange work and labour service, industrial hygiene and inspection, factory regulations;

8. Welfare of children, young persons, and orphans, physical training, population policy, public health, veterinary organization within the State, humanitarian institutions, hospitals and the like;

9. Poor relief and old age pensions;

10. Land settlement, building questions including housing and the encouragement of building, expropriation of land and compensation therefor, and sale of land;

11. Bodies set up by particular interests to manage their own affairs, such as chambers of commerce and industry, industrial unions and trade associations, including the right of setting up new chambers;

12. (*a*) The right to create obligatory associations for the promotion of economic life, including supervision of voluntary economic organizations;

(*b*) The right to create obligatory social and vocational associations;

13. Matters relating to industry, concessions, the issue of licences, markets, and theatrical licences, including supervision by the police;

14. The supply of electricity within the national territory;

15. Questions concerning currency within the national territory (*Volksgeldwesen*), including their revision and supervision;

16. Work connected with the cultivation of the land (agricultural production, legislation on livestock breeding, land improvement, regulation of waterways, consolidation of holdings, and the like), agricultural experimental and testing work, and forestry together with its supervision, matters relating to hunting and fishing (for agricultural education, see under No. 6);

17. Autonomous administration by the national authorities of the financial quotas for their several spheres of activity (see under Finance);

18. Right to levy additional taxes for carrying out the functions of the autonomous sphere of activity, and right to raise loans for the same purpose;

19. Statistical returns within the sphere of autonomous administration.

The matters dealt with under Nos. 3, 4, 5, 6, 8, and 12 (*b*) cover all registered citizens of the same nationality (*Volkszugehörigkeit*) living on the territory of the State, and the same applies to the utilization of the respective financial quotas. For other matters the sphere of application is the nationality's territory (*Volksgebiet*). The conclusion of inter-State conventions concerning such matters as those dealt with under Nos. 7, 8, and 16, for example, continues, of course, to be reserved for the State Assembly and the Government and executive power of the State.

POINT V. *The Division of the Legislative Authority.*

Legislation is enacted by:

1. The State Assembly,
2. The representative bodies of the nationalities.

Concerning 1, the State Assembly:

(*a*) Composition: It is to be constituted on the basis of a universal, direct, and secret franchise, the organization of the elections being modified in such a way as to produce pure proportional representation of the nations and national groups (with possibly the abolition of the Senate).

(*b*) Organization: Deputies of the same nationality will form national *curiae;* they will represent, in the general State Assembly, the legal personality of their nation or national group and put forward the corporate claims of the latter.

(*c*) Competence: The State Assembly will be competent to enact laws on all subjects which are not reserved for national autonomous administration, as well as laws on matters of principle and skeleton legislation on matters similar to those coming under Nos. 5, 6, 8, 9, 13, 14, and 16 in Point IV.

(*d*) Procedure: This is to be altered in the following respects in order to bring about equality of national rights: appointment of President and Vice-Presidents, right to speak, appointment of *rapporteurs,* discussions in committee and interpellations; it will also be supplemented by provisions concerning the rights and functions of the national *curiae.*

Concerning 2, the representative bodies of the nationalities:

(*a*) Composition: The members of the national *curiae* in the State Assembly will form the bodies representing the nationalities.

(*b*) Competence:

(*aa*) Legislation concerning matters appertaining to national autonomous administration, including either independent legislation or measures applying laws of principle.

(*bb*) Election of the president of the autonomous administration.

(*cc*) Vote of want of confidence in the government of the autonomous administration.

(*dd*) Budget control over financial quotas and the special funds of the autonomous administration.

(*ee*) Right to audit accounts.

(*ff*) Right to submit motions in the Constitutional Tribunal in accordance with section 9 of Act No. 162/1920.

(*c*) Legislative procedure: The same system as in the State Assembly, i.e. the possibility of an overriding resolution over a veto (*Beharrungsbeschluss*), as well as the possibility of a plebiscite on an appeal by the president of the autonomous administration.

(*d*) Procedure and direction: The same system as in the State Assembly. Proceedings to be directed by the president or vice-presidents.

(*e*) Supervision of legislation:

(*aa*) political: exercised by the requirement of the signature of the President of the Republic.

(*bb*) legal: exercised by the Constitutional Tribunal on the motion of the State Assembly.

(*f*) Right of initiative: The representative bodies of the nationalities have the right to initiate Bills in the State Assembly.

(*g*) Separate registers will be introduced for the publication of the laws and decrees of the autonomous administrations.

POINT VI. *The Reorganization of Executive Authority.*

1. The State organs of government and executive power:

(*a*) The President of the Republic, as hitherto.

(*b*) The Government. This will consist, as previously, of the Prime Minister and the Ministers. The presidents of the autonomous administrations will also be *ex officio* members of the Government. They will consequently not be dependent on the confidence of the State Assembly.

2. The organs for the exercise of executive power in the sphere of autonomous administration.

The supreme authority of each autonomous administration will consist of:

(*a*) the president of the autonomous administration,

(*b*) the heads of the principal offices of the autonomous administration, who together constitute the directorate of the autonomous administration.

In connexion with (*a*): The president is elected by the representative body of the nationality for six years. His appointment requires to be confirmed by the President of the Republic. If confirmation is refused, the representative body of the nationality can pass an overriding resolution.

In connexion with (*b*): These persons are appointed and dismissed by the president of the autonomous administration.

The president and the heads of the principal offices are severally responsible to the representative body of the nationality. Decisions are taken corporately by majority vote. The president of the autonomous administration is also a member of the Supreme Council for National Defence.

POINT VII. *Reorganization of Administration.*

A. State administration:

1. The central authorities:

(*a*) Those Ministries dealing with education, social welfare, and public health will be abolished, as these matters are entirely transferred to the autonomous administrations. Matters of common interest and the State's right of supervision will be taken over by a special section of the Ministry of the Interior or the Prime Minister's Office. The Ministry for Unification should also be abolished.

(*b*) National sections with officials of the same nationality will be instituted in the Chancery of the President of the Republic, the Prime Minister's Office and the Ministries of the Interior, Justice, Commerce, Agriculture, Public Works, Railways, and Posts.

(*c*) National sections will not be instituted in the Ministries for National Defence, Foreign Affairs, and Finance. In the Ministry of Finance and the Ministry for Foreign Affairs, however, arrangements should be made for the representation of the special economic interests of the different national territories.

2. The administrative authorities, offices, and organs of all kinds which are subordinate to the Ministries are to be re-formed in a way corresponding to these principles and the basic rights of the nations and national groups.

B. The authorities of the autonomous administrations:

1. The supreme organ of the autonomous administration: The president and directorate are at the head and exercise supreme control. Head offices of the autonomous administration will be set up for the various administrative branches, as for example: one for education, one for social questions, one for economic affairs, one for agricultural matters, etc.

2. The executive orders for the application of the laws of the autonomous administration will be issued by the directorate.

3. Principles concerning relations between the directorates of the various autonomous administrations and between the directorates and the State administration will be regulated by a special law of the State Assembly.

4. In the national autonomous administration, autonomous district and provincial administrations, superior to the communes, will be instituted.

(*a*) At the head of the districts of the national autonomous administrations will be an elected district head, who will be assisted by the district representative body and the district committee as organs of decision and consultation.

In connexion with (*a*) and (*b*): These organs of decision and consultation will be elected.

(*b*) At the head of the provinces of the national autonomous administration will be an elected provincial head. The (national) provincial assembly and the (national) provincial committee will assist him, as organs for consultation and the adoption of decisions.

Thus in Bohemia, for example, there will be:

The political provincial authority for the whole of Bohemia, which will deal with State matters.

In the sphere of national autonomous administration: a Czech-national provincial administration for the Czech territory of Bohemia and a German-national provincial administration for the German territory of Bohemia.

In so far as the sphere of action of the national autonomous administration is based on the personal principle, the competence of the national autonomous administration extends to all citizens of the same nationality (*Volkszugehörigkeit*) in Bohemia.

5. Against decisions of the highest authorities of the autonomous administration, there is a legal means of appeal in the form of a complaint to the

Administrative Tribunal. The decision on such complaints will be given by special national sections of the Supreme Administrative Tribunal.

POINT VIII. *Reorganization of the Rules relating to Officials.*

In order to correspond with the division of the administration, the classification of autonomous officials and public employees will be reintroduced.

There will thus be a list of grades of State officials and employees, including those in State undertakings, and a list of grades of autonomous officials. The latter will include all officials and employees who perform services for the autonomous administrations.

In making this division, an endeavour should be made to change the existing systematization, which is opposed by all parties in Parliament, back into the former system of promotion by seniority.

A. State.

1. The officials and employees of the State in the first and second class (*Instanz*), and in the third class in cases where national sections are set up, will, in respect of nationality, correspond to the territorial sphere in which they are to work, so that German officials only are employed in offices which are situated on German territory or are competent for it.

2. In the case of the staff of State undertakings, the determining consideration is the district in which the office is situated or the place at which the staff is stationed (*Amtssprengel beziehungsweise Stationsbereich*).

3. In the central administration or in those departments of the State in which no separate national sections are set up, the principle of proportion should be applied, regard being had to the special circumstances of the case.

4. Proof of the nationality of officials and employees is to be obtained from national lists of officials and their classes, which shall be published.

5. Before the officials in charge of the national sections, such as chiefs of section of the national sections of the Ministries, heads of the national branches of the provincial administrative offices, provincial directors of finance, etc., are appointed, the competent authorities will ask for proposals from the presidents of the autonomous administrations.

6. Disciplinary decisions to be taken only by tribunals of the same nationality as the person concerned.

7. The national *curiae* concerned have the right of appeal to the Supreme Administrative Tribunal against appointments made in contravention of these principles.

B. Autonomous Administration.

1. Questions relating to the officials of the autonomous administrations will be settled on similar lines to those which apply in the case of State officials.

2. A special disciplinary authority will be established for such officials, the highest authority in this respect being the president of each national autonomous administration.

3. Appointments in the higher grades will be made by the President of the Republic on the proposal of the president of the autonomous administration. If the appointment is not made within 30 days of the proposal being submitted, the right to make the appointment passes to the president of the autonomous administration.

POINT IX. *Organization of the Judicature.*

1. The district (*Bezirk*) and sub-district (*Kreis*) judicial areas are to be re-delimited according to national territories.

2. National sections are to be instituted in the higher courts and in the supreme courts.

3. National sections are also to be instituted in the Supreme Administrative Tribunal and the Supreme Taxation Tribunal.

4. A special court will be set up to settle disputes as to competence between autonomous administrations and the State administration.

5. The Constitutional Court, the Electoral Tribunal, and the State Tribunal are to be re-formed on similar lines.

POINT X. *Principles of the new Language Law.*

A. In the sphere of State administration and State undertakings. Here, the following principles must apply:

1. The State speaks the language of its citizens.

2. The higher officials speak the language of their subordinate officials.

3. Officials of equal rank speak each his own language.

4. The language of administrative authorities which are situated exclusively in one national territory is the language of that national territory.

5. The same principles should apply to State undertakings, establishments, public bodies, associations, and institutes.

B. In the sphere of the autonomous administrations:

(*a*) The language of the authorities of an autonomous administration is the language of their nationality.

(*b*) Reciprocal minority language rights are to be established for minorities.

(*c*) Other organs of the State, such as notaries, civil engineers, etc., speak the language of their nationality (*Volkszugehörigkeit*), when dealing with the administrative authorities and in official communications; when dealing with individuals the language of the individuals concerned.

(*d*) Special rules are to be laid down for the capital city of Prague, in order to give an outward expression to the fact that it belongs jointly to all the nations and national groups.

POINT XI. *Special Urgent Questions.*

The following establishments and institutions are also to be remodelled in accordance with the principles and demands set forth above: the

Reeskompte und Lombardinstitut, the National Bank, the provincial finance institutes, the general and special funds of the finance institutes, the post-office savings bank, the cereals corporation, the corporation for the hop-growing districts, the export institutes, export credit insurance, the central social insurance institution, social institutes, health funds, occupational chambers, economic advisory council, currency advisory council, savings fund advisory council, investment advisory council, insurance advisory council, electricity advisory council, roads advisory council, water control council, mineral baths council, State Statistical Office and State Statistical Council, Permanent Commission for the Fixing of Official Place Names, Czechoslovak Press Bureau, the *Radiojournal*, undertakings managed under State influence, administration of the funds of the State and provinces, State monopolies, management of State lotteries, financial procuratorships and the like.

With regard to questions of exchange control, the Germans are to have an equal voice; for this purpose a system of double signatures, one of each nationality, will be introduced; proportionality is to be observed in the appointment of officials.

POINT XII. *Principles of Financial Organization.*

1. The State budget is the backbone of any well-organized, beneficent, and just administration. For this purpose, national justice must find its expression even in the State budget and the balancing of the State accounts. For this purpose a Finance Act is to be passed which may not be modified without the common agreement of the nations and national groups. It is to be based on the following principles:

2. The State budget estimates are to be subdivided upon a national basis, in accordance with the tasks to be carried out, according to a scheme to be agreed upon by the national *curiae* of the State Assembly for each period to which the scheme applies. This agreed scheme requires confirmation by the President of the Republic. If an agreement between the *curiae* is not reached in the necessary time, the Government will decide by Government decree on a provisional budget for a brief period. This requires the signature of the President of the Republic.

3. In agreeing upon the scheme for the different departments, the relevant special circumstances are to be taken into consideration. In addition, reparation is to be made for all injustices inflicted upon the German national group.

4. Until such time as the system of taxation has been re-formed, the State estimates will also include the sums necessary for the performance of the functions of the national autonomous administrations. These will be shown as total sums and will be turned over to the national autonomous administrations to be expended at their discretion. The national *curiae* will present the accounts to the National Assembly for information.

5. Transfers from the sums allotted under one item cannot be made from

one nationality to another. Modifications require the consent of the national *curiae* also.

6. The bases of the national financial quotas:

(*a*) Payments in respect of personnel: List of officials and national register or inhabited area.

(*b*) Payments in respect of material, including public contracts and investments: Nationality of the receiving or producing firm, regard being had to the composition of the personnel and the national character of the locality.

In the case of joint stock companies, distribution to be made by agreement between the presidents of the autonomous administrations of the nations and national groups concerned; in case of disagreement, the financial quota is to be based on the workers directly engaged in production.

7. With regard to the supply of commodities and the investment of funds, where it has not been possible to divide them nationally in advance in the individual items of the estimates, the final accounts must show that the scheme has been observed. In the final total, all public supply contracts of the same kind and representing the same intensity of work must show that the agreed scheme has been followed.

The application and observation of the principles set forth in I and II in the sphere of State investments and supply contracts is to be regulated and guaranteed by new regulations concerning these matters.

8. Supervision of accounts:

(*a*) The report on the accounts must show the national distribution clearly.

(*b*) In connexion with the use of public loans for investment, a special report of the Supreme Auditing Office is to be made, showing how the scheme has been observed.

(*c*) A special national supervisory office is to be established in connexion with the Supreme Auditing Office to ensure that the scheme is observed.

As regards Parliament: Special supervisory committees (even for so-called secret functions).

9. If the scheme has not been observed, the sum spent in excess of or below what was required by the scheme must be made good in the next financial year at the expense of the nation or national group which was unduly favoured.

10. The establishment of the provincial budget estimates and accounts is to follow similar principles in so far as any common tasks still remain to be fulfilled in this sphere.

POINT XIII. *Application by way of Legislation.*

The reorganization of the State in accordance with the principles and demands set forth above is to be established by a comprehensive body of

legislation, which will consist of constitutional laws or ordinary laws according to the subject, in such a way that it cannot be altered by a majority vote. In other respects the existing legal position is to be modified by legislation in the sense of the principles set forth under I and II.

POINT XIV. *Reparation.*

Special legislative and administrative measures are to be carried out in order to make reparation for the injuries suffered by the German national group, in so far as the treatment of these matters is not already provided for above, more particularly in the following spheres: land reform, university laws, minority schools, colleges, laws regarding the legionaries, subsidies to banks and the like.

(iii) *Joint Official Communiqué issued by the Press Bureau of the Sudeten German Party and the Official Czechoslovak Press Bureau, June 15, 1938.*[1]

On Tuesday evening the representatives of the Sudeten German Party—Deputy Kundt, Dr. Peters, Dr. Rosche, Dr. Sebekovsky, and Dr. Schicketanz—visited the Prime Minister, Dr. Hodža, to receive the Government's reply to the Sudeten German Party's memorandum.

Dr. Hodža stated in the name of the Government that the Sudeten German Party's memorandum, together with the Government's Nationalities Statute, would be taken as a basis for negotiations. A further conversation will take place within the next few days to enable the parties to define their respective standpoints.

Deputy Kundt took the opportunity provided by the Prime Minister's statement to re-state the reasons underlying the memorandum and laid particular stress on the affirmation that it contained, not theories, but claims which the experience of twenty years had shown to be indispensable to the security of the Sudeten German cause and to the reorganization of political conditions within the State.[2]

(iv) *Extracts from Communiqué issued by the Czechoslovak Government, June 18, 1938.*[3]

. . . There will be a consultation next week between the Prime Minister and the leaders of the Coalition Parties, and the spokesmen of the Deputies' or Senators' Clubs of those parties. . . .

The work done by the Government has now reached a point which makes preparations for the formal official stage of the negotiations with the Sudeten German Party possible. The Political Committee of the Cabinet has

[1] *Prager Presse*, June 16, 1938. Translation.

[2] According to the *Frankfurter Zeitung* of June 16, the Press Bureau of the Sudeten German Party added that Deputy Kundt also said: 'In this connexion Konrad Henlein's Karlsbad Principles represented a realistic judgment of the whole nationality problem in relation to the State.'

[3] *Prager Presse*, June 19, 1938. Translation.

accordingly accepted the Prime Minister's request that the departmental Ministers should take part in these negotiations with the Sudeten German Party, with whose accredited representatives he has gradually become acquainted in the course of the preparatory conferences. Each of these Ministers will assist the Prime Minister in the discussions on the content of those draft legislative measures which relate to his particular department. The negotiations with the Sudeten German Party will thus be conducted by Dr. Josef Černý, Minister for Home Affairs, in so far as the new settlement affects public administration, Dr. Emil Franke, Minister of Education, who will have to deal with the important and complicated question of cultural and educational problems, Dr. Ivan Dérer, Minister of Justice, who in addition to dealing with certain minor questions concerning the administration of justice, will also supervise the juristic formulation of the general scheme of the Bill or Bills which will result from the negotiations, and Mgr. Jan Šrámek, Minister for the Unification of Laws and Public Administration.

The dates of the conferences between the Prime Minister and the political representatives of the Hungarian and Polish nationalities, to which formal invitations were issued last week, will also be fixed next week.

If the discussions continue with the same good-will on all sides and at the same pace, it is expected that the Government, among whose members and component elements absolute unanimity exists, will, in July, bring before Parliament a comprehensive scheme of Bills for the establishment of a new and permanent basis for the nationalities policy of the Republic.

(v) *Extracts from Speech by Dr. Goebbels, German Minister for Propaganda, June 21, 1938.*[1]

. . . We did not fight against international Jewry in Berlin for seven years only to find it spreading itself in National-Socialist Berlin to-day to an almost greater extent than ever before. We must protest with the utmost vigour against this provocative attitude of international Jewry. . . . Germany desires peace, but not the grave-yard peace which Versailles proposed to organize. If foreign countries wish to do anything for peace they should make haste to dispose of the indefensible conditions of the Versailles Treaty. If there is one lesson the nations should have learned from the war it is the impossibility, in this twentieth century, of separating nation from nation indefinitely. . . . Germany does not represent any danger of war. She merely asks for the elimination of those elements which bear the seeds of future war within them. Germany's only demand is the right to live. She cannot relinquish that right and we have by no means the intention of remaining for ever among the 'have-nots' . . .[2]

[1] At the festival of the Summer Solstice, at the Olympic Stadium, Berlin. *Völkischer Beobachter*, June 23, 1938. Translation.

[2] Most of this speech was merely summarized in the German Press. The report in the *Temps* of June 23, 1938, gives the following account of what followed when an interruption occurred after Dr. Goebbels had said that the treatment of the Jews in Germany did not concern the British:

(vi) *Extracts from Communiqué issued by the Czechoslovak Government, June 23, 1938.*[1]

The informatory discussion between the members of the Political Committee of the Cabinet and the accredited negotiators of the Sudeten German Party took place this morning under the chairmanship of the Prime Minister. . . . The members of the Sudeten German Party informed the political Ministers of their views concerning the new settlement of relations between the nationalities, and gave full explanations concerning the demands which the Sudeten Party is laying before the Government. . . .

(vii) *Extract from Speech by President Beneš, June 30, 1938.*[2]

. . . I am confident that in a very short time, within the next few days or weeks, we shall solve our nationalities problems—those of our own Czechoslovaks and of our other nationalities—in a just and reasonable manner, that we shall maintain a sound economic and financial position, that we shall strengthen the whole structure of our State by a well-conceived nationalities, social, and cultural policy, and that we shall emerge from the present crisis stronger than before. We desire to adjust these problems in a spirit of loyalty and good-will towards our nationalities, and we desire genuine fair play on both sides. We are prepared, in the interests of our own State and also of international co-operation, to go to the extreme limit that the needs, political circumstances, conditions, and potentialities of our State allow. I am also confident that all our responsible political parties will co-operate in full agreement and with mutual loyalty and complete solidarity in this responsible task. We must, however, ask from all elements in the State complete loyalty, preservation of order and calm, respect for the law, and the upholding of the right to individual liberty and freedom of opinion. I also still believe that it is possible to save the peace of Europe. . . .

(viii) *Communiqué of the Czechoslovak Government concerning Relations with Germany, July 16, 1938.*[3]

The official German news agency maintains in a message from Waldenburg that Czechoslovakia 'carried out a new mobilization early this morning

'Une voix dans la foule ayant crié à ce moment: "Et les Allemands des Sudètes?", le ministre de la propagande enchaîna aussitôt sur ce nouveau thème:

'Ceux-là aussi, dit-il, il faudra les laisser tranquilles. Qu'on ne croie pas que nous regarderons sans fin comment on les maltraite. On aurait dû apprendre à l'étranger qu'il n'est pas possible à la longue de séparer deux parties d'un même peuple pour les maintenir dans deux Etats différents. Que cela ne va pas, on s'en est déjà rendu compte en Autriche et on le verra encore ailleurs. Nous en avons assez des mots, il nous faut des actes. Nous voulons voir résolus les problèmes qui oppressent l'Europe. L'Allemagne ne veut que son droit à la vie, mais nous ne voulons pas nous laisser ranger indéfiniment dans la catégorie des non-possédants.'

[1] *Prager Presse*, June 24, 1938. Translation.

[2] At Prague, on receiving the honorary degree of Doctor of Commercial Science. *Prager Presse*, July 1, 1938. Translation.

[3] *Prager Presse*, July 17, 1938. Translation.

between Troppau and Trautenau', that 'the principal roads and streets have been occupied by the military', that 'the machine guns across the frontier can be seen from Germany with field glasses', that 'Braunau has been occupied by a regiment', that 'the peasants' horses and carts have been requisitioned'—and all sorts of other assertions which are thought likely to make what is untrue pass for true. In connexion with this the *Deutschlandsender* asserts that Czechoslovakia mobilized on May 21 'on account of a whispering propaganda campaign', and is now doing the same for a second time. The motives which led Czechoslovakia to take the measures adopted on May 21 are sufficiently well known and do not need to be recapitulated. They have nothing whatever to do with the undoubtedly regrettable and harmful whispering campaign of certain circles. It is true that in the last few days there has again been a whispering campaign, but no one—except the German news agency—knows anything whatever about its having caused Czechoslovakia to carry out a 'mobilization between Troppau and Trautenau'. The official news agency of the German Reich, which rightly and energetically protests against the spreading of false news about Germany in foreign countries, would do well, for its own part, not to disturb public opinion by the dissemination of statements which are mere inventions.

Official Démenti

The Czechoslovak Press Bureau is authorized to deny categorically all rumours and invented statements about movements of Czechoslovak troops, or even a mobilization, which are being spread by certain foreign news agencies, including the official German news agency. The Czechoslovak Press Bureau is further authorized to declare that neither to-day nor on the preceding days have there been any abnormal troop movements anywhere on Czechoslovak territory, and that no preparations are being made for any such movements.

(ix) *Communiqué of the Czechoslovak Government concerning the Progress of the Discussions on the Nationalities Statute, July 16, 1938.*[1]

Last week the Government brought to a close the conversations on the details of the reform of public administration in connexion with the claims of the various nationalities of the Republic regarding self-administration. This will make it possible to continue next week with the detailed discussions on the preparation of the necessary Parliamentary measures; both the Coalition groups and the Opposition parties will take part in these discussions.

As already announced, there will be a meeting early in the week, probably on Monday, of the Political Committee of the Cabinet, over which the President of the Republic will preside.

The Government and the Prime Minister, Dr. Hodža, have from the beginning of these negotiations on the nationalities problem sought to create

[1] *Prager Presse*, July 17, 1938. Translation.

an atmosphere which will enable the Opposition, and particularly the Opposition groups of other nationalities, to take part in the individual phases of the negotiations; for it has been and still is the object of the good will shown by the Czechoslovak Government to present no person or political group with a *fait accompli*. To this end the Government will still hold one or more meetings with the Opposition prior to parliamentary procedure, so that both the German and the other national groups may have the opportunity of co-operating on the basis established within the Government Coalition by agreement between all its elements. There will therefore be another conversation next week between the Political Committee of the Cabinet and the Deputies representing the Sudeten German Party in these negotiations.

Although at times like these, when a decision is approaching, there is bound to be increased tension between the different standpoints, there is in the present instance evidence of a certain reasonableness. Propaganda by means of a strike, for instance, has proved its worthlessness, as will all propaganda designed to inflame men's passions at a time when a decision is at hand.

(x) *Extracts from Speech by the Rt. Hon. Neville Chamberlain, Prime Minister, July 26, 1938.*[1]

[*Lord Runciman's Mission*]

. . . In recent weeks the attention of His Majesty's Government has necessarily been particularly directed to two areas in Europe. One is that with which I have been dealing; the other is Czechoslovakia. In dealing with Czechoslovakia, it is very difficult for people in this country, with the exception of a comparatively small number who have made a special study of the position, to arrive at a just conclusion as to the rights and wrongs of the dispute between the Czechoslovakian Government and the Sudeten Germans. Many of us would have been very glad if we could have left this matter to be decided by the two parties concerned; but, unfortunately, here again we are only too conscious that there are all the materials present for a breach of the peace, with incalculable consequences, if the matter is not handled boldly and with a reasonable amount of speed. Therefore, in accordance with our general policy, and in close association with France, we have done everything that we could to facilitate a peaceful solution of the dispute. It is a problem which, in one form or another, has existed for centuries, and it would perhaps be unreasonable to expect that a difficulty which has been going on so long should be capable of solution in a few short weeks.

The right hon. Gentleman spoke of one of the many rumours which he has collected, without very much authority behind them. This was to the effect that we were hustling the Czech Government. . . . I should like to assure the right hon. Gentleman that there is no truth in it. Indeed, the very

[1] In the House of Commons. *Hansard*, July 26, 1938, cols. 2955–63.

opposite is the truth. Our anxiety has been rather lest the Czechoslovakian Government should be too hasty in dealing with a situation of such delicacy that it was most desirable that the two sides should not get into a position where they were set, and unable to have any further give-and-take between them.

Perhaps I might say, with regard to the rumour to which the right hon. Gentleman referred when he inquired whether we had urged on the Czechoslovakian Government to submit their proposals to Herr Henlein before putting them to their Parliament, that we did so, and we did so for that very reason, that if by any chance an agreed settlement could be come to between Herr Henlein and the Czechoslovakian Government before any statute was put before the Czech Parliament, obviously that would be the best solution of all. But I do not think that any great amount of pressure need be applied from us to induce the Czechoslovakian Government to do what they were anxious to do all along, and that was to give the fullest opportunity for a full and frank discussion of any proposals they might wish to make. Hitherto we have ourselves abstained from making suggestions as to the particular method of trying to solve this Czechoslovakian question, although, of course, in this country we have had a certain amount of experience of the difficulty of trying to provide for local government without endangering the stability of the State. We have, perhaps, in that respect had as much experience as any country in the world.

But while we have felt that an agreement voluntarily come to, if it could be reached between the Sudeten Germans and the Czech Government, would be the best solution, nevertheless, as time has gone on it has begun to appear doubtful whether, without some assistance from outside, such a voluntary agreement could take place. In those circumstances, His Majesty's Government have been considering whether there were some other way in which they could lend their help to bring the negotiators together, and, in response to a request from the Government of Czechoslovakia, we have agreed to propose a person with the necessary experience and qualities to investigate this subject on the spot and endeavour, if need be, to suggest means for bringing the negotiations to success. Such an investigator and mediator would, of course, be independent of His Majesty's Government—in fact, he would be independent of all Governments. He would act only in his personal capacity, and it would be necessary, of course, that he should have all the facilities and all the information placed at his disposal in order to enable him to carry through his task.

I cannot assert that a proposal of that kind will necessarily bring about a solution of this problem, but I think it may have two valuable results. First of all, I think it would go far to inform public opinion generally as to the real facts of the case, and, secondly, I hope that it may mean that issues which hitherto have appeared intractable may prove, under the influence of such a mediator, to be less obstinate than we have thought. But it is quite obvious that the task of any one who undertakes this duty is going to

be a very exacting, very responsible, and very delicate one, and His Majesty's Government feel that they are fortunate in having secured from Lord Runciman a promise to undertake it, provided he is assured of the confidence of the Sudeten Germans—I hope he will be—as well as the assistance of the Czechoslovakian Government. Lord Runciman was a Member of this House so long that he is well known to many hon. Members. I think they will agree with me that he has outstanding personal qualifications for the task he has undertaken. He has a long experience of public affairs and of men of all sorts and conditions. He is characterized by fearlessness, freedom from prejudice, integrity, and impartiality, and I am quite certain that every one here will wish him all success. . . .

He is an investigator and mediator—that is what I called him. He will try to acquaint himself with all the facts and the views of the two sides, and he will no doubt see them separately, and perhaps later on he will be able to make some proposals to them which will help them. He is in the position, so well known to the hon. Member, of a man who goes down to assist in settling a strike. He has to see two sides who have come to a point when they cannot go any further. He is there as an independent, impartial person. . . .

We have impressed upon the Government of Czechoslovakia, and also upon the German Government, our own sense of the desirability of restraint. We have noted with satisfaction the efforts which the Czech Government have made, and we have also been very happy to receive assurances, only recently renewed, from the German Government of their own desire for a peaceful solution. . . .

If only we could find some peaceful solution of this Czechoslovakian question, I should myself feel that the way was open again for a further effort for a general appeasement—an appeasement which cannot be obtained until we can be satisfied that no major cause of difference or dispute remains unsettled. We have already demonstrated the possibility of a complete agreement between a democratic and a totalitarian State, and I do not myself see why that experience should not be repeated. When Herr Hitler made his offer of a Naval Treaty under which the German fleet was to be restricted to an agreed level bearing a fixed ratio to the size of the British fleet, he made a notable gesture of a most practical kind in the direction of peace, the value of which it seems to me has not ever been fully appreciated as tending towards this general appeasement. There the treaty stands as a demonstration that it is possible for Germany and ourselves to agree upon matters which are vital to both of us. Since agreement has already been reached on that point, I do not think that we ought to find it impossible to continue our efforts at understanding, which, if they were successful, would do so much to bring back confidence. . . .

(xi) *Extracts from Speech by the Rt. Hon. Viscount Halifax, Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, July 27, 1938.*[1]

[*Lord Runciman's Mission*]

. . . I must turn for a few moments to Czechoslovakia. . . . Through all the developments of recent weeks and months the single purpose of His Majesty's Government has been to impress in all quarters—quite impartially let me assure Lord Snell—the necessity and urgency of reaching an agreed solution of an issue that might gravely menace the preservation of European peace. The problem is not a new one, for the historic provinces of Bohemia and Moravia have long been one of the great nerve centres of Europe. It is in these provinces that contacts between Slav and German have been most intimate and where the problem of their relationship has been most acute . . . and to-day the racial self-consciousness, and the rise of fierce national ideals that our own day has seen, reinforced by the violent clash of philosophies that perplexes the modern world, have now, within the old political frontier of Bohemia, bred the antagonism, still sharper, which we know.

The problem there is, as we all know, within that political frontier and without destroying the integrity of the Czechoslovak State, to find, by peaceful means, a way to confer substantial rights of self-administration upon the German-speaking population, and with them upon the other populations, such as the Polish and Hungarian, who live within the Czechoslovak borders and possess Czechoslovak citizenship. The problem is a very real one, and of a kind in regard to which we ourselves are not without experience. Accordingly His Majesty's Government, in close accord with the French Government, agreed in response to a request made by the Czechoslovak Government, to take the action that was detailed by my right honourable Friend the Prime Minister yesterday, and His Majesty's Government, as we all know, has been fortunate in enlisting the assistance of Lord Runciman. The noble Lord who spoke last asked me whether I had information as to the acceptance by the Sudeten leaders of the services of Lord Runciman. I am in a position to assure him that they received the idea favourably, and I hope, therefore, so far as we can at present judge, that the way seems to be clear for Lord Runciman to proceed upon his most public-spirited and patriotic mission. We feel that Lord Runciman does indeed bring to his task of independent investigation and mediation many qualities which those who have had the opportunity of working most closely with him are in the best position to appraise. The noble Marquess opposite spoke of them, and they are sufficiently well known to his fellow countrymen to secure for him all the good wishes for which the noble Lord who opened the debate asked.

Several of your Lordships have asked what precisely is his status when he goes to Czechoslovakia. His status is one of complete independence of His Majesty's Government, and . . . I think that that is not a very difficult

[1] In the House of Lords. *Hansard*, July 27, 1938, cols. 1280–5.

status for either him or us to maintain. I have made it quite plain to him, and quite plain also to all those concerned, that he is in no way acting as a representative of or on behalf of His Majesty's Government, nor do we take any responsibility for the suggestions that he may make. His achievement, as I see it, will be to inform public opinion not only in this country but in a great many other countries, and, more important than that, he can as mediator bring the two sides together and explain perhaps where there is misconstruction and conceivably make new suggestions and the like. Perhaps I might, without breach of confidence with Lord Runciman, tell your Lordships what Lord Runciman said after I had so lucidly explained to him what his functions were to be. He said: 'I quite understand; you are setting me adrift in a small boat in mid-Atlantic.' I said: 'That is exactly the position.'

There is one other thing I think that I must say before I leave Lord Runciman, and it is this. We cannot but feel that any public man of British race and steeped in British experience and thought may have it in his power for this reason to make a contribution of peculiar value. The British people, both at home and in the Dominions, have repeatedly found themselves confronted with the problem of reconciling the unity of the State with the position of men of a different race included within the body politic. The British Commonwealth itself is the outstanding example of the attainment of single unity through great diversity. It may be, and no doubt is, that the particular problem that faces the Czechoslovak Government is not strictly analogous to those with which the British Government have had to deal, but it is of the same order of difficulty, and requires the same kind of genius for its solution. It, therefore, naturally occurs to British thought that the solution of the problem created by the position of different nationalities within a single State is most likely to be found through the application in some form appropriate to local conditions of the principle of partnership in self-administration, by which our own problems, not totally dissimilar, have been so happily resolved, and that in a form which has, through the contentment so brought to many different races, been the seed of greater strength to the whole community of which they form part.

It is the earnest hope of His Majesty's Government that through the application of some such principles as these the way may be found at once to strengthen the foundations of contentment within the Czechoslovak State and to relieve Europe of a great anxiety. For reasons with which we are all conversant, upon the handling of this problem depend the interests not merely of Czechoslovakia herself but those of peace, and it is this fact which both entitles and compels this country, with others, to be interested in the treatment of it. We recognize the justice and the necessity of change, but it is none the less our desire to see it effected by peaceful means. The lesson of history must surely be that such an achievement would have greater chances of survival than any settlement imposed by force, which must inevitably create more problems than it solves. . . .

I do not believe that those responsible for the Government of any country in Europe to-day want war. Every Government must know the great desire for peace among the people of every nation, and every Government must reflect upon what would be the consequences to all the fairest hopes they cherish for the future of the millions that are entrusted to their charge. His Majesty's Government believe that a just and reasonable settlement is capable of attainment if the problem is handled prudently, with a spirit of restraint and a spirit of accommodation on all sides. Here I should like to express a hope. I think that every one will agree that it is only reasonable that Lord Runciman should be enabled to carry out his delicate mission in an atmosphere of calm and of confidence. I trust, therefore, that all those concerned, both within and without the frontiers of Czechoslovakia, will do all they can to help to create this atmosphere and thus assist Lord Runciman in the difficult task that he is willing to undertake. Above all, if this work of mediation is to proceed smoothly and successfully, it is clear that the less there can be of recrimination or threats in the Press or elsewhere, the better. Since we are pressing the Czechoslovak Government to be generous and conciliatory, we confidently count on Germany to give similar advice, where she may, with a view to avoiding a deadlock the consequences of which might be incalculable.

A problem which in one form or another has challenged solution for five hundred years cannot be suddenly resolved, and provided always that those who are seeking for a settlement are animated by sincere intentions, it cannot fairly be made a cause of reproach that matters so closely affecting the structure of the State should be handled with due precaution and, as far as may be, with the assent of all concerned. Given such sincere and honest intentions, His Majesty's Government are anxious, as we have tried to prove, to lend any help within our power, and I feel bound to say plainly that public opinion in this country would quickly declare itself against any action which, whether by obstructing reasonable compromise or by rendering impossible its fair consideration, might imperil the settlement and jeopardize the cause of European peace. . . .

(xii) *Communiqué of the Czechoslovak Government, July 29, 1938.*[1]

Within the last few days articles have appeared in the foreign Press, as well as in the home Press, both Czech and German, in which sections detached from the whole body of the nationalities proposals on which the Government are now working are quoted or commented on. The Czechoslovak Press Bureau has been officially notified that no such extracts from the Government's proposals can give a complete picture, or make it possible to form a general idea of them, because they are not documents the terms of which have been finally fixed. As is known, the Political Committee of the Cabinet is still at work on the problems of the reform of public administration.

[1] *Prager Presse*, July 29, 1938. Translation.

Until the programme for transferring the powers of the higher organs to the organs of self-administration have been settled in detail, it is impossible to pronounce final judgment on this reform. The same applies to the proposal for the remodelling of the Language Act and to the drafts prepared for individual sections of the Nationalities Statute. Neither the Political Committee of the Cabinet nor the Parliamentary Committee of Six have as yet finished their work, neither have the helpful negotiations with representatives of the political parties representing the various nationalities come to an end. It is therefore obvious that no final decision has been taken as regards these legislative proposals, to which only the Cabinet, after finally appraising and formulating them, can give the definite form of proposals to be laid before Parliament. No journalistic publications of sections of these proposals, and no Press comment on them, can therefore be regarded as complete documentary sources of information from which a complete, undistorted survey is to be obtained of the legislative work which is to form the basis for a new settlement of the nationalities question in Czechoslovakia.

(xiii) *Extracts from Speech by Herr Henlein, Leader of the Sudeten German Party, July 29, 1938.*[1]

. . . German men and women, boys and girls, have come from foreign countries to Breslau in their thousands to this the greatest rally of Germans from abroad ever held in the Greater German Reich. They have come from all over the world, from all countries into which fate has cast the people of our race, to join in this truly German national festival. The German people within the Reich have given a warm welcome to their brothers and sisters from overseas, from former colonies and from all groups of German nationals in Europe, including large numbers on the borderland. . . . This impressive gathering . . . proves, better than any words, that there exists once more a great, proud and united German nation, inspired by a single world outlook and upheld by a single mighty faith. Efforts to make State frontiers serve as spiritual ones between the members of one nation (*Volk*) have been shattered by the instinctive race-consciousness of German men and women. We Germans abroad render unto the State that which is the State's, and unto the nation that which is the nation's. We are accustomed, as Germans, to perform the tasks we undertake conscientiously, and thus we take the fulfilment of our duties towards the States to which we belong seriously and conscientiously. But, even though State citizens of so many different countries and Powers, we are and remain German national citizens serving voluntarily under the laws of the German nation (*Volkstum*). We have become one people (*Volk*), a community of all Germans throughout the world.

I attended the German gymnastic festivals at Munich (1923), Cologne (1928), and Stuttgart (1933). In Breslau to-day the mighty outburst of German national renewal is everywhere visible. The Stuttgart meeting was

[1] At the National Gymnastic Festival at Breslau. *Die Zeit*, July 30, 1938. Translation.

associated with the opening phase of this revival of the German nation. Only five years separate Stuttgart from Breslau, but within this short span a new German nation and a new German State have arisen. For us Germans from abroad it is a joyous and moving experience to see the new Reich which the Führer has created. . . . We see with astonishment and emotion this mighty, living creation of Adolf Hitler's—a Germany at work. . . . The work achieved by the German revolution affects us Germans from abroad more powerfully and to a greater extent than Germans within the Reich can probably visualize, for we know that the greatness and happiness of the Greater German Reich betokens also that of the whole German people and, what is more, of all Europe and its peoples. It is our firm conviction that Germany is singled out by history to institute that new justice among nations which alone can bring real peace to our troubled continent. For this great spiritual unity we Germans have to thank one single man—Adolf Hitler. We shall return to our home countries, proud that fate has entrusted us with a special and difficult task: that of faithfully guarding German soil and German blood and of helping to secure peace for the German people. Speaking for the largest German national group in Europe I can say on behalf of all other Germans beyond the Reich's frontiers that we are all inseparable constituents of the great German people. Millions of German hearts beyond those frontiers throb with deepest gratitude towards the man who offers to Europe and the world at large the most convincing example of constructive work for peace, the man who saved the German people from a seemingly inevitable downfall. This rally of Germans from abroad salutes him in token of its affection and unswerving loyalty.

(xiv) *Communiqué of the Sudeten German Press Bureau concerning Herr Kundt's Letter to Dr. Hodža, July 30, 1938.*[1]

The official announcement of July 28 by the Czechoslovak Press Bureau and the various reports in newspapers which usually receive their information from Czech Government Coalition circles have given rise to uncertainties as to whether the proposals officially handed to the Sudeten German Party by the Government are still valid, both as regards their basic content and their existing drafting, and how the Government envisages the further course of the negotiations. Deputy Ernst Kundt has therefore felt it incumbent upon him as Leader of the Sudeten German Delegation to write to the Prime Minister and ask for a reply to the following questions set forth in detail:

'1. Does the Government still adhere to the "Principles of National Settlement" as laid down in the parts of the Nationalities Statute handed to us officially on June 30, 1938, and the "Principles of Language Law" which were handed to us on the same date in the form of a Bill?

'2. Is the part of the two Bills on self-administration which was handed

[1] *Die Zeit*, July 31, 1938. Translation.

to us by President Dr. Krejči on July 28 definitive, and when are we to have the remainder?

'3. When may we expect the definitive text of all the Government's proposals?

'4. When may we expect to receive the written statement, promised to us on June 15, of the Government's attitude towards our memorandum of June 7?

'5. Do the intentions put forward in our earlier negotiations regarding the continuance of those conversations still hold good? Or do you regard these intentions and plans as having been rendered obsolete by Lord Runciman's mission?'

(xv) *Dr. Hodža's Reply to Herr Kundt's 'Five Questions', July 31, 1938.*[1]

1. The texts of the Nationalities Statute and Language Bill handed to the Sudeten German Party remain valid, with the reservation that they will serve as bases for the discussion in detail on the same footing as the memorandum of the Party of June 7.

2. The latest proposals handed over regarding self-government are to be regarded as the definite proposals of the Government with the same reservation.

3. With regard to the Sudeten Party memorandum of June 7, in as far as it goes beyond the proposals of the Government in the matter of the Nationalities Statute Language Bill and self-government proposals, a reply will be given at the latest after the negotiations dealing with the measures at present under consideration.

4. The same applies to the definitive attitude of the Government to the entire contents of the German memorandum.

5. The present conversations between the Sudeten Party and the Government will continue and will assume an official character. The method of discussion will be altered only should there be any new developments outside present conditions.

(xvi) *Lord Runciman's Statement to the Press on his Arrival in Prague, August 3, 1938.*[2]

In the first place I have to make it quite clear to you and to many other people that I did not ask for this job. Two parties told me before we left England that my presence would be welcome, and I have to thank the Lord Mayor, the representatives of the Ministers, and of the Sudeten Germans for the kind welcome I received to-day.

I come as one who has had forty years of experience in various phases of political activity in my country. I have learnt that permanent peace and true tranquillity can be secured only on a basis of mutual consent.

[1] *Manchester Guardian*, August 4, 1938. [2] *Manchester Guardian*, August 4, 1938.

Personally, I hope to be the friend of all and the enemy of none. I would say to you, gentlemen of the Press, that your assistance will be valuable to help in solving the troubles that have to be settled.

These troubles can and will be explored, and in due course we may hope to get to the bottom of some of them, especially if we set to work in a spirit of goodwill and the exercise of patience.

(xvii) *Extracts from Statement by Dr. Hodža, Prime Minister of the Czechoslovak Republic, August 25, 1938.*[1]

[*Negotiations with the Sudeten Germans*]

I hope a new, third basis for the negotiations can be found, and speedily. We are entering into a period of events where the solutions cannot be postponed. That is why I shall try to continue the work of arriving at an agreement, not only in the formal way by the continuance of conversations, but also by examination of the possibility for such an eventual new basis. The precise form that these further efforts to reach a compromise will take I hope to ascertain within a few days.

Dr. Hodža was asked whether the new basis might be along the lines suggested in certain reports of Vicount Runciman's recent conference with Herr Henlein; these reports mentioned the possibility of a division of Czechoslovakia into Cantons on the Swiss model. He answered:

It is impossible to say at this moment. Certain it is that we will deal on any reasonable basis of compromise offered, by the mediator or anybody else.

Asked how far this basis would meet the Henleinist demand for full autonomy, he answered:

Autonomy is an ambiguous term. It is essential that we deal not with words and names but with concrete ideas. There is a twofold aspect to this problem: the aspect of content and the aspect of form. As concerns content, the Government was able to present the Henlein party with proposals for self-administration not very different from their own demands for powers and extensions of powers. On this phase we are close to agreement. As concerns form, on the other hand, their proposal is incompatible both with the practical conditions of public life in the Republic and with the indivisible unity and integrity of the Parliament as the representative body of our State.

Despite this seeming irreconcilability, so far as the Government is concerned we are able to say: There is a possibility of a settlement because it is just the form which would have to be dealt with on a new basis. Our *communiqué* concerning the last joint discussion indicated this effort. It pointed out the difference between the two viewpoints, but added that there

[1] In an interview given to a representative of the *Daily Telegraph and Morning Post*. *Daily Telegraph and Morning Post*, August 26, 1938.

was on both sides an effort to obtain a common view. If we succeed in establishing a new basis, I shall be altogether hopeful.

Only those who expected wonderful results immediately were disappointed in the results of the last meeting. Personally, I realize that to arrive at an agreement must be the work of very intensive patience. We are exercising such patience—a new element in European politics. There are no miracles to achieve a sudden understanding; it must be built up and worked toward with the co-operation of the people and the concentrated effort of responsible statesmen. . . .

Were it only a matter of our internal policy, unaffected by external influences and interests, our problem could be settled very soon, and in a perfectly equitable manner, too. We are sufficiently strong and well-organized to make such a solution possible on purely internal lines. But we are fully aware that our problem is an integral part of the whole European and world problem of peace and appeasement, and that the international importance of arriving at a solution requires a special attitude from us. It is with this awareness that we have listened loyally to the advice given us by France and England and others of our friends, and recognize the possibility of harmonizing our own special interests with the interests of the European feeling for peace.

We accept our responsibility to collaborate in that cause by contributing in the fullest possible measure to a compromise, and it is in this spirit that we have arrived at our readiness to deal with the Sudeten issue on a new basis. This new basis may be found very soon. But, recognizing as we do the international importance of compromise and our responsibility to use our State as a force in that direction, we nevertheless cannot abandon the second, correlative responsibility which is equally ours—that of maintaining the unity, integrity, and strength of our State, so that it may in these troubled times constitute a stable, determinate element in European equilibrium.

However, I do not see that these two essential responsibilities which we feel in the matter—of maintaining our force as a national entity and of contributing by compromise to European peace—are at all antagonistic to one another. Nor are they antagonistic to a settlement with Germany within the framework of the general European picture. In this whole Danubian area, and especially here in Czechoslovakia, no one really wants conflicts and jealousies. The various countries want to maintain their independence, but otherwise they are ready for any co-operative measures. I am thinking especially of the Little Entente, Hungary and Bulgaria.

Our Czechoslovak problem should not be looked on as necessarily a dangerous, disagreeable one for European policy. Treated constructively, it has every possibility of assisting, here in Central Europe, in the truly noble task of bringing together the various countries and their interests, and at the same time giving political recognition to an existing fact that there are small nations, their interests identical or nearly so, which wish only to maintain their independence—secured by the principle of non-interference

and allowing the fullest exercise of the principles of co-operation. . . . It is certain, at any rate, that the real interests of the Danubian countries are entirely compatible with the interests of their big neighbours, especially with those of Germany. Within the framework of an all-European arrangement, these Central European interests can be guaranteed, not only along diplomatic lines, but especially so far as economic relationships and interests of the various national entities are concerned. It is in the highest interest of such a creative, constructive European policy that our internal problem should be worked out. . . .

Questioned about the recent extension of Government posts to Sudeten Germans, he answered:

We have had Sudeten German functionaries for years, and as the number of fully-qualified candidates has grown, we have progressively increased their numbers, as is logical, especially in the German-speaking areas. If anyone chooses to designate this as an obvious attempt to promote present good-will, we are quite satisfied. We want good-will, and we want to take every legitimate step, obvious or otherwise, to further it. The only new thing about the recent appointments is that for the first time this policy has been announced to an observer.

Questioned about his views concerning Lord Runciman's mission, he said:

I find it eminently satisfactory that Lord Runciman is here, for his presence is a practical proof of genuine interest by British public opinion in crucial Central European affairs.

(xviii) *Communiqué of the German Government on Herr Henlein's Visit to Herr Hitler at Berchtesgaden, September 2, 1938.*[1]

At the Berghof to-day the Führer received the Leader of the Sudeten German Party, Konrad Henlein, who at Lord Runciman's desire explained to him the stage that had now been reached in the negotiations with the Prague Government.

The Führer noted his explanations with interest, and complete unanimity was reached in reviewing the situation.

Herr Henlein then lunched with the Führer, leaving the Berghof in the afternoon.

(xix) *Extract from Speech by M. Bonnet, French Minister for Foreign Affairs, September 4, 1938.*[2]

. . . Nous ne dissimulons pas la gravité du problème tchécoslovaque. Mais nous espérons que, grâce aux sentiments pacifiques qui doivent animer

[1] *Völkischer Beobachter*, September 3, 1938. Translation.

[2] At Pointe de Grave, at the unveiling of the memorial to American intervention in the War of 1914–18. *Le Temps*, September 5, 1938.

tous les peuples, grâce à la haute conscience que les gouvernements de Berlin et de Prague doivent avoir de leurs responsabilités internationales, grâce à la collaboration étroite et loyale de la Grande-Bretagne et de la France, les lourdes menaces qui pèsent sur l'Europe centrale seront conjurées.

La France, en tout cas, restera fidèle aux pactes et aux traités qu'elle a conclus. Elle restera fidèle aux engagements qu'elle a pris. . . .

(xx) *The 'Fourth Plan' drafted by the Czechoslovak Government, September 7, 1938.*[1]

Note: In communicating the German text of the Plan to the Royal Institute of International Affairs, the Czechoslovak Government in London accompanied it by the following official commentary:

'The Plan was drafted by Dr. Beneš personally on express and repeated pressure from Lord Runciman. When handing the Plan over to Lord Runciman, Dr. Beneš accompanied it by a special Note, making clear that the Plan, applying almost completely the so-called Eight Carlsbad Points from the statement made by Konrad Henlein, has been drafted upon pressure from the British and French diplomatic representatives.

'Dr. Beneš emphasized that the application of these so-called Eight Carlsbad Points appeared to be utterly absurd, for it would establish for one section of the population a Totalitarian System within the democratic Czechoslovak Republic.

'In the desire to prove the Czechoslovak Government's good-will to the Western Democracies, and knowing that—because of the well-known plans of the Berlin Government and of Henlein's and his Party aims—even this plan was very unlikely to be accepted by the Germans, and that the Czechoslovak Government's offer would be made in vain—Dr. Beneš, nevertheless, was loyal and sincere enough to have the Plan drafted and put before Henlein and his party. A reply came—which was exactly as, with certainty, expected by Dr. Beneš.'

Protocol concerning the Basis of Negotiation agreed upon between the Czechoslovak Government and the Sudeten German Party with regard to the Settlement of Nationalities Questions (the 'Fourth Plan'). September 7, 1938.

1. With a view to achieving a lasting and effective settlement of the nationality problem of the Republic, the procedure adopted will be that the solution of the main questions in dispute in a concrete and practical way will be taken in hand immediately. All other questions which fall within the scope of this general agreement but which are not dealt with here or are not formulated in a more concrete way will be reserved for subsequent more

[1] Translation from the German text communicated to the Royal Institute of International Affairs by the Czechoslovak Government in London.

detailed negotiations. In this connexion it will always be borne in mind that the object in view is, on the one hand, to settle these questions in their entirety, and on the other hand, to do so without detriment to the sovereignty, integrity, and unity of the State.

2. With regard to the question of public employees and workers it is agreed that the principle to be applied should be that all nationalities have the right to a number of posts in the public service in all grades corresponding to the percentage of the population which they represent. This principle is binding in future for all new appointments and applies to all departments. In so far as this ratio cannot be applied in certain departments, the deficiency will be made good in others. In order to establish this state of affairs with all possible speed, national proportionality in the appointment of new personnel of German nationality will in the next ten years be modified in their favour in such a measure as to produce the appropriate percentage by the end of that period. For this purpose, citizens of German nationality who are at present in private employment or in the professions and who possess the necessary qualifications may be appointed to an appropriate grade in the public service. Similarly, personnel who have in recent years been discharged or prematurely pensioned may be reappointed if it can be shown that they possess the qualifications now required for the public service. In this connexion, former or present membership of a party, profession of allegiance to a particular nationality, and political and nationalist activity, or penalties imposed on account of these, shall not be an obstacle to reappointment, in so far as this is not contrary to the regulations at present in force.

Without prejudice to the general maintenance of the principle of the transferability of State officials on the territory of the Republic, each nationality is entitled to claim that the national composition of the body of State employees and workers in the different administrative areas shall correspond to the national composition of the population. In view, however, of the extensive intermingling of nationalities in the State, and having regard to the proposed alteration of the Language Act, this principle must be applied with due consideration for the needs of the State as a whole. These interests demand that, up to a certain point, officials of different nationality—including Germans—should be employed over the whole area of the Republic. The requirements of the State imply, with regard to the German nationality, that a maximum of 30 per cent of the officials of German nationality may be stationed in areas where citizens of German nationality do not constitute the majority. This applies also to the appointment of judges, without prejudice to the principle of the non-transferability of judges. The same principles apply as appropriate to State undertakings, monopolies, funds, installations, and institutions. For the composition of the personnel of the central Government departments and the highest courts, the population percentages of the whole State will be applied in all categories and grades.

Without prejudice to the other rights and legal recourses open to the

nationalities for making good these claims, a joint committee will be set up in the Prime Minister's Office for each nationality, consisting of equal numbers of representatives of the Government and of the nationality concerned, presided over by a State official of the appropriate nationality. The representatives of the nationalities on the committees will be elected by the members of Parliament of the same nationality according to the principle of proportional representation. The committee will meet once in every quarter, and must also be convoked by its Chairman if and when a majority of the members belonging to the nationality concerned so requires.

The duties of the committee will be:

(*a*) to keep the records of the State officials of the nationality concerned;

(*b*) to examine whether new appointments correspond to the applications made and the prescribed ratio. It will be the duty of each department to supply the committee with information concerning all proposed notifications of vacancies, filling of vacancies, new appointments, and increases of staff, and concerning the action taken.

(*c*) to examine whether the prescribed ratio of State employees and workers are stationed and employed in accordance with the above principles.

(*d*) to draw up a report at the end of each year concerning the position as regards the appointment, place of employment, and utilization of State employees and workers from the point of view of nationality. The Government will lay the reports of all the committees for the various nationalities before Parliament.

These principles of proportionality will also apply to the personnel and the appointment of members and organs of other State offices and institutions such as advisory councils, permanent committees, privileged undertakings, etc., without prejudice to the principle of division into national departments or sections.

Principles similar to those for State employees will also apply to the employees and workers of territorial and functional local government authorities,[1] of public corporations, of the institutions, undertakings, funds, and offices of the local government authorities, members of the local government councils and their committees, undertakings, etc.

3. With regard to the question of proportionality in State finance it has been agreed that the appropriations and credits in the State budget estimates for educational and cultural requirements, public health, social services, and public works, will be allocated and shared out according to the national quotas in such a way as to correspond to the percentage which the separate nationalities form of the total population of the State. How far the application of this principle is technically possible in other departments will be reserved for further examination and decision.

[1] The term *Selbstverwaltung* is the normal German equivalent of the English term 'local government' as distinct from central government; but in this document, as also in the Sudeten German memorandum of June 7 (see p. 153) it is used in some passages in a more specific sense, to express the demand of the German minority for local autonomy. In the translation, an endeavour has been made to select whichever English equivalent seems to be required by the context.

In the allocation of contracts for works and supplies for the State, State undertakings, institutions, funds, and offices the total sums allocated for these purposes will be so divided that the persons of different nationality affected, and the employees and workers who obtain employment thereby, benefit in proportion to the national composition of the population of the State. If for practical reasons it should temporarily be impossible to apply this principle in the case of any particular department or a particular type of works, the deficiency will be made good in another department or type of works. The same principle will be observed in undertakings in which the State owns a substantial part of the capital.

A joint committee for each nationality will be set up in the Prime Minister's Office, consisting of equal numbers of representatives of the Government and of the nationality concerned, presided over by the President of the Supreme Public Accounts Office, or his deputy. For the appointment of the members of this committee, the same rules will be applied as in Point 2. The committee will meet at least once in every quarter, and must also be convoked when a majority of the members belonging to the nationality concerned so require. It will be the duty of the committee to examine whether the principle set forth above is observed in the allocation of contracts for supplies and works for the State. At the end of each year the committee will draw up a report on contracts for supplies and works for the State from the point of view of the nationalities.

The Government will lay the reports of all the committees of the different nationalities before Parliament.

These provisions will not affect the rights of the different nationalities to secure the observation of this settlement by means of a decision of the courts.

The principles which apply as regards proportionality in the State finances and with regard to supplies and works for the State, State undertakings, institutions, funds, etc., will apply by analogy to territorial and functional local government authorities, public corporations, etc., and so will the principles relating to guarantees.

4. With regard to the questions of immediate economic and financial assistance for those districts and branches of industry which have been most severely affected by the depression, it was agreed that the Government should, by the end of this year at the latest, grant a loan of one milliard crowns, under the most favourable conditions possible, for assistance to those areas and branches of industry which have suffered particularly severely from the effects of the economic depression and from unemployment. Of this loan, seven hundred million crowns will be allocated to firms employing German workers and districts with a German population. The decision concerning the distribution of the sum to be allocated, and other matters of detail concerning the manner in which it is to be used, will be taken by a committee to be set up for each nationality by the Minister of Commerce on the proposal of the employers' and workers' organizations.

5. With regard to the bodies responsible for maintaining order within the State, the principle to be applied shall be that the former arrangement under which the maintenance of public order and security was shared by the State security organs (gendarmerie) and the local security organs (police) will be reintroduced. At the same time, measures will be taken by agreement between the parties concerned to ensure that proper and normal conditions are established, and that the question of the mutual co-operation and division of functions between these two organs is in future clearly regulated and delimited.

6. In view of the fact that the present agreement as a whole is an expression of the endeavour to ensure the genuine application of justice and so far as possible to remedy anything in the administration of the State which may in the past have involved discrimination against anyone (see Points 2 and 4), the treatment of any concrete cases of such discrimination which may be brought forward, if they are not covered by any of the provisions of the present agreement, shall be reserved for further negotiations with the Government.

7. The language law will be regulated afresh; for this purpose the previously existing Act will be amended on the lines of what is applicable and effective for the practical organization of the administration of the State, so as to create equality of rights for the German, Russian (Little Russian), Magyar, and Polish languages with the Czechoslovak language.

8. With a view to establishing internal calm and bringing about harmony and co-operation between the different nationalities in the State, the principle of national autonomous administration is adopted, and this will take the form of a system of cantons (*Gaue*).

Public administration will be carried out by organs of the State and organs of autonomous administration. The organs of autonomous administration will, like the representative assemblies of the State as a whole (Chamber of Representatives and Senate), be elected on the principle of universal, equal, direct, and secret suffrage with proportional representation. In the question of the division of competence between the State and the autonomous administrations, both as regards administration and as regards the laying down of general rules, the principle followed will be that all those matters will be allocated to the autonomous administration which the unity and security of the State do not unconditionally require to be reserved for the State itself, and which are calculated to facilitate and promote the fullest possible development of the special characteristics and capacities of the different nationalities on an equal footing within the framework of the common State. The integrity and unity of the State should thus receive a genuine guarantee.

The territorial basis of autonomous administration will, wherever possible, be fixed in accordance with the nationality of the population, but account should be taken of the geographical situation, economic conditions, and means of communication. The national minorities which will remain in the

different areas of autonomous administration will be safeguarded by a system of *curiae* (Diets), and the protection of their national rights will be secured to them in the different areas of autonomous administration on a basis of reciprocity.

The members of the different nationalities will be placed under the protection of special laws, not only as regards their membership of a particular nationality, but also as regards their property and their protection against political, social, economic, or any other kind of oppression. Should these laws be infringed by any measure taken by an organ of autonomous administration, it is open to the appropriate *curia*, by a majority decision, to protest against such a measure, regardless whether or not the directly injured party has made a complaint or not; in cases where no *curia* has been set up, similar action may be taken by the members of the organ of autonomous administration provided that they belong to the nationality whose rights and interests have been infringed, and that they did not themselves vote for the measures in question. If the law has been infringed by an organ of the State, it is open to an absolute majority of the deputies or senators of the nationality concerned to make a protest; this is without prejudice to the right of the injured party to claim compensation under the contemplated Act concerning the legal liability of the State for the acts of its agents. In this way the members of the different nationalities are given the possibility of defending their national rights as their collective possession, and thus expressing the collective consciousness of the national community.

The nationality of every citizen will be attested by national registers.

The organs of autonomous administration will be financed by grants from State funds or from revenues of their own until such time as a reconstruction of the taxation and excise system can be carried out.

9. In order to ensure the realization and effective representation of the equality of rights of the nationalities, and to render their basic rights effective, they shall be accorded effective curial rights in all organs of autonomous administration.

For dealing with matters concerning the different nationalities, special divisions and sections will be set up in the departments of the central Government in so far as the character and extent of the affairs to be dealt with renders this possible. These departments or sections will be staffed by members of the nationality concerned. In order to ensure that the claims of the nationalities may be made good in the sphere of State and autonomous administration, the Act concerning the Constitutional Court will be amended as appropriate. Disputes between organs of public administration concerning competence will be settled by a special Court.

The territorial spheres of the State and autonomous administrations will be adapted to one another. The same applies to the spheres of jurisdiction of the Courts.

The Courts of higher instance will be organized in national sections as appropriate.

10. The present agreement, with all its sections, forms an indivisible whole. In order that the object of this agreement of principle may be attained, its application will be put in hand at once and completed in the shortest possible time.

In order to guarantee the agreement and the attainment of its object, legislative measures will be adopted wherever this also is necessary for its realization. Representatives of the Sudeten German Party will co-operate in carrying them through and in drafting the necessary Bills.

11. In order that peaceful development may be ensured for the nationalities of the State in these difficult times, and that the prompt application of the present agreement may not be impeded, the parties concerned will endeavour to calm public opinion among the Czech and German population, and to create a better atmosphere between the nationalities in a spirit of mutual understanding and collaboration on an equal basis. No one shall be deprived of the right of criticizing or discussing political events or defending his views, interests, and rights; but the object in view will be to create a new atmosphere by moderating and gradually altering the present methods of controversy carried on in the Press or by agitation and propaganda, and to ensure that political criticism and discussion are throughout carried on in a decent, loyal, and objective manner.

(xxi) *Extracts from Broadcast Speech by President Beneš, September 10, 1938.*[1]

Dear fellow-citizens: I am speaking to you in a moment of international difficulties—the most serious since the World War—which have befallen not only the European States but also countries of importance in other continents. I speak to you at this critical moment of ourselves, of our position in the midst of this disturbed world, and I speak to you all: to Czechs and Slovaks, to Germans and all other nationalities, and to all parties, all groups, and all camps. I speak to you above all as to people desirous of peace and order who also respect human dignity and good-will in others. I will add that to-day I refrain intentionally from entering into details of the situation and international questions.

For fully twenty years the development of our Republic has been peaceful and progressive. Her liberal democratic policy, her advance in economic and cultural spheres, in religious toleration and in social justice, have been achieved step by step by means of peaceful evolution and without crises, *Putsche*, or revolts. Situations which elsewhere have caused dangerous disturbances, and indeed revolutions, have been dealt with in this country in a reasonable, practical manner without blind passion. We have had, and still have, one problem: a problem fraught with difficulty now as for centuries past throughout our territory, a problem which calls for ever new forms of solution—the problem of the nationalities.

[1] *Prager Presse*, September 11, 1938. Translation.

But this problem too we have endeavoured to solve in our own fashion in a progressive manner. I will not enumerate here the individual efforts made by us which would, as I believe, have led to a solution in the normal course of development; but speaking objectively I can state as a fact that the rapid tempo of European and world events, from which we cannot isolate ourselves, compels us to quicken our own pace in this direction. That is the meaning of all our undertakings with regard to these questions to-day.

We are changing the tempo, but not the spirit, in which this State is seeking to solve its great current problems. It is in this spirit of truth and sincerity that we are trying to attain that degree of political equity which is commensurate with the political events of the moment, and which can be put into practice. This spirit seeks to be one of true and sincere democracy. In this spirit the Government opened negotiations with the representatives of the various nationalities of our Republic, starting with the Sudeten German Party as the strongest group. The plan prepared by our constitutional factors in this spirit applies, of course, to all inhabitants of our State and matters will naturally also be discussed with the other representatives of our nationalities.

The problems in question and the principles by which it is intended to solve them were made public to-day. A considerable portion of this material was incorporated in the Nationalities Statute published in the spring. Unlike the Nationalities Statute Bill, however, the Government proposals do not take the form of a law, but of an agreement on the principles of the new settlement. They are, however, more fundamental, more detailed, and are designed expressly to dispel any anxiety or misgivings on the ground of insufficient guarantees on one point or another or of the fear that matters are not taken seriously enough, and so on. Moreover, the proposals are so formulated as to avoid inaccuracies and misunderstandings as far as possible.

Certainly it contains sections that were not in the original plan, but these too are so elaborated as to give to the State what belongs to it and to the nationalities what is theirs. It upholds the democratic tradition of this Republic by which every unit (whether State-administered or self-administered) and every individual as opposed to the whole, every minority as opposed to the majority, shall have all rights guaranteed; the freedom of their convictions, national rights, and equitable conditions for their political, cultural, and economic activities. This applies equally to Czechs and the German minorities; to Slovaks and Magyars, Ruthenians and Poles. The proposals will in practice ensure above all that real equality of rights to all citizens and all nationalities in the State which is inherent in our Constitution, our democratic ideas and institutions, in such a way that each nationality holds that position in the State to which its numerical strength entitles it. The special problems of Slovakia will be solved in this same spirit.

A people which forms a two-thirds majority of the population, which is healthy and sound in itself, which loves its State so ardently and is so

determined, persevering, and realistically minded as our Czechoslovaks, can permit itself the realization of so comprehensive a conception of State justice.

In the last few days I have received hundreds of communications, from Czechs and Germans as well as from abroad, which confirm me in this opinion. Even in cases where a certain misgiving was expressed it was purely as to whether this was quite the right moment for such a comprehensive settlement, seeing that mutual distrust was still rife between some sections of the population and political passions were raging to such a degree. I find the same misgivings in the columns of some newspapers and have several times heard them expressed during these days.

Here is my direct answer to them: I believe that the new measures proposed will be beneficial to the further development and future of the State. I believe that with the resumption of co-operation among the nationalities, they will constitute no threat of any kind either to its unity and security or to its integrity, even in these difficult times. It will, moreover, be a political task shared by us all to see that no such threat arises. I wish particularly to emphasize the fact that, above all, nothing will be altered in the democratic structure and policy of the State. On the contrary, should the international situation develop favourably, our democracy may be strengthened and perfected.

Our present proposals are a logical outcome of the development of nationality questions throughout Europe. We are compelled by our special conditions to take the lead in securing a just settlement of our nationality affairs. All the nationalities in our State have a high standard of culture. The two numerically strongest, in particular, have a strong national consciousness and have made many a contribution to world culture in the course of their history. Obviously, therefore, our measures on behalf of these and of our other nationalities must be rapid by comparison with those taken by other Central European nations in their nationalities affairs. But we shall not be the last. The other States will have the same problems.

It will be clear from our decision to make this settlement at so critical an hour—an hour when mutual confidence has been to some extent shaken—that we are making no small sacrifice for the preservation of world peace. We do it deliberately, for we wish to contribute to the settlement of European differences in general, to the establishment of good co-operation with all our neighbours and particularly with our greatest neighbour, Germany. We wish to prove to Europe and America, and particularly to England and France, that we understand our duty with regard to general collaboration and are performing it to the extent permitted by the exigencies of State.

While I, as President of the Republic and in agreement with the Government, recommend this solution to you to-day, notwithstanding the supreme sacrifices it entails at this difficult period, I appeal to you at the same time—you, the entire population of the State—and say in all seriousness: It must be our first concern to restore full confidence and collaboration between the

two largest nations of the Republic and to secure order, peace, and peaceful development within the State. We shall thus be working not only to preserve peace for the world and for Europe at a moment of great international unrest, but also for peace in our own towns and villages, our workshops, our family life and all that is dear to us. The obligation to work for peace rests not only with me in my official capacity or with other responsible Constitutional factors, not only with political personalities in the ranks of the Government majority or the Opposition minority: these come first, but beside them every individual citizen must take his stand and play his part in exactly the same spirit. As things stand to-day, you can each serve the peace by maintaining good-will and order and preventing disputes, incidents, and clashes. On the other hand, any excitement or provocation on your part may imperil peace, not only within our State but throughout Europe.

The last point of the proposed agreement published to-day in the Press contains these words:[1] . . .

I therefore make my appeal to all Czechoslovaks, all Germans in our country, and all other inhabitants of the Republic without distinction of nationality. It is not addressed to politicians and political parties; they need no telling. It is, however, addressed to each individual citizen, to the whole of the population:

Never has our responsibility as individuals been greater than now. Be calm, be reasonable, keep your nerves steady. Go quietly about your daily work: this, above all, your fatherland asks of you. The less you deviate from your daily routine the greater your contribution to the maintenance of peace. Show the world that there is not one of us who would take the responsibility of increasing European tension. In this spirit I appeal also to the Press of all parties, tendencies, and nationalities: its power for good or evil may be greater to-day than it perhaps realizes. For we live at a time when we must all stand together without distinction of party or nationality if we too are to keep the peace in this land where our fathers and forefathers for centuries past carried on their peaceful constructive work. Are the Czechoslovak and Sudeten German descendants of these ancestors to pull down what they built up? I am well aware that the power of the State in our Republic is, and indeed must be, strong enough to guarantee order and discipline among and on behalf of the population by the means at its disposal. But it has been the pride of our democracy that it has hitherto been a disciplined democracy; that with us it was first and foremost the self-control of our citizens which safeguarded the peace. Why should this be otherwise to-day? I therefore ask for a complete return to peace and order, and for the free, loyal, orderly, and disciplined use of intellectual weapons and argument in controversy. If it were just in these mutual relations between the nationalities that the State were obliged, despite itself, to intervene by force, would not this cast a regrettable shadow over the nationalities' whole life in common in the future? I therefore steadfastly believe that nothing more than moral

[1] President Beneš quoted the passage which appears on p. 184, paragraph 11.

strength, good-will, and mutual trust is needed to enable us to find each other. I believe in the honest desire of the Sudeten Germans for peace and collaboration just as I know the Czechs and Slovaks and all others to have this desire.

I have good reports of the longing for normal conditions and peace felt by all people of good-will among our fellow-citizens of German race. I receive quantities of letters daily to this effect, particularly from our German fellow-citizens. They wish for peace, order, and work under honourable, harmonious conditions of mutual good-will. Czechs and Slovaks, Magyars, Poles, and Ruthenians desire the same. I therefore believe that the present Government majority will reach agreement with all the nationalities on the proposals submitted and thus secure the further prosperous development of the Republic. If this is to be achieved, and if national peace is to be satisfactorily restored, there must be one single inviolable law for Czechoslovaks: to limit party strife, to unite more than in the past, to show absolute loyalty and solidarity, and—hands off the ideal of Czechoslovak unity.

If we solve our national affairs in peace and by mutual collaboration, as we undertook to solve and have successfully solved a series of problems, our fatherland will be one of the most beautiful, best administered, richest, and most equitable countries in the world. Can there be a more enticing prospect for anyone living in this land? I repeat, I am determined to believe—and do believe—that the longing for such a future is what most of all unites us. Let us all do all we can to bring it nearer. And should anything threaten to turn us aside from it, anything which does not lie within the power of the inhabitants of this precious land, may there be not a single one among them who is not prepared to help in warding off such a danger with justice, sincerity, and devotion, by whatever means and sacrifices.

If to-day I speak to the population of this State in these terms it is not from anxiety as to the future. I have never in my life known fear. I was ever an optimist, and to-day my optimism is stronger than ever. I have unshakable confidence in our State: in its health, its strength, its power of resistance, its brilliant army, and the inflexible spirit and devotion of its whole population. And I know that it will emerge victorious from the present difficulties. Let us therefore all be filled with determination and with the belief that we shall recover from the times we are passing through. Let us maintain order and have faith in ourselves, our State, and its successful development. Let us be prepared for every sacrifice, but let us also be optimists through the darkest days. Above all, let us not forget that faith and good-will remove mountains, and will lead us safely out of all the present confusion in Europe.

(xxii) *Extracts from Speech by Field-Marshal Göring, September 10, 1938.*[1]

[*Czechoslovakia*]

. . . One small section of Europeans is to-day tormenting other Europeans, namely the minorities entrusted to its care, and so constitutes a hot-bed of unrest for the rest of Europe. Unfortunately no one looks for the cause of the tension in the hot-bed itself but in its periphery. . . . We know what is going on there. We know how intolerable it is that that little fragment of a nation down there—goodness knows where it hails from—should persistently oppress and interfere with a highly civilized people. But we know that it is not these absurd pygmies who are responsible. Moscow and the eternal grimacing Jewish-Bolshevist rabble are behind it. They make the propaganda and the agitation. They it is who make promises which will of course never be fulfilled. Thence come the rumours, the lies, the calumnies, the propaganda which sets the world by the ears—and the democratic countries fall for it all. . . . So the world echoes once again with wars and rumours of wars. And if the democracies are full of rumours of war, the democracies know where to look for the culprits. The guilty ones are, for them, always the powerful States of law and order, Germany and Italy. We are always alleged to be the disturbers of the peace. Yet we are two peoples who were ready, and who have proved our capacity, unlike some others, to restore peace on our own territory. Both, too, are peoples which have, instead of the vague anonymous responsibility of Parliaments, two men of the highest responsibility. That is something very different from the anonymous conceptions of majorities and parliaments, which never can or will undertake responsibility. These States, which on their own territory have brought their peoples discipline and order, peace and happiness, have not done so with the idea of suddenly lighting the torch of foreign war and letting loose its furies. What matters is not who prates most about peace, but who does most for it. That is the only thing that matters. And it would not become England badly if, before the English talked so much about peace and threats to peace in Europe, they established peace in that old Jew-State of theirs. But we read every day of murders and assassinations in Palestine. . . .

We have done what we could to safeguard Germany's honour and Germany's security. In foreign policy we have tried to find friends where there was a bond of similar ideals. We have found them; and in spite of all attempts to separate us, in spite of all those who do not wish to admit the fact, the Axis and the friendship between Germany and Italy stand firmer than ever. Both these peoples in Europe, together with Japan in the Far East, to-day represent the only great bulwark against the world plague of Bolshevism and therefore against world disintegration. . . .

Never in her history has Germany been so strong, so well fortified, and so

[1] Addressing the German Labour Front at the Nuremberg Party Congress. *Monatshefte für Auswärtige Politik*, Berlin, October 1938. Translation.

united. A complex system of fortifications, based on the most recent experience and created by a unique effort, secures the Reich in the West against any attack. No Power in the world can again penetrate German soil from this side. . . . We have no desire to harm anyone, but neither will we any longer tolerate the harm done to our German brothers. I believe that no one and no nation in the world desires peace as ardently as we do, for we have had to go without it for so long. Let all the nations remember that Versailles banished peace from the world. To-day its contemptible creators stand helpless before the miserable makeshift work of their hands, and do not know which way to turn. It was the States which stand for order—Germany and Italy—which brought back peace to the world. These two countries wish to establish a new, just peace. We shall soon see whether reason or hatred is to rule. Conscious of our strength, we are ready to enter the lists for reason at any time, but if hatred wins the day we are utterly and courageously determined to obey our Führer's call in whatever direction he may lead us. We know that the Führer, in all the years for which he has been our Führer, has always and everywhere done the right thing. . . . His mighty faith in Germany has brought our people out of deepest darkness and misery, out of wretchedness, despair, shame, and weakness, up into radiant light, has made Germany a Great Power; and through all these years the Almighty has blessed him and the people, again and ever again. In the Führer he sent us our saviour. Unswervingly the Führer went on his way, and unswervingly we followed him. The way was steep, but the goal was splendid—our Great Germany. In these days and hours, when constant attempts are made from outside to make us despond, to make us doubtful about our leader, to flatter and threaten the German people by turns, there is only one thing I can say to you and the whole nation: steel yourselves in the certainty that so long as nation and Führer are one, Germany will remain invincible. The Lord sent us the Führer, not that we might perish, but that Germany might rise again.

(xxiii) *Extracts from Speech by Dr. Goebbels, September 10, 1938.*[1]

. . . Yet I cannot recall having read as much as a line in these papers[2] about the many thousand Germans, Finns, and others who were liquidated in the Soviet Union or oppressed and persecuted in Czechoslovakia. Some 700,000 of our German kinsmen have up to now been exterminated by starvation, murder, or forced labour in the Soviet Union. But the Jewish democratic apostles of morality refuse to be informed about this or about the situation of the Sudeten Germans, the Slovaks, Hungarians, Poles, and Ukrainians in democratic Czechoslovakia. . . .

[1] At the Nazi Party Congress, Nuremberg. *Völkischer Beobachter*, September 12, 1938. Translation. Other portions of the speech will be found in the section on German declarations of foreign policy, pp. 17–19.

[2] He had been referring to attacks in the international Press on the suppression of intellectual freedom in Germany and the persecution of the Jews.

The trend of developments in Czechoslovakia is particularly menacing. At the Seventh World Congress of the Comintern, Deputy Slansky of Prague . . . said that his Party aimed at making that country the nucleus of the proletarian world revolution in Central Europe, and the chief organ of the Czech Communists made the frank statement: 'We Communists are advancing unswervingly towards our goal, the Soviet Republic, with Klement Gottwald at its head.' To reach this goal as quickly as possible the Communists . . . ensured the sympathy of the Czech Government by (*a*) supporting President Beneš in the election of December 16, 1935, when their votes turned the scale in his favour, and (*b*) by voting in 1935 for the first time in favour of the Government's military budget. . . . We have accurate knowledge of the activity of the 'Union of Friends of the Soviet Union'. We know all about Bolshevist wireless and film propaganda. We know about Moscow's influence with the Prague Press—particularly with the bourgeois democratic papers—and we know that the Czech Government looks on with approval at these activities of Moscow. What is not so well known is that Prague represents the organizing centre of Bolshevist plots against Europe. It harbours the 'Central European Bureau' of the Comintern, at whose head stands Deputy Klement Gottwald. . . . The Hradčany can hardly be unaware of this, and to say that it looks on benevolently is to put it mildly. . . . The only consolation in the midst of this general European anarchy is the fact that we have seen through this system. . . . We have sent out our alarm signals from our Congress platforms. . . . We present a closed and determined opposition to the united front of democracy and Bolshevism. . . .

(xxiv) *Extracts from Speech by Herr Hitler, September 12, 1938.*[1]

. . . So to-day in the National Socialist Reich we see ourselves opposed by the same forces, the same factors which, as a Party, we had an opportunity of coming to know during fifteen years. So far as this does but give a general witness to the hostile attitude towards Germany of the democratic countries it leaves us cold. Why should we fare any better than did the Reich before we came into power? Besides I frankly confess that I still find it more tolerable to be insulted by someone who is no longer able to plunder me than to be plundered by someone who praises me for it. To-day we are insulted, but, thank God! we are in a position to prevent any plundering of Germany or any violence done to Germany. The State before our day was for nearly fifteen years the victim of extortion. But it received what in my eyes is the somewhat inadequate compensation or reward that it was praised for being a good, democratic State.

[1] At the close of the National-Socialist Party Congress at Nuremberg. Baynes, *op. cit.*, Vol. II, pp. 1487-99.

[*Accusations against Czechoslovakia*]

This attitude only becomes intolerable for us at the moment when it begins to launch as a threat against our fellow-countrymen its flood of democratic phrases in a land where a great part of our people is delivered up to shameless ill-treatment without any apparent means of self-defence. I am speaking of Czechoslovakia. This State is a democracy, that is to say it was founded on democratic principles, since the overwhelming majority of the inhabitants of this State, without being asked their opinion, were compelled one day out of hand to accept and to adapt themselves to the construction which was manufactured at Versailles. As a genuine democracy this State forthwith began to oppress, to ill-treat, and to deprive of its vital rights the majority of its inhabitants. Gradually the attempt was made to impose upon the world the view that this State had a special political and military mission to perform. The former French Minister for Air, Pierre de Cot, recently explained this for us. Czechoslovakia (*die Tschechei*) is according to him there so that in the event of war it can attack with bombs German towns and industries. This probably is a case of those well-known explosives with civilizing effect! This duty, however, is in contradiction with the views on life, the vital interests, and the wishes of the majority of the inhabitants of this State. Therefore the majority of these inhabitants must keep silence. Every protest against its fate is an attack upon the purpose for which the State exists and therefore contravenes the Constitution. The Constitution, it is true, since it was made by the democracies, did not start from the popular rights of those concerned, but from political expediency as viewed by the oppressors. This political expediency therefore demanded that some arrangement should be invented which should confer upon the Czech people an overriding position of privilege. He who opposes this claim is 'an enemy of the State' and therefore, according to the democratic view, he has no rights whatever.[1] The so-called 'State-people' of the Czechs[2] is thus ordained by Providence—which in this case has availed itself of the arrangement previously devised at Versailles—to see to it that no one opposes this State-purpose. Should, however, in spite of this, someone from the majority constituted by the oppressed peoples of this State raise a protest, then he can be struck down with brutal violence[3] and, if necessary or desired, assassinated.

If it were a matter of some foreign country which did not concern us at all, then we could regard this case, like so many others, merely as an illustration of democratic conceptions of a people's rights and self-determination and take no action. But the factor which makes it a duty upon us Germans to take an interest in this problem is something very natural. Amongst the majority of the nationalities which are suffering oppression in this State there are to be found three and a half million Germans, that is to say about as many people of our race as, for example, the whole population of Denmark.

[1] German: *vogelfrei*. [2] i.e. the Czechs as the dominant element in Czechoslovakia.
[3] German: *mit Brachialgewalt*. (Notes by Professor Baynes.)

But these Germans—they too are God's creatures. The Almighty did not create them in order that by means of a State-construction designed at Versailles they should be given over to a hated alien Power. And He did not create the seven million Czechs that they should watch over and take under their care—much less that they should outrage and torture—these three and a half millions.

The conditions in this State, as is generally known, are intolerable. Here in political life over seven and a half millions in the name of the right of self-determination of a certain Mr. Wilson are deprived of their right of self-determination. In economic life these seven and a half millions are being systematically ruined and thus devoted to a slow process of extermination. This misery of the Sudeten Germans is indescribable. It is sought to annihilate them. As human beings they are oppressed and scandalously treated in an intolerable fashion. When three and a half million members of a people which numbers nearly eighty millions may not sing a song they like simply because it does not please the Czechs, or when they are beaten until the blood flows solely because they wear stockings the sight of which offends the Czechs, or when they are terrorized and ill-treated because they use a form of greeting which the Czechs dislike, although they use it only in greeting each other and not in greeting Czechs, when they are hunted and harried like helpless wild-fowl for every expression of their national sentiment—this may perhaps cause the worthy representatives of our democracies no concern: they may possibly welcome it since in this case only some three and a half million Germans are in question; but I can only say to the representatives of these democracies that this *does* concern us, and that if these tortured creatures can of themselves find no justice and no help they will get both from us. The depriving of these people of their rights must come to an end. I already expressed this clearly in my speech of 22 February.[1] It was a short-sighted arrangement which the statesmen of Versailles devised for themselves when they called into being that monstrous formation—Czechoslovakia. Its commission—to do violence to the masses of other nationalities, to ill-treat these millions—could be carried into execution only so long as the brother nationalities had themselves still to suffer under the consequences of the general world ill-treatment. To believe, however, that such a régime could continue to sin without limit and for all time is to surrender oneself to a blindness which is hardly conceivable. In my speech of 22 February[1] before the German Reichstag I stated that the Reich would not tolerate any further oppression and persecution of these three and a half million Germans, and I would ask the statesmen of foreign countries to be convinced that this is no mere form of words.

The National Socialist State has taken upon itself very heavy sacrifices in the cause of European peace—very heavy national sacrifices. It has not only not fostered any thought of revenge but on the contrary has banished any such thought alike from the whole of its public and private life. In the

[1] Read 20 February, 1938. See pp. 12–13. (Note by Professor Baynes.)

course of the seventeenth century in the midst of a period of profound peace France slowly took away from the old German Reich Alsace and Lorraine. In 1870–1, after severe warfare which was forced upon her, Germany demanded back and received these territories. After the great World War they were once more lost. For us Germans the Cathedral of Strassburg meant very much. If in spite of that we have here drawn a final line, that was done in order for the future to serve the cause of the peace of Europe. No one could compel us to surrender voluntarily such claims to the revision of frontiers, if we had not been willing to surrender them!

We have surrendered them because it was our determination to end the eternal quarrel with France once and for all. On other frontiers, too, the Reich has taken the same decisive measures and adopted the same attitude. We have voluntarily taken upon ourselves the heaviest sacrifices through surrendering claims of ours in order to maintain peace for Europe in the future and above all to smoothe the way for a reconciliation of the peoples. That way should start from us. In so doing we have acted more than loyally. Neither in the Press nor in the film nor on the stage has any propaganda been permitted which ran counter to this decision. Not even in literature was any exception allowed.

It was this same spirit which led me to make offers towards the lessening of tension in Europe—offers which met with a rejection on grounds which for us to-day are still incomprehensible. We have even voluntarily limited our power in one important sphere in the hope that we might never again have to cross arms with the State in question. That was not done because we were unable to build ships above the limit of 35 per cent; it was done in order to make a contribution to the final relieving of tension and to the pacification of European conditions. Since in Poland a great statesman and patriot was ready to conclude an agreement with Germany, we forthwith took the matter up and have brought into force a Pact which means more for the peace of Europe than all the speechifying in the Temple of the League of Nations at Geneva taken together.

On many sides Germany to-day has frontiers where peace is completely secure and she is determined, and has given assurances to the effect, that she will accept and regard these frontiers henceforth as unalterable and final in order to give to Europe the feeling of security and peace. This self-limitation and self-restraint have apparently been interpreted by many as merely weakness on Germany's part. For this reason I should like to-day to correct this mistake.

I believe that it cannot benefit the cause of European peace that anyone should be left in doubt on the point: the German Reich is not willing in general to express a lack of interest in all European questions and in particular it is not prepared to remain indifferent to the suffering and the life of a sum-total of three and a half million Germans or to take no further part in their misfortune. We understand it when England or France champion their interests throughout an entire world. But I would like to

assure statesmen in Paris and London that there are also German interests which we are determined to safeguard and that, too, in all circumstances. . . . No European State has done more for peace than Germany! None has made greater sacrifices! But it must be understood that at some point even these sacrifices have their limits, that the National Socialist State must not be confused with the Germany of the Bethmann-Hollwegs or the Hertlings.

[*The Crisis of May 21*]

If I make these statements in this place that is because in the course of the present year an event has taken place which compels us all henceforth to alter our general attitude in some respects. As you know, comrades, in the present year in Czechoslovakia after a succession of innumerable postponements of any popular vote there were to be held elections at least in the communes. Even in Prague folk were now convinced that the Czech position was untenable. Folk were afraid of common action on the part of the German and other nationalities. It was therefore thought that resort must be had to special measures in order through the exercise of pressure upon the conduct of the elections to be able to influence the result of the voting. With this end in view the Czech Government came to think that the sole effective means which could be considered was brutal intimidation. As likely to produce this intimidation a demonstration of the forces of the Czech State suggested itself. The Sudeten Germans in particular were to be shown the brutality of Czech violence so as to warn them from championing their national interests and voting in their support. In order, however, to give plausibility to this demonstration in the eyes of the world the Czech Government, Mr. Beneš, invented the lie that Germany had mobilized her troops and was on the point of marching into Czechoslovakia.

On that I have to make the following statement: the production of such lying assertions is nothing new. . . . This time, too, assurances were given to the Ambassador of another Great Power that there was not a word of truth in this Czech assertion. This assurance was repeated and was also immediately communicated to the Czech Government. But the Prague Government needed this fraud, and needed it badly,[1] as an excuse for their terroristic pressure and influence upon the elections. At this point I can here give the further assurance that, in the first place, at this time not a single additional German soldier was called to the colours beyond those who were already serving in the army, and, in the second place, that no regiment or any other formation marched to the frontier; I can go further: at this time there was not a soldier who was not in his peace-time garrison: on the contrary, orders were given to avoid on our side even the slightest appearance of pressure upon Czechoslovakia.

In spite of this there now took place that infamous campaign in which the whole of Europe was organized with the sole object of serving the

[1] German: *die Prager Regierung brauchte diesen Betrug ja als Vorwand.* . . . (Note by Professor Baynes.)

criminal ends of a Government which intended to put an election under military pressure in order to intimidate the citizens and to nullify their voting-right and which for that purpose needed some form of moral justification. Thus in its complete lack of scruple it did not hesitate to cast suspicion upon a great State and to throw all Europe into a state of alarm, and was even prepared to take the risk of driving Europe into a bloody war. Since Germany was nursing no schemes, but on the contrary was convinced that it was precisely these communal elections which would confirm the rights of the Sudeten Germans, no action was taken on the part of the Government of the Reich. But this fact was now made the ground for the assertion that, since nothing happened, Germany had given way before the resolute attitude of the Czechs and the first interventions of England and France. You will understand, my comrades, that a Great Power cannot for a second time suffer such an infamous encroachment upon its rights. I have therefore taken care that the necessary consequences should be drawn. I am a National Socialist and as such I am accustomed on every attack to hit back immediately. I know, too, quite well that through forbearance one will never reconcile so irreconcilable an enemy as are the Czechs: they will be but provoked to still further presumption. The old German Reich can in this be a warning to us. In its love of peace it went so far as to surrender its own self and still in the end it could not stop the War.

[*German Military Measures*]

With this in mind on 28 May I took very serious measures:

1. The increases already announced both of the army and the air force were on my orders extraordinarily extended and forthwith put into execution and carried out.

2. I ordered the immediate completion of our line of fortifications in the West.

I can give you the assurance that there since 28 May the most gigantic fortification-line of all times is being completed. . . .[1]

I have made this mightiest effort of all times in the service of peace. But in no circumstances am I willing to look on calmly for ever at a further oppression of German fellow-countrymen in Czechoslovakia. Mr. Beneš plays his tactical game: he makes speeches, he wishes to organize negotiations, after the fashion of Geneva he wishes to clear up the question of procedure and to make little appeasement-presents. But in the long run that is not good enough! This is no matter of a form of words: here right is in question and violated right at that. What the Germans demand is the right of self-determination which every other people also possesses: they do not want mere phrases. Mr. Beneš has no presents to give to these Sudeten Germans: they have the right to claim a life of their own just as every other people. But if the democracies should be of the conviction that in this case,

[1] Particulars concerning the construction of the fortifications followed.

if need be, they must support with every means the oppression of the Germans, then this decision will have serious consequences!

I believe that I shall serve peace best if I leave no doubt upon this point. I have not put forward the demand that Germany may oppress three and a half million Frenchmen or that, for instance, three and a half million of the English should be given up to us for oppression: my demand is that the oppression of three and a half million Germans in Czechoslovakia shall cease and that its place shall be taken by the free right of self-determination. We should be sorry if, through this, our relation to the other European States should be troubled or suffer damage. But in that case the fault would not lie with us. Besides, it is the business of the Czechoslovak Government to discuss matters with the representatives of the Sudeten Germans and in one way or another to bring about an understanding. My business, the business of us all, my fellow-countrymen, is to take care that here from a right there does not come a denial of right.[1] For it is with German fellow-countrymen that we are concerned. I am in no way willing that here in the heart of Germany through the dexterity of other statesmen a second Palestine should be permitted to arise. The poor Arabs are defenceless and perhaps deserted. The Germans in Czechoslovakia are neither defenceless nor are they deserted, and folk should take notice of that fact.

I feel that I must express this thought at the Parteitag at which for the first time the representatives of our German-Austrian shires (*Gaue*) take part. They know best how bitter a thing it is to be separated from the Motherland. They will be the first to recognize the significance of what I have been saying to-day. They will be the most ready to agree with me when I state before the entire people that we should not deserve to be Germans if we were not prepared to adopt this attitude and in one way or another to bear the consequences which follow from it.

When we consider the unheard-of imputations which in these last months even a small State thought that it could level at Germany we can explain this only by its reluctance to see in the German Reich a State that is anything more than a pacifist upstart.

When in the spring of this year I stood in Rome I became inwardly conscious to what an extent the history of humanity is viewed in too small periods and as a result is conceived on too small a scale. A thousand years, a millennium and a half, embrace only a small series of generations. That which in such a period grows weary can in the same period raise itself up afresh. The Italy and the Germany of to-day form a speaking witness to this truth. They are regenerated nations which in this sense one can perhaps call new nations, but this youth does not rest upon a new territory but upon old historic soil. The Roman Empire begins to breathe again. But Germany, though historically immensely younger, is also as a State no new birth. I have caused the insignia of the old German Empire to be brought to Nuremberg in order that not only our own German people but also a whole

[1] German: *dasz hier nicht aus Recht Unrecht wird.* (Note by Professor Baynes.)

world may bethink themselves that more than half a millennium before the discovery of the New World already a mighty Germanic-German Reich was in existence. Dynasties came and passed, external forms have changed. The people has renewed its youth, but in its substance it has remained eternally the same. The German Reich has slumbered long. The German people is now awakened and has offered itself as wearer of its own millennial crown. For us, the historical witnesses of this resurrection, there lies in that fact a proud happiness, a humble gratitude before the Almighty. For the rest of the world this should be alike spur and lesson—a spur to study history once again from a higher watch-tower: a lesson not to fall into the mistakes of the past.

The new Italian-Roman Reich just as the new Germanic-German Reich are in truth ancient institutions. There is no call to love them: but no Power in the world will any longer remove them. . . .

(xxv) *Communiqué concerning the Proclamation of Martial Law in Certain Districts, September 13, 1938.*[1]

Some regrettable acts of violence and clashes with the forces of law and order occurred last night, Tuesday, in certain districts. The Government have therefore ordered the proclamation of martial law in all areas in which disturbances of the peace and public order arise. The districts in which these measures have up till now been applied are Eger, Neudek, Pressnitz, Elbogen, and Kaaden. The Government exhort the whole population to keep the peace. The forces of law and order are fully adequate to maintain public discipline.[2]

(xxvi) *Communiqué concerning the Prohibition of Meetings in Czechoslovakia, September 13, 1938.*[3]

In accordance with the decision of the Government, political or non-political meetings of any description are hereby prohibited and may not be held either in indoor premises or in the open air. Processions and similar manifestations also come under this order.

We are informed that the order applies to the entire area of the Czechoslovak Republic and comes into force immediately.

(xxvii) *Communiqué of the Sudeten German Party, September 14, 1938.*[4]

Konrad Henlein discussed the situation with the negotiating delegation on Tuesday.[5] Note was taken of the fact that in view of the events of the

[1] Issued by the Czechoslovak Press Bureau. *Prager Presse*, September 14, 1938. Translation.

[2] In a supplementary announcement it was stated that martial law had been extended to the districts of Böhm, Krumau, Falkenau, and Karlsbad.

[3] Issued by the Czechoslovak Press Bureau. *Prager Presse*, September 14, 1938. Translation.

[4] Issued from Asch. Reprinted from the Deutsche Nachrichtenbüro announcement in *Monatshefte für Auswärtige Politik*, Berlin, October 1938. Translation.

[5] the 13th.

last forty-eight hours, and as the demands put forward by the Sudeten German Party have not been met, the conditions necessary for a continuation of the negotiations in the spirit of the mandate previously conferred on the delegation no longer exist. Henlein therefore relieved the delegation of its functions, and thanked Deputy Kundt, Dr. Peters, Dr. Rosche, Dr. Sebekovsky and Dr. Schicketanz for their self-sacrificing labours.

3. The September Crisis

The official information relating to the September crisis is abundant; in particular, historical accounts of its successive stages were given, from their different points of view, by Mr. Chamberlain on September 28[1] and October 3,[2] by M. Daladier on October 4,[3] and by Count Ciano on November 30.[4]

The disturbances in the Sudeten districts, taken in conjunction with Herr Hitler's Nuremberg speech, led the British and French Governments to fear that the German troops concentrated on the Czechoslovak frontier might invade the country on the pretext of restoring order, in spite of the fact that the disturbances had, according to Lord Runciman's Report, never been more than sporadic,[5] and were, according to Mr. Chamberlain's statement, over by September 14.[6] Such an invasion would have brought the French treaty obligations into force, and Great Britain would also probably have become involved. Mr. Chamberlain therefore decided on September 14 to see whether 'there was yet any hope of saving the peace' by a personal interview with Herr Hitler.[7] A suggestion that he should take this course was also made by M. Daladier.[8] Mr. Chamberlain's message to Herr Hitler and the reply[9] and a message from Mr. Chamberlain to the nation[10] were published on September 15. The news of his journey to Berchtesgaden, where he arrived on September 15, was generally welcomed in Great Britain and France, but received with apprehension in Prague.[11]

On September 14 the Japanese Government issued a statement[12] expressing agreement with Herr Hitler's Nuremberg speech, and accusing the Comintern of manipulating Czechoslovakia in an attempt to 'bolshevize Europe'.

An open letter to Lord Runciman,[13] written though not signed by Signor Mussolini,[14] appeared in the Italian Press on September 15. By his suggestion that plebiscites should be held in all districts of Czechoslovakia inhabited not only by Germans, but by Magyars, Poles, or Slovaks, Signor Mussolini brought the question of the non-German minorities into the sphere of the international discussions, primarily, no doubt, in the interest of Hungary.

On the day of Mr. Chamberlain's arrival at Berchtesgaden Herr Henlein and a number of his supporters fled to Germany; he issued a proclamation,[15] broadcast over the German wireless, proclaiming his hostility to the Czechoslovak Government and, for the first time, stating that the Sudeten Germans were 'determined to go home to the Reich'. In view of these developments there was no further purpose in Lord Runciman's mission remaining in Czechoslovakia, and it returned to London on September 16.

Herr Henlein issued a still more fiery proclamation on September 17,[16] calling on his supporters to 'offer resistance upon resistance', and saying that hundreds of thousands were joining the volunteer corps of Sudeten Germans which he was

[1] See pp. 273–78. [2] See pp. 292–98. [3] See pp. 307–14. [4] See pp. 315–21. [5] See p. 221.
[6] See p. 279. [7] See p. 279. [8] See p. 308. [9] See p. 204. [10] See p. 205.
[11] See Dr. Hubert Ripka: *Munich: Before and After*. Gollancz, London, 1939, p. 47.
[12] See pp. 204–5. [13] See pp. 206–8. [14] See Count Ciano's speech of November 30, p. 317.
[15] See p. 205–6. [16] See p. 208.

forming in the Reich. There was, however, a certain revulsion of feeling among the Sudeten Germans who had not left the country in favour of a settlement on the lines of the Fourth Plan,[1] and the Slovak National Party also expressed its desire for autonomy within the Republic.[2] Dr. Hodža, in a broadcast of September 18,[3] while rejecting the idea of a plebiscite, said that the Government was ready, notwithstanding the revolt, to resume negotiations with the Sudeten Germans without Herr Henlein.

The statement issued by Mr. Chamberlain on his return from Berchtesgaden[4] gave little information, but the Prime Minister gave an account of the interview in his speech of September 28.[5] Herr Hitler told him that he was determined, even at the risk of war, that the Sudeten Germans should have the right of self-determination, and of 'returning', if they wished, to the Reich. He asked for an assurance that the British Government accepted the principle of self-determination; if so, he was ready to discuss the means of carrying it out. Mr. Chamberlain received the impression that his visit alone had prevented an invasion. The Cabinet met on September 16, and heard an oral report from Lord Runciman; this is shown by Mr. Chamberlain's account to have been on the same lines as his written Report,[6] which was dated September 21. In his Report, Lord Runciman stated his views on the Sudeten German question, gave an account of the course of events, and concluded by proposing the transfer to Germany of the frontier districts of Czechoslovakia 'where the Sudeten population is in an important majority'. He thought a plebiscite inadvisable, but proposed that safeguards for the population of the ceded districts should be agreed upon, and that for the districts 'where the German majority is not so important', there should be some form of local autonomy on the lines of the Fourth Plan. His Report ended with other proposals which referred, not to the Sudeten question itself, but to the situation of Czechoslovakia in general; one of these was the neutralization of Czechoslovakia on the lines of Switzerland; this would, of course, have involved the abandonment of the pacts with France and Soviet Russia.[7]

MM. Daladier and Bonnet came to London on September 18 to discuss the situation with the British Cabinet.[8] After a long discussion they adopted the Anglo-French Proposals,[9] which provided for the cession to Germany of 'areas with over 50 per cent of German inhabitants'. The British Government offered to take part in a general international guarantee of the new Czechoslovak frontiers against unprovoked aggression, 'in place of existing treaties which involve reciprocal obligations of a military character'. These proposals were handed to the Czechoslovak Government at 2 p.m. on September 19. The Government replied in a Note, which was not published at the time,[10] pointing out the consequences which the proposals would involve for Czechoslovakia, emphasizing that they had been drawn up without consultation of Czechoslovak representatives, and stating that they were not acceptable. They suggested that the dispute should be submitted to arbitration under the German-Czechoslovak Treaty of 1925.[11] The British and French Ministers at Prague were instructed[12] to see President Beneš at once; the interview took place at 2 a.m. on the night of September 20–21. The British Minister was instructed to point out to the Czechoslovak Government that there was no hope of a peaceful solution on these lines, and to urge them to reconsider their decision 'before producing a situation for which we could take no responsibility'. The French Minister was authorized to make a verbal communication only. President Beneš asked to receive it in written form; the written version was not published officially by the French Government, and therefore does not

[1] See Ripka, *op. cit.*, pp. 51–53. [2] See section dealing with Slovak autonomy, pp. 341–43.
[3] See pp. 209–13. [4] See p. 208. [5] See pp. 279–80. [6] See pp. 218–24.
[7] Cf. Herr Henlein's Karlsbad speech, pp. 135–37. [8] See p. 213. [9] See pp. 213–14.
[10] See pp. 214–16. [11] See above, p. 107. [12] See pp. 216–17.

appear among the documents which follow; but according to Professor Seton-Watson[1] and Dr. Ripka,[2] whose statements on this point have not been contested, it ran: 'En repoussant la proposition franco-britannique, le gouvernement tchécoslovaque prend la responsabilité de déterminer le recours à la force de l'Allemagne. Il rompt par là même la solidarité franco-britannique qui vient d'être établie et il enlève ainsi toute efficacité pratique à une assistance de la France.' In view of the implications of these statements, the Czechoslovak Government had no alternative but to accept the Anglo-French proposals, which they did by a Note of September 21.[3] The decision was announced to the Czechoslovak public by a broadcast the same evening.[4] The announcement was followed by immense but orderly demonstrations in Prague which lasted all through the night.

On the same day M. Litvinov, speaking in the Assembly of the League of Nations,[5] again affirmed the loyalty of the U.S.S.R. to the pact with Czechoslovakia;[6] the U.S.S.R. would give immediate and effective aid if France came to the assistance of Czechoslovakia. Two days later he stated that this declaration still held good, even though Czechoslovakia had accepted the Anglo-French proposals, which involved 'the eventual denunciation of the Soviet-Czechoslovak Pact.'[7]

In view of the strong opposition among the people of Czechoslovakia to the acceptance of the Anglo-French proposals, Dr. Hodža's Government resigned on September 22 and was succeeded by a Government headed by General Syrový, who had led the Czech Legionaries through Siberia after the war of 1914–18 and was regarded as a national hero. M. Krofta retained the portfolio of foreign affairs, but most of the other members were officials. The change was made in order to calm public opinion, and not to reverse the acceptance of the Anglo-French plan. In the evening President Beneš gave a broadcast[8] in which he appealed for calm and said that he had a plan for all eventualities. This was believed to refer to a plan for gaining Polish support by means of concessions in regard to the Teschen district. The advancement of claims by Poland and Hungary at this juncture is dealt with in a subsequent section.[9]

Mr. Chamberlain returned to Germany on September 22[10] and saw Herr Hitler at Godesberg. He described in his speech of September 28 the shock which he received on finding that instead of being prepared to discuss the application of the Anglo-French plan, Herr Hitler put forward new and much more drastic demands. Before meeting Herr Hitler again on September 23, Mr. Chamberlain conveyed his views to him in writing;[11] Herr Hitler replied,[12] and Mr. Chamberlain wrote again[13] asking Herr Hitler to present his demands in written form. A memorandum[14] was accordingly handed to him when the meeting took place. It demanded the immediate evacuation of certain areas of Czechoslovakia and their occupation by Germany by October 1; all military and commercial installations were to be left intact, and no raw materials, goods, or cattle to be removed. For still other districts there was to be a plebiscite. Mr. Chamberlain told Herr Hitler that this was an ultimatum rather than a memorandum, and that it would profoundly shock neutral opinion. In view of these developments, the British and French Governments informed the Czechoslovak Government that they could no longer take the responsibility of advising Czechoslovakia not to mobilize,[15] as they had previously done in order to avoid anything which Germany might regard as 'provocation'. Mobilization was duly ordered the same evening;[16] it was welcomed by public opinion in the country, and was carried out promptly and in perfect order.

[1] R. W. Seton-Watson: *Munich and the Dictators*. Methuen, London, 1939, pp. 65–72.
[2] Ripka, *op. cit.*, pp. 78–85. [3] See p. 217. [4] See pp. 217–18. [5] See pp. 224–25.
[6] See above, pp. 107–9. [7] See pp. 233–34. [8] See pp. 226–27. [9] See pp. 343–58.
[10] See p. 225. [11] See pp. 227–8. [12] See pp. 228–31. [13] See p. 231. [14] See pp. 232–33.
[15] See Czechoslovak broadcast of September 26, p. 237; also Ripka, *op. cit.*, pp. 129–30.
[16] See p. 233.

Mr. Chamberlain returned to London on September 24.[1] The Godesberg memorandum was transmitted to the Czechoslovak Government, which replied that it was an ultimatum of the sort usually presented to a vanquished nation, and that it was 'absolutely and unconditionally unacceptable'.[2] In a broadcast of September 26[3] the Czechoslovak Government explained the reasons for the mobilization, and replied to the accusations made by the German wireless. This campaign of the German wireless was of such a character that it was described by *The Times* as showing 'an almost incredible lack of decency'.[4]

During this period Signor Mussolini had been making a tour of Italian cities in the course of which he made a series of speeches[5] keeping the Italian public informed of the progress of the negotiations, and intimating that in the event of war, Italy would support her Axis partner. A fuller retrospective account of the Italian attitude was given by Count Ciano on November 30.[6]

The danger of war now appeared to be acute. France and Italy carried out partial mobilizations, and Great Britain took certain precautionary measures; the mobilization of the Fleet was announced on September 27. Germany's military preparations had of course been made at an earlier stage. On September 26 the French Ministers again came to London for consultations. Mr. Chamberlain decided to send Sir Horace Wilson to Berlin with a personal message[7] to be delivered to Herr Hitler before the speech which he was to make that night in the Sportpalast; it suggested that the methods of the transfer of the Sudeten German areas, to which Czechoslovakia had already consented, should be settled peacefully by a German-Czechoslovak conference at which Great Britain might be represented. Herr Hitler's reply, sent on the following day,[8] did not accept this suggestion. Count Ciano stated in his November speech that Herr Hitler had decided on this day to put forward his time-limit from October 1 to September 28.[9]

Mr. Jan Masaryk, Czechoslovak Minister in London, gave the British Government a reply to their questions concerning the proposed conference.[10] In Czechoslovakia, an official statement[11] was issued pointing out the effects which the fulfilment of the Godesberg demands would have on the position of the country as regards economic affairs, communications, and defence.

Herr Hitler's Sportpalast speech of September 26[12] was of extreme violence even by his own standards. He put forward his demands in the form of an ultimatum, saying that his 'patience was exhausted', and made an unparalleled personal attack on President Beneš. He stated categorically that he was now making the last of his territorial claims in Europe, and said that when the Sudeten German question was settled he would have no further interest in 'the Czech State'. He added, 'We want no Czechs!'

Mr. Chamberlain, in a comment on this speech made the same evening,[13] said that the British Government were prepared to guarantee the carrying out of the undertakings given by Czechoslovakia. Later, an official British statement was issued[14] saying that if in spite of all efforts to preserve peace a German attack was made on Czechoslovakia, France would be bound to come to her assistance, and Great Britain and Russia would stand by France. This attracted attention as being the first reference made in a British official statement to the position of Russia.

It was also on September 26 that President Roosevelt made an endeavour to bring the moral influence of public opinion to bear on the crisis by sending a peace appeal[15] to Herr Hitler, President Beneš, Mr. Chamberlain, and M. Daladier. It was supported by many other American Republics.[16] Replies were received from all the statesmen addressed;[17] but in view of the character of the reply from Herr

[1] See pp. 234–35. [2] See pp. 235–36. [3] See pp. 236–38. [4] In a leader of September 24.
[5] See pp. 239–43. [6] See pp. 315–21. [7] See pp. 243–45. [8] See pp. 268–70. [9] See p. 218.
[10] See pp. 245–46. [11] See pp. 246–48. [12] See pp. 249–60. [13] See pp. 260–61. [14] See p. 261.
[15] See pp. 261–62. [16] See pp. 267–68. [17] See pp. 262–66.

Hitler, the President sent a further message to him alone.[1] This message was not published in the German Press. Further statements of the United States attitude were made by Mr. Sumner Welles on October 3[2] and by Mr. Sayre on October 10.[3]

On September 27 Mr. Chamberlain gave a broadcast[4] in which he described his horror of war and his efforts to avert it;[5] he was willing to make even a third visit to Germany, though for the moment he did not see what he could usefully do in the way of mediation. On the same day it was announced that the British Legion had offered its services as an impartial body in the disputed areas;[6] the offer was accepted, but owing to subsequent developments the scheme did not materialize.[7] A further exchange of notes between the British and Czechoslovak Governments took place in Prague on this day; the British Notes have not been published officially, but texts are given in Dr. Ripka's book.[8] In Spain, General Franco issued a statement[9] expressing his desire to remain neutral in the dispute.

In a final endeavour to avoid war, Mr. Chamberlain, on September 28, sent Herr Hitler a letter[10] saying that he believed he could obtain all essentials without war and without delay, and that Mr. Chamberlain would himself come to Berlin to discuss arrangements for the transfer of territory with Herr Hitler and representatives of Czechoslovakia, as well as of France and Italy if it were so desired. He also sent a message[11] to Signor Mussolini asking for his support for this proposal. Accounts of the parallel steps taken by the French and Italian Governments respectively were given by M. Daladier on October 4[12] and Count Ciano on November 30.[13]

Parliament met on September 28, and Mr. Chamberlain made the speech which has been repeatedly referred to in the above pages. At the end of it, he announced that Herr Hitler had invited him, Signor Mussolini, and M. Daladier to a conference at Munich.[14] This announcement was received both in Parliament and by the general public with strong emotions of relief from imminent danger of war. M. Daladier said that the proposal was in the spirit of President Roosevelt's second message. Actually it differed from it very widely, for the President had suggested a conference of all the countries directly interested, to be held in a neutral spot, whereas Herr Hitler's invitation was for a meeting at Munich, attended by the representatives of the four Great Powers but not those of Czechoslovakia; two Czechoslovak representatives were allowed to attend, but only to give information to the British and French delegations. The reasons why the question of including Soviet Russia was not raised were given by M. Daladier on October 4,[15] and by British spokesmen in the debate on the Munich agreement.[16]

The Munich conference took place on September 29, and the agreement[17] was signed on the same day. The agreement itself was accompanied by an annex dealing with the question of an international guarantee of the new frontiers of Czechoslovakia, and a declaration stating that if the problems of the Polish and Hungarian minorities were not settled within three months, another Four-Power Conference would be held to deal with them. In addition, Herr Hitler and Mr. Chamberlain signed a declaration[18] referring to 'the desire of our two peoples never to go to war with one another again', and stating that all subsequent disputes between them should be dealt with by the method of consultation. The circumstances in which the Munich decisions were conveyed to the Czechoslovak delegates are described in a report by Dr. Hubert Masaryk, quoted by Dr. Ripka.[19]

[1] See pp. 266–67. [2] See pp. 303–7. [3] See pp. 314–15. [4] See pp. 270–71.
[5] It was in this speech that he made the reference to 'a quarrel in a far-away country between people of whom we know nothing', which has frequently been criticized.
[6] See p. 272. [7] See pp. 340–41. [8] Ripka, *op. cit.*, pp. 194–202. [9] See p. 272.
[10] See p. 272. [11] See pp. 272–73. [12] See pp. 310–11. [13] See pp. 319–20.
[14] See p. 288. [15] See p. 311. [16] See pp. 298–301. [17] See pp. 289–90.
[18] See p. 291. [19] See Ripka, *op. cit.*, 224–27.

A comparison between the terms of the Munich agreement and those of the Godesberg memorandum was drawn by Mr. Chamberlain in the debate on the agreement on October 3.[1] For a different view of this question, reference may be made to the Opposition speeches in the same debate, and to the analysis by Professor Seton-Watson,[2] who deals also with the departures from the terms of the Munich Agreement which were made subsequently.

Messages expressing their hope that the collaboration of their two countries would promote the consolidation of European peace[3] were exchanged between Mr. Chamberlain and M. Daladier on their return from Munich.

In the debate on the Munich agreement which took place in the British Parliament on October 3–6, the subjects dealt with by members of the Government included, in addition to Mr. Chamberlain's defence of his policy[4] and the question of Soviet Russia, to which reference was made above, the question of the international guarantee of the new frontiers of Czechoslovakia[5] and the loan to that country,[6] the necessity of rearmament,[7] and the question of a Four-Power Pact.[8] The present collection includes only the statements of official speakers, but reference should also be made to the records of the debate for the views of Opposition speakers, and for Mr. Duff Cooper's statement on his resignation.

A number of speeches dealing with the Munich Agreement will also be found in the first volume of the present collection; they include the speeches of Lord Halifax on October 24[9] and October 27,[10] of Mr. Chamberlain on November 1,[11] on November 9 at the Guildhall,[12] and on December 13,[13] of M. Daladier on October 27,[14] and of M. Molotov on November 6.[15]

(i) *Communiqué concerning the Message from the Rt. Hon. Neville Chamberlain to Herr Hitler, September 14, 1938.*[16]

The Prime Minister has sent to the German Führer and Chancellor, through His Majesty's Ambassador in Berlin, the following message:

'In view of increasingly critical situation, I propose to come over at once to see you with a view to trying to find peaceful solution. I propose to come across by air and am ready to start to-morrow. Please indicate earliest time at which you can see me and suggest place of meeting. Should be grateful for very early reply.'

The Führer and Chancellor has replied to the above message to the effect that he will be very ready to meet the British Prime Minister on September 15 (to-morrow). The Prime Minister is accordingly leaving for Germany by air to-morrow morning.

(ii) *Statement by the Japanese Foreign Office Spokesman, September 14, 1938.*[17]

In his address on the last day of the Nuremberg Congress, Führer Hitler set forth the basic principle of Germany's foreign policy. His address, which constitutes a genuine expression of ardent patriotism, has taken Europe by

[1] See pp. 293–95. [2] R. W. Seton-Watson, *op. cit.*, pp. 110–20. [3] See pp. 292.
[4] See pp. 292–98. [5] See pp. 295 and 299–302. [6] See pp. 295–96. [7] See p. 298.
[8] See pp. 302–3. [9] See *Documents* for 1938, Vol. I, pp. 91–4. [10] See Vol. I, pp. 96–8.
[11] See Vol. I, pp. 98–107. [12] See Vol. I, pp. 114–18. [13] See Vol. I, pp. 128–9.
[14] See Vol. I, pp. 217–19. [15] See Vol. I, pp. 322–3.
[16] *The Times*, September 15, 1938. [17] *Contemporary Japan*, December 1938, pp. 581–2.

storm. What the Führer demands concerning the Sudeten problem is, in a word, a 'solution with justice', for which our nation has nothing but admiration and sympathy.

At the time of founding of Czechoslovakia the Sudeten Germans demanded that the question of their national status be decided only in accordance with the principle of racial self-determination. But their earnest desire was sacrificed to expediency and the St. Germain Treaty fixed their present status, whereby the seed of the subsequent complications of racial problems was planted. It is the Comintern which took advantage of this situation. For the present complication of the Sudeten question the responsibility lies largely on the machinations of the Comintern, which is pulling the strings behind the Czechoslovakian Government.

In its desperate attempt to bolshevize Europe, the Comintern has been doing everything to prevent a peaceful settlement of the racial problem in Czechoslovakia.

We Japanese have had plenty of experiences with the subterranean activities of the Comintern in the present China Affair. Since the position of Czechoslovakia as a base for the Comintern's machinations for the bolshevization of Europe is exactly similar to that of China in East Asia, we can readily see the ways of the Comintern in Europe. And Japan is prepared as ever to join forces with Germany and Italy for fighting against the Red operations in accordance with the spirit of the Anti-Comintern Agreement.

In view of the fact that the Comintern's intrigue is to blame for the present European crisis, we hope that such great Powers as Great Britain and France will take a definite cognizance of it and act accordingly for the sake of world peace.

(iii) *Message to the Nation from the Rt. Hon. Neville Chamberlain, September 15, 1938.*[1]

I am going to meet the German Chancellor because the present situation seems to me to be one in which discussions between him and me may have useful consequences.

My policy has always been to try to ensure peace, and the Führer's ready acceptance of my suggestion encourages me to hope that my visit to him will not be without results.

(iv) *Declaration by Herr Henlein, September 15, 1938.*[2]

Fellow-countrymen: As bearer of your confidence and conscious of my responsibility, I hereby affirm before the whole world that the system of oppression practised by the Czech nation has reached its climax in the

[1] Before his departure for Munich. *The Times*, September 16, 1938.

[2] Broadcast from German wireless stations and distributed by the German Press Bureau. *Frankfurter Zeitung*, September 16, 1938. Translation.

employment of machine-guns, armoured cars, and tanks against the unarmed Sudeten Germans. The Czech people have thus demonstrated to the world at large that it has become definitely impossible for us to live together in one State with them. Our experiences during twenty years of domination by force, and above all the heavy toll of life in the past few days, oblige me to make the following declaration:

1. In the year 1919 we were denied the right of self-determination which had been solemnly guaranteed to us, and so were forced against our will into the Czech State.

2. Without having ever renounced our right to self-determination, we have tried in every way, and at the cost of heavy sacrifices, to safeguard our existence within the Czech State.

3. All our endeavours to arrive at a just and honourable settlement with the Czech nation and their responsible representatives have been wrecked by their implacable desire to destroy us.

In this hour of distress for the Sudeten German people I stand before you, before the German nation, and before the entire civilized world, and declare: We wish to live as free German men and women. We wish to have peace and work in our fatherland once more. We wish to go home to the Reich. God bless us and our just fight!

KONRAD HENLEIN

(v) *Unsigned Article by Signor Mussolini, published under the Title 'Letter to Runciman', September 15, 1938.*[1]

When, about a week ago, you left London for Prague, the world had no clear idea what you were going to do, and in what capacity and with what responsibility. Was your mission official or not official? All this was left, as it were, wrapped in a sort of London fog. Was your task only one of mediation, or would it, at a certain stage, be that of an arbitrator? In any case, you arrived at Prague with a staff of assistants, and universal attention was centred on you. Everyone was compelled to admire the zeal with which you set to work on your difficult task. In the course of the week you must have read dozens of memoranda and hundreds of letters, received dozens of persons, and conferred with the leaders of all the nationalities, since there is not only a Sudeten problem, but a Magyar, a Polish, and a Slovak problem; as many problems as the nationalities with which Beneš's republic was 'inflated' at Versailles.

I believe that in your own mind you have already arrived at this conclusion: just as there is not a Czechoslovak nation, so there is not a Czechoslovak State. You have not, Mr. Runciman, come upon a family where there is a minimum of cordiality and comprehension as between persons of the same blood. No; the 'components' of the Czechoslovak family are of different races and cannot endure one another. They are not animated by

[1] *Il Popolo d'Italia*, September 15, 1938. Translation.

a centripetal, but by a centrifugal force. Nothing but constraint holds them together. If that constraint ceased, the dislocation of Czechoslovakia would be inevitable and irresistible.

At Versailles, they ought to have created a Bohemia—a historic name—with a homogeneous population of Czechs; instead, they wanted to create a swollen Czechoslovakia—an entity which was never a living reality—and they set up an artificial State which from its birth carried in itself the elements of its own debility and dissolution.

I believe, Mr. Runciman, that you have seen this situation as I have described it. And perhaps you have asked yourself what remained to be done. (There has in fact been talk of your returning to London.) No. After Hitler's speech, there is an opportunity for you, Mr. Runciman. You can act, and do something which will pass into history. It is no longer time for compromises. Karlsbad is obsolete. Beneš—the old parliamentarian—has lost the race. You, Mr. Runciman, must simply propose to Beneš a plebiscite, not only for the Sudetens, but also for all the nationalities which may ask for it. Beneš will refuse a plebiscite? Then you can let him know that England will think seven times—and seven times seven—before going to war simply to maintain a State which is a monstrous fiction even in its geographical configuration, so that it has often been called a crocodile State or a sausage State. If London makes it known that it will not move, no one else will, whatever the Masonic Powers of the Great East may say. The game is really not worth the candle. If Hitler were claiming to annex three million and more Czechs, Europe would be right to be disturbed, and to take action. But Hitler is not thinking of doing so. I who am writing you this letter am in a position to tell you—in confidence—that if he were offered more than three million Czechs as a present, Hitler would politely but firmly decline the gift. The Führer is concerned and preoccupied with the three million and more Germans and with them only. No one can contest such a right. No one can oppose the fulfilment of such a duty; least of all we Italians, who have precedents for such a case.

Have courage, Mr. Runciman. Propose the plebiscite, or rather, the plebiscites. It is a magnificent and difficult task. There are compact zones, where the plebiscite will mean annexation pure and simple to the brother-nation; there are zones where, on the contrary, the races are terribly mixed, and a clear cut is impossible. There, it might be possible to apply the system of so-called cantonalization on an equal basis or something of the kind. This would be, incidentally, in the democratic tradition.

When the plebiscite zones have been fixed, it will remain to settle the date, the method, and the means of supervision, which might be of an international character such as was applied with satisfactory results in the Saar plebiscite.

It is my impression, Mr. Runciman, that this letter will be of interest to you. When the change has been made it will be a further simplification of the map of Europe and the elimination of a focus of disorder and uneasiness.

Prague, peacefully 'deflated', would be stronger and more secure, and would march forward more rapidly, because it would no longer have chained to its foot the leaden ball of hostile nationalities. Whereas it is to-day practically impossible for Italy to pursue a policy of friendship with Czechoslovakia in its present form, it would be possible to do so with the Bohemia of to-morrow. Thus the new politico-territorial situation would create a new balance and new possibilities, and above all, Europe would be spared a war. Millions of men think that it is strictly necessary that it should be spared. Frontiers drawn with a stroke of the pen can be changed by another stroke of the pen. It is another thing when the frontiers were drawn by the hand of God and the blood of men.

(vi) *Statement by the Rt. Hon. Neville Chamberlain on his Return from Berchtesgaden, September 16, 1938.*[1]

I have come back again rather quicker than I expected, after a journey which, had I not been so preoccupied, I should have found thoroughly enjoyable. Yesterday afternoon I had a long talk with Herr Hitler. It was a frank talk, but it was a friendly one, and I feel satisfied now that each of us fully understands what is in the mind of the other.

You will not, of course, expect me to discuss now what may be the results of these talks. What I have got to do is to discuss them with my colleagues, and I would advise you not to accept prematurely any unauthorized account of what took place in the conversations. I shall be discussing them to-night with my colleagues and others, especially Lord Runciman. Later—perhaps in a few days—I am going to have another talk with Herr Hitler; only this time he has told me that it is his intention to come half-way to meet me. That is to spare an old man such another long journey.

(vii) *Call to Arms by Herr Henlein, September 17, 1938.*[2]

Sudeten Germans: You are still being oppressed by the Hussite-Bolshevik criminals of Prague. The Czech despots are trying to suppress the liberty of the Sudeten Germans by machine-guns, tanks, and artillery. Unspeakable suffering is the result. But the hour of liberation is near. Do not despair, therefore, but hold out. Offer resistance upon resistance. Hundreds of thousands of Sudeten German comrades are pouring into the ranks of the Volunteer Corps. They are prepared to pledge their blood and their life for the liberation of the homeland from the Czech yoke.

[1] To the Press and public, on his arrival at Heston aerodrome at 5.30 p.m. *The Struggle for Peace.* By the Rt. Hon. Neville Chamberlain. Hutchinson, London. Pp. 265–6.

[2] *Völkischer Beobachter*, September 19, 1938. Translation.

(viii) *Broadcast Speech by Dr. Hodža, Czechoslovak Prime Minister, September 18, 1938.*[1]

You are all aware that we are now living through the most dramatic days in the modern history of our country. We have become the centre of a crisis which has shaken the whole of Europe. Peace is once more threatened, and more seriously than at any time in the immediate past.

In common with the nations at whose side we fought in the World War, we have made, and shall continue to make, every effort to save the peace, but never have we needed so much strength of mind and of heart in making our decisions as to-day.

It is not as if it were merely a question of peace. By comparison with the other participants in this great conflict we have more at stake: an honourable future and the integrity of the Republic. Our whole history is permeated by the endeavours we have made to reach a settlement in the relations between our own people and the German people, both those who live here and those in the Reich. This unsolved problem now presents itself with the full force of its fateful significance. Its significance is fateful because the nationalist movement, and still more the nationalist agitation of Germanism as a whole, have in the last few years reached a climax. It has been and is, therefore, our responsibility in the eyes of history to do everything to bring about a speedy settlement of Czech-German relations which shall be as satisfactory as possible, in the vital interests both of our State and of the German people.

All Europe knows that, after prolonged negotiations, we had at last found a basis which both sides regarded as a suitable preliminary to an agreement. It was just at this hopeful juncture that the dramatic set-back occurred. At the very moment when it became clear that these negotiations were likely to achieve their aim, the way which pointed to a sound solution was abandoned, and tumult was let loose. The Government's action, though approved abroad, was also blamed on the ground that we did not treat the revolt as a mere bagatelle but handled it with decision. We refute all such reproaches. We did no more than the obvious duty of a well-regulated State. In our earnest desire for peace we had, moreover, in the earlier stages carried our moderation almost to the point of sacrificing our dignity.

The repression of a revolt against the established order is not persecution, especially when a suitable basis for the peaceful settlement of national relations has been found. The Government of the Republic have had to steer the ship of State past dangerous rocks during these months. They could not act precipitately, but they were bound to intervene when the authority of the State was in the balance, and when it had to fulfil its duty of protecting the personal safety of the citizens and the order established by law. The proclamation of martial law may have aroused adverse criticism in some quarters, but it is an indisputable fact that only the strong measures

[1] *Prager Presse*, September 20, 1938. Translation.

taken at this time of impending revolt could have warded off the worst consequences. We deeply mourn the fate of all the innocent martyrs of the revolt, and we honour their supreme sacrifice in fulfilling their duties to the State and their fellow-citizens as men and as patriots. Our special security measures have entirely justified themselves. They have been extended and will remain in force as long as is necessary.

The Government's policy during the past few months has therefore been governed by a double responsibility—a sense of responsibility for maintaining undisputed State authority in moments of crisis, and a sense of responsibility for all consequences which might ensue from Czech-German relations in so far as they were not yet settled. Hence our inexhaustible patience during the negotiations and our honest endeavour to give no pretext—not even the appearance of one—for any shifting of responsibility for future developments on to our shoulders. Some among us have more than once lost patience and accused the Government of weakness, but the situation should now be clear to everyone.

Our policy, which enables us to mark time when advisable though without yielding ground, has led our friends and all dispassionate observers to recognize that we have served the cause of peace; that, for all our determination to defend our cause, we are capable of coming to an agreement, and that Czechoslovakia can therefore be trusted to work for the cause of peace. It is this which enables the Government to take a firm stand in home and in foreign policy.

The policy of the last few months has in the past few days produced results for the Republic which nothing else could have done. To-day it can be said that Czechoslovakia has fulfilled all the tasks which devolved upon her. It now remains for others to do the same. The settlement of Czech-German relations cannot and must not be the source of a fresh conflict, nor must it be a psychological obstacle to future co-operation between nations in just those parts of Europe where peace, progress, and happiness depend upon peaceful and constructive collaboration.

A so-called plebiscite cannot in any circumstances bring about a solution commensurate with this great aim. On this point all those are agreed, both at home and abroad, who are acquainted with the complex national and territorial position in Czechoslovakia and Central Europe generally. In places where plebiscites could bring about a settlement of nationality problems, they have been held. If a plebiscite could have provided a suitable means of settling the nationalities problem in Czechoslovakia, the Peace Conference would have welcomed it as such. A plebiscite in Czechoslovakia is unacceptable not only from the subjective standpoint of the State but also objectively, because it would open up a series of new problems.

Czechoslovakia is willing, even in this moment of tension, to continue her efforts for peace. In the name of all the lawful authorities of this State I declare that, in spite of Henlein's refusal to come to terms with the Czechoslovak

Government over the settlement of the nationalities problem and in spite of his attempted revolt, the Government's policy of coming to an understanding with the various nationalities, and particularly with the Sudeten Germans, remains unchanged. We shall continue to defend the complete integrity of the State and to negotiate on the basis of our recent proposals. The Government has no further need of Henlein and the other fugitive leaders in this connexion. Events here, and the collapse of the revolt, are the best proof that an overwhelming majority of the masses of the Sudeten German people with whom the Government has to deal are in favour of a peaceful settlement of national relations and the nationalities problem.

The Government will adopt no policy of reprisals or persecution. It must however see that the law is respected and order maintained. No concessions can be made on that point, for only in peaceful and orderly conditions can a complete and reasonable settlement be reached. Although in these days we all talk of our nationalities policy and the policy of our State with a view to the Germans, it would be a grave mistake to allow the magnitude of our task in that direction to blind us to our internal State problems as a whole. Actually the question is a much wider one.

Even the public at large must long have been aware of the far-reaching attempt to undermine the internal political structure of our State. I need only recall certain of our parliamentary sessions at which other political groups put forward demands in harmony with and on the same lines as those of the German deputies. Whether intentionally or not, the impression was created that, except for the Czechs and the Slovaks of the Government Parties, practically all the nationalities were opposed to the constitution and the structure of the State. Unrest was to be stirred up at home, and the impression created abroad that the Czechoslovak Republic was not in a position to hold its national groups together, and that it was therefore doubtful whether it could fulfil its mission as a State at all. This constituted, and still constitutes, a frontal political attack on the Czechoslovak State as such. By seeking to disintegrate us internally they hoped to strike at our heart. The Government of the Republic was well aware that notwithstanding our present more than liberal nationalities policy, many of our regional and nationalities problems remained unsettled. A whole series of Government measures were accordingly put in hand. The President of the Republic did not hesitate to use his full political and personal authority for a thorough clearing up of all these matters. We thereupon embarked on a policy of national settlement which was formulated in a number of Government proposals. Until recently, practically no one in this country doubted that these would be successful. But while the Government was still striving to find a radical solution for all nationality problems by way of peaceful agreement, anonymous action was taken by the other side in order to produce disruption. On the one side, unmistakable work for peace; on the other, unmistakable work for disruption.

As the Republic entered upon its twenty years' jubilee, intrigue pursued

it like a shadow. We recall vividly that short period during which even a section of the Slovaks went astray. It must be stressed that last year's measures concerning the first stage of Ruthenian[1] autonomy were justified not only from the legal but from the political standpoint With but few exceptions, Ruthenia did not go astray. I make only a brief reference to Slovakia and Ruthenia to-day in order to show that the regulation of conditions in these two provinces is progressing favourably. After twenty years' development of national groups and individuals further steps can and must now be taken so as to ensure that, in addition to formal and legal ties, the provision of every moral guarantee of internal contentment for our Slovak and Ruthenian brethren may contribute to the total strength of the Republic. If at this juncture the whole population of these two contented, loyal provinces gives the State their valuable support, our State policy will have registered a notable result in this direction also.

We are confronted to-day with nothing less than a systematic political attack upon the most important principles of our State. I must emphasize that we are about to be put to a test of historic significance. What is involved is not a partial problem; we must ward off every attempt to threaten us, and dispose of any doubts that might undermine our unity. We must do this in virtue of our international position, but it has to be done above all by our own internal strength. We shall need this unity particularly in the immediate future when our heaviest tasks have to be faced.

We are a nation that has learnt, in spite of or perhaps just because of the terrible pages in our history, not only how to resist, but how to husband our resources at critical moments. We have warded off all recent attempts to destroy our ties with our friends simply by the superhuman self-control which has enabled us to weigh every situation not merely from the standpoint of our own right to exist, but from a genuinely European standpoint. We do not and never shall forget the unexampled national discipline and sense of political responsibility shown by our people. I thank you in the name of the Government and with all my heart for the iron nerve with which you have resisted the attacks of enemy propaganda and political agitation. Stand firm; do not let yourselves be depressed by the spreading of doubt and whispers of distrust. All of you, we members of the Government, the army, and the citizens, are at one. We are one people, not just so many Parties, and the whole nation is at one with its President—on whom reproaches such as have been voiced abroad can have no effect. The greater the pressure brought to bear on us from outside, the more firmly we shall be united. No one has succeeded, and no one will succeed in creating disunity among us.

We know that the trial which confronts our Republic will be severe and that the demands made on our self-sacrifice and our strength are increasing daily. The lesson of the centuries has taught us that no one may dream of peace who is not capable of fighting for it. Let us therefore go forward to

[1] See Introductory Note to Section 4, pp. 322–23.

meet the days to come with quiet hearts. We are a people who know how to defend ourselves, whatever may happen, for we remain true to ourselves. We want peace and freedom, freedom and peace. We neither use nor need to use strong words. We need, and we possess, firmness and stout hearts.

(ix) *Communiqué issued after the Conversations between M. Daladier and M. Bonnet and British Ministers in London, September 18, 1938.*[1]

After a full discussion of the present international situation, the representatives of the British and French Governments are in complete agreement as to the policy to be adopted with a view to promoting a peaceful solution of the Czechoslovak question. The two Governments hope that thereafter it will be possible to consider a more general settlement in the interests of European peace.

(x) *Anglo-French Proposals submitted to the Czechoslovak Government, September 19, 1938.*[2]

The representatives of the French and British Governments have been in consultation to-day on the general situation, and have considered the British Prime Minister's report of his conversation with Herr Hitler. British Ministers also placed before their French colleagues their conclusions derived from the account furnished to them of the work of his Mission by Lord Runciman. We are both convinced that, after recent events, the point has now been reached where the further maintenance within the boundaries of the Czechoslovak State of the districts mainly inhabited by Sudeten Deutsch cannot, in fact, continue any longer without imperilling the interests of Czechoslovakia herself and of European peace. In the light of these considerations, both Governments have been compelled to the conclusion that the maintenance of peace and the safety of Czechoslovakia's vital interests cannot effectively be assured unless these areas are now transferred to the Reich.

2. This could be done either by direct transfer or as the result of a plebiscite. We realize the difficulties involved in a plebiscite, and we are aware of your objections already expressed to this course, particularly the possibility of far-reaching repercussions if the matter were treated on the basis of so wide a principle. For this reason we anticipate, in the absence of indication to the contrary, that you may prefer to deal with the Sudeten Deutsch problem by the method of direct transfer, and as a case by itself.

3. The area for transfer would probably have to include areas with over 50 per cent of German inhabitants, but we should hope to arrange by negotiations provisions for adjustment of frontiers, where circumstances render it necessary, by some international body, including a Czech representative. We are satisfied that the transfer of smaller areas based on a higher percentage would not meet the case.

[1] *The Times*, September 19, 1938. [2] *British White Paper*, Cmd. 5847.

4. The international body referred to might also be charged with questions of possible exchange of population on the basis of right to opt within some specified time-limit.

5. We recognize that, if the Czechoslovak Government is prepared to concur in the measures proposed, involving material changes in the conditions of the State, they are entitled to ask for some assurance of their future security.

6. Accordingly, His Majesty's Government in the United Kingdom would be prepared, as a contribution to the pacification of Europe, to join in an international guarantee of the new boundaries of the Czechoslovak State against unprovoked aggression. One of the principal conditions of such a guarantee would be the safeguarding of the independence of Czechoslovakia by the substitution of a general guarantee against unprovoked aggression in place of existing treaties which involve reciprocal obligations of a military character.

7. Both the French and British Governments recognize how great is the sacrifice thus required of the Czechoslovak Government in the cause of peace. But because that cause is common both to Europe in general and in particular to Czechoslovakia herself they have felt it their duty jointly to set forth frankly the conditions essential to secure it.

8. The Prime Minister must resume conversations with Herr Hitler not later than Wednesday, and earlier if possible. We therefore feel we must ask for your reply at the earliest possible moment.

(xi) *Reply of the Czechoslovak Government to the Anglo-French Proposals, September 20, 1938.*[1]

The Czechoslovak Government thank the British and French Governments for the report transmitted, in which they express their opinion on a solution of the present international difficulties concerning Czechoslovakia. Conscious of the responsibility they bear in the interests of Czechoslovakia, her friends and allies, and in the interest of general peace, they express their conviction that the proposals contained in the report are incapable of attaining the aims which the British and French Governments expect from them in their great effort to preserve peace.

These proposals were made without consultation with the representatives of Czechoslovakia. They were negotiated against Czechoslovakia, without hearing her case, though the Czechoslovak Government has pointed out that they cannot take responsibility for a declaration made without their consent. It is hence understandable that the proposals mentioned could not be such as to be acceptable to Czechoslovakia.

The Czechoslovak Government cannot for constitutional reasons take a decision which would affect their frontiers. Such a decision would not be

[1] This Note was not published. *Munich: Before and After.* By Dr. Hubert Ripka. Gollancz, London 1939, pp. 74–7.

possible without violating the democratic régime and juridical order of the Czechoslovak State. In any case it would be necessary to consult Parliament.

In the view of the Government, the acceptance of such a proposal would amount to a voluntary and complete mutilation of the State in every respect. Czechoslovakia would be completely paralysed in regard to economics and communications and, from a strategic point of view, her position would become extremely difficult. Sooner or later she would fall under the complete domination of Germany.

Even if Czechoslovakia should make the sacrifices proposed, the question of peace would by no means be solved.

(*a*) Many Sudeten Germans would, for well-known reasons, prefer to leave the Reich and would settle in the democratic atmosphere of the Czechoslovak State. New difficulties and new nationality conflicts would be the result.

(*b*) The mutilation of Czechoslovakia would lead to a profound political change in the whole of Central and South-Eastern Europe. The balance of forces in Central Europe and in Europe as a whole would be completely destroyed: it would have the most far-reaching consequences for all other States and especially for France.

(*c*) The Czechoslovak Government are sincerely grateful to the Great Powers for their intention of guaranteeing the integrity of Czechoslovakia; they appreciate it and value it highly. Such a guarantee would certainly open the way to an agreement between all interested Powers, if the present nationality conflicts were settled amicably and in such a manner as not to impose unacceptable sacrifices on Czechoslovakia.

Czechoslovakia has during recent years given many proofs of her unshakable devotion to peace. At the instance of her friends, the Czechoslovak Government have gone so far in the negotiations about the Sudeten German question that it has been acknowledged with gratitude by the whole world—also a British Government pronouncement stressed that it is necessary not to exceed the bounds of the Czechoslovak Constitution—and even the Sudeten German Party did not reject the last proposals of the Government but publicly expressed its conviction that the intentions of the Government were serious and sincere. In spite of the fact that a revolt has just broken out among a part of the Sudeten population which has been instigated from abroad, the Government have again declared solemnly that they still adhere to the proposals which had met the wishes of the Sudeten German minority. Even to-day they consider this solution as realizable as far as the nationality questions of the republic are concerned.

Czechoslovakia has always remained faithful to her treaties and fulfilled her obligations resulting from them, whether in the interests of her friends or the League of Nations and its members or the other nations. She was resolved and is still resolved to fulfil them under any circumstances.

of recent obligations and declarations of her neighbour and also on the basis of the arbitration treaty of October 16, 1925, which the present German Government have recognized as valid in several pronouncements. The Czechoslovak Government emphasize that this treaty can be applied and ask that this should be done. As they respect their signature, they are prepared to accept any sentence of arbitration which might be pronounced. This would limit any conflict. It would make possible a quick, honourable solution which would be worthy of all interested States.

Czechoslovakia has been always bound to France by respect and most devoted friendship and an alliance which no Czechoslovak Government and no Czechoslovak will ever violate. She has lived and still lives in the belief in the great French nation, whose Government have so frequently assured her of the firmness of their friendship. She is bound to Great Britain by traditional friendship and respect with which Czechoslovakia will always be inspired, by the undissoluble co-operation between the two countries and thus also by the common effort for peace, whatever conditions in Europe prevail.

The Czechoslovak Government appreciate that the effort of the British and French Governments have their source in real sympathy. They thank them for it sincerely. Nevertheless, for reasons already stated, they appeal to them again and for the last time and ask them to reconsider their opinion. They do so in the conviction that they are defending, not only their own interests, but also the interest of their friends, the cause of peace and the cause of healthy development in Europe. At this decisive moment, it is not only a question of the fate of Czechoslovakia, but also the fate of other countries, and especially of France.

(xii) *Telegram of Instructions from Lord Halifax to the British Minister at Prague, September 21, 1938.*[1]

You should at once join with your French colleague in pointing out to the Czech Government that their reply in no way meets the critical situation which the Anglo-French proposals were designed to avert, and if adhered to would, when made public, in our opinion lead to an immediate German invasion. You should urge the Czech Government to withdraw this reply and urgently consider an alternative that takes account of realities. Anglo-French proposals remain in our view only chance of avoiding immediate German attack. On the basis of the reply now under consideration I would have no hope of any useful result ensuing from a second visit to Herr Hitler, and Prime Minister would be obliged to cancel arrangement for it. We therefore beg Czech Government to consider urgently and seriously before producing a situation for which we could take no responsibility. We should of course have been willing to put Czech proposal for arbitration before the German Government if we had thought that at this stage there was any

[1] Quoted by Earl Stanhope, President of the Board of Education, in the House of Lords on October 5. *Hansard*, October 5, 1938, col. 1492. It was sent at 1.20 a.m.

chance of its receiving favourable consideration. But we cannot for a moment believe that it would be acceptable now, nor do we think that the German Government would regard the present proposition as one that is capable of being settled by arbitration as the Czech Government suggest. If on reconsideration Czech Government feel bound to reject our advice, they must of course be free to take action that they think appropriate to meet the situation that may thereafter develop.

Please act immediately on receipt at whatever hour.[1]

(xiii) *Note from the Czechoslovak Government accepting the Anglo-French Proposals, September 21, 1938.*[2]

The Czechoslovak Government, forced by circumstances, yielding to unheard-of pressure and drawing the consequences from the communication of the French and British Governments of September 21, 1938, in which both Governments expressed their point of view as to help for Czechoslovakia in case she should refuse to accept the Franco-British proposals and should be attacked by Germany, accepts the Anglo-French proposals with feelings of pain, assuming that both Governments will do everything in order to safeguard the vital interests of the Czechoslovak State in their application. It notes with regret that these proposals were elaborated without previous consultation with the Czechoslovak Government.

Deeply regretting that their proposal of arbitration has not been accepted, the Czechoslovak Government accept these proposals as a whole, from which the principle of a guarantee, as formulated in the note, cannot be detached, and accept them with the further assumption that both Governments will not permit a German invasion of Czechoslovak territory, which will remain Czechoslovak up to the moment when it will be possible to carry out its transfer after the determination of the new frontier by the International Commission referred to in the proposals.

In the opinion of the Czechoslovak Government, the Franco-British proposals imply that all details of the practical realization of the Franco-British proposals will be determined in agreement with the Czechoslovak Government.

(xiv) *Extract from Broadcast by the Czechoslovak Government, September 21, 1938.*[3]

. . . The British and French Governments, during a common *démarche* made last night before the President of the Republic by their diplomatic representatives, intimated to the Czechoslovak Government that this solution[4] would not prevent a conflict, and that Great Britain and France

[1] With regard to the French Minister's instructions, see Introductory Note, p. 200–1.
[2] *Munich: Before and After.* By Dr. Hubert Ripka. Gollancz, London, 1939, pp. 84–5.
[3] Given at 7 p.m. *Munich: Before and After.* By Dr. Hubert Ripka. Gollancz, London, 1939. pp. 105–6.
[4] i.e. negotiations in accordance with the Czech-German Treaty of Arbitration.

would be unable to afford any help to Czechoslovakia in the event of her being attacked by Germany, which would happen if Czechoslovakia did not immediately agree in principle to the cession of the territories with German population to the Reich.

Since the Soviet Union could afford us military help only in company with France or, alternatively, if France would not act, until Germany had been declared an aggressor by the League of Nations, we found ourselves faced with the threat of a war, which would endanger, not merely the present boundaries of our State, but even the very existence of the Czechs and Slovaks as one indivisible nation. The Government is quite decided to maintain order with all the means at its disposal and protect in every way the independence and freedom of the nation under the new conditions which will consequently obtain. The President of the Republic, therefore, together with the Government, could not do anything but accept the plan of the two Great Powers as the basis of further negotiations. We had no other choice, because we were left alone.

The Government will guide and direct the State in the new conditions, and believes that the National Assembly, when it is assembled, and even after considering the inevitable consequences of this painful decision, will confirm it. The Government well understands and shares deeply the feelings of the nation, its sorrow and its grief. It is, however, convinced that, with the aid of all the moral and defensive forces of the people, it will be able to strengthen the new Czechoslovak State, which will represent even in the future the legacy of our famous past as a nation. It will unite the whole nation to defend the freedom and independence, within its new framework, of our cherished Fatherland, which is just to all, and will be strengthened in its resistance by the love of all its citizens.

We are all still completely ready and constantly prepared, if necessary, to sacrifice our lives and property for our nation and for our State. We have not allowed, and we shall not allow ourselves and our successors to perish.

(xv) *Letter from Lord Runciman to the Rt. Hon. Neville Chamberlain, September 21, 1938.*[1]

My dear Prime Minister,

When I undertook the task of mediation in the controversy between the Czechoslovak Government and the Sudeten German party, I was, of course, left perfectly free to obtain my own information and to draw my own conclusions. I was under no obligation to issue any kind of report. In present circumstances, however, it may be of assistance to you to have the final views, which I have formed as a result of my Mission, and certain suggestions which I believe should be taken into consideration, if anything like a permanent solution is to be found.

[1] A similar letter was sent by Lord Runciman to President Beneš on the same date. British White Paper, Cmd. 5847.

The problem of political, social and economic relations between the Teuton and Slav races in the area which is now called Czechoslovakia is one which has existed for many centuries with periods of acute struggle and periods of comparative peace. It is no new problem, and in its present stage there are at the same time new factors and also old factors which would have to be considered in any detailed review.

When I arrived in Prague at the beginning of August, the questions which immediately confronted me were (1) constitutional, (2) political and (3) economic. The constitutional question was that with which I was immediately and directly concerned. At that time it implied the provision of some degree of home rule for the Sudeten Germans within the Czechoslovak Republic; the question of self-determination had not yet arisen in an acute form. My task was to make myself acquainted with the history of the question, with the principal persons concerned, and with the suggestions for a solution proposed by the two sides, viz., by the Sudeten German party in the 'Sketch' submitted to the Czechoslovak Government on the 7th June (which was by way of embodying the 8 points of Herr Henlein's speech at Karlsbad), and by the Czechoslovak Government in their draft Nationality Statute, Language Bill, and Administrative Reform Bill.

It became clear that neither of these sets of proposals was sufficiently acceptable to the other side to permit further negotiations on this basis, and the negotiations were suspended on the 17th August. After a series of private discussions between the Sudeten leaders and the Czech authorities, a new basis for negotiations was adopted by the Czechoslovak Government and was communicated to me on the 5th September, and to the Sudeten leaders on the 6th September. This was the so-called 4th Plan. In my opinion—and, I believe, in the opinion of the more responsible Sudeten leaders—this plan embodied almost all the requirements of the Karlsbad 8 points, and with a little clarification and extension could have been made to cover them in their entirety. Negotiations should have at once been resumed on this favourable and hopeful basis; but little doubt remains in my mind that the very fact that they were so favourable operated against their chances, with the more extreme members of the Sudeten German party. It is my belief that the incident arising out of the visit of certain Sudeten German Deputies to investigate into the case of persons arrested for arms smuggling at Mährisch-Ostrau was used in order to provide an excuse for the suspension, if not for the breaking off, of negotiations. The Czech Government, however, at once gave way to the demands of the Sudeten German party in this matter, and preliminary discussions of the 4th Plan were resumed on the 10th September. Again, I am convinced that this did not suit the policy of the Sudeten extremists, and that incidents were provoked and instigated on the 11th September and, with greater effect after Herr Hitler's speech, on the 12th September. As a result of the bloodshed and disturbance thus caused, the Sudeten delegation refused to meet the Czech authorities as had been arranged on the 13th September.

Herr Henlein and Herr Frank presented a new series of demands—withdrawal of State police, limitation of troops to their military duties, etc., which the Czechoslovak Government were again prepared to accept on the sole condition that a representative of the party came to Prague to discuss how order should be maintained. On the night of the 13th September this condition was refused by Herr Henlein, and all negotiations were completely broken off.

It is quite clear that we cannot now go back to the point where we stood two weeks ago; and we have to consider the situation as it now faces us.

With the rejection of the Czechoslovak Government's offer on the 13th September and with the breaking off of the negotiations by Herr Henlein, my functions as a mediator were, in fact, at an end. Directly and indirectly, the connexion between the chief Sudeten leaders and the Government of the Reich had become the dominant factor in the situation; the dispute was no longer an internal one. It was not part of my function to attempt mediation between Czechoslovakia and Germany.

Responsibility for the final break must, in my opinion, rest upon Herr Henlein and Herr Frank and upon those of their supporters inside and outside the country who were urging them to extreme and unconstitutional action.

I have much sympathy, however, with the Sudeten case. It is a hard thing to be ruled by an alien race; and I have been left with the impression that Czechoslovak rule in the Sudeten areas for the last twenty years, though not actively oppressive and certainly not 'terroristic', has been marked by tactlessness, lack of understanding, petty intolerance and discrimination, to a point where the resentment of the German population was inevitably moving in the direction of revolt. The Sudeten Germans felt, too, that in the past they had been given many promises by the Czechoslovak Government, but that little or no action had followed these promises. This experience had induced an attitude of unveiled mistrust of the leading Czech statesmen. I cannot say how far this mistrust is merited or unmerited; but it certainly exists, with the result that, however conciliatory their statements, they inspire no confidence in the minds of the Sudeten population. Moreover, in the last elections of 1935 the Sudeten German party polled more votes than any other single party; and they actually formed the second largest party in the State Parliament. They then commanded some 44 votes in a total Parliament of 300. With subsequent accessions, they are now the largest party. But they can always be outvoted; and consequently some of them feel that constitutional action is useless for them.

Local irritations were added to these major grievances. Czech officials and Czech police, speaking little or no German, were appointed in large numbers to purely German districts; Czech agricultural colonists were encouraged to settle on land transferred under the Land Reform in the middle of German populations; for the children of these Czech invaders Czech schools were built on a large scale; there is a very general belief that Czech

firms were favoured as against German firms in the allocation of State contracts and that the State provided work and relief for Czechs more readily than for Germans. I believe these complaints to be in the main justified. Even as late as the time of my Mission, I could find no readiness on the part of the Czechoslovak Government to remedy them on anything like an adequate scale.

All these, and other, grievances were intensified by the reactions of the economic crisis on the Sudeten industries, which form so important a part of the life of the people. Not unnaturally, the Government were blamed for the resulting impoverishment.

For many reasons, therefore, including the above, the feeling among the Sudeten Germans until about three or four years ago was one of hopelessness. But the rise of Nazi Germany gave them new hope. I regard their turning for help towards their kinsmen and their eventual desire to join the Reich as a natural development in the circumstances.

At the time of my arrival, the more moderate Sudeten leaders still desired a settlement within the frontiers of the Czechoslovak State. They realized what war would mean in the Sudeten area, which would itself be the main battlefield. Both nationally and internationally such a settlement would have been an easier solution than territorial transfer. I did my best to promote it, and up to a point with some success, but even so not without misgiving as to whether, when agreement was reached, it could ever be carried out without giving rise to a new crop of suspicions, controversies, accusations, and counter-accusations. I felt that any such arrangement would have been temporary, not lasting.

This solution, in the form of what is known as the 'Fourth Plan', broke down in the circumstances narrated above; the whole situation, internal and external, had changed; and I felt that with this change my mission had come to an end.

When I left Prague on the 16th September, the riots and disturbances in the Sudeten areas, which had never been more than sporadic, had died down. A considerable number of districts had been placed under a régime called Standrecht, amounting to martial law. The Sudeten leaders, at any rate the more extreme among them, had fled to Germany and were issuing proclamations defying the Czechoslovak Government. I have been credibly informed that, at the time of my leaving, the number of killed on both sides was not more than 70.

Unless, therefore, Herr Henlein's Freikorps are deliberately encouraged to cross the frontier, I have no reason to expect any notable renewal of incidents and disturbances. In these circumstances the necessity for the presence of State Police in these districts should no longer exist. As the State Police are extremely unpopular among the German inhabitants, and have constituted one of their chief grievances for the last three years, I consider that they should be withdrawn as soon as possible. I believe that their withdrawal would reduce the causes of wrangles and riots.

Further, it has become self-evident to me that those frontier districts between Czechoslovakia and Germany where the Sudeten population is in an important majority should be given full right of self-determination at once. If some cession is inevitable, as I believe it to be, it is as well that it should be done promptly and without procrastination. There is real danger, even a danger of civil war, in the continuance of a state of uncertainty. Consequently there are very real reasons for a policy of immediate and drastic action. Any kind of plebiscite or referendum would, I believe, be a sheer formality in respect of these predominantly German areas. A very large majority of their inhabitants desire amalgamation with Germany. The inevitable delay involved in taking a plebiscite vote would only serve to excite popular feelings, with perhaps most dangerous results. I consider, therefore, that these frontier districts should at once be transferred from Czechoslovakia to Germany, and, further, that measures for their peaceful transfer, including the provision of safeguards for the population during the transfer period, should be arranged forthwith by agreement between the two Governments.

The transfer of these frontier districts does not, however, dispose finally of the question how Germans and Czechs are to live together peacefully in future. Even if all the areas where the Germans have a majority were transferred to Germany there would still remain in Czechoslovakia a large number of Germans, and in the areas transferred to Germany there would still be a certain number of Czechs. Economic connexions are so close that an absolute separation is not only undesirable but inconceivable; and I repeat my conviction that history has proved that in times of peace the two peoples can live together on friendly terms. I believe that it is in the interests of all Czechs and of all Germans alike that these friendly relations should be encouraged to re-establish themselves; and I am convinced that this is the real desire of the average Czech and German. They are alike in being honest, peaceable, hard-working and frugal folk. When political friction has been removed on both sides, I believe that they can settle down quietly.

For those portions of the territory, therefore, where the German majority is not so important, I recommend that an effort be made to find a basis for local autonomy within the frontiers of the Czechoslovak Republic on the lines of the 'Fourth Plan', modified so as to meet the new circumstances created by the transfer of the preponderantly German areas. As I have already said, there is always a danger that agreement reached in principle may lead to further divergencies in practice. But I think that in a more peaceful future this risk can be minimized.

This brings me to the political side of the problem, which is concerned with the question of the integrity and security of the Czechoslovak Republic, especially in relation to her immediate neighbours. I believe that here the problem is one of removing a centre of intense political friction from the middle of Europe. For this purpose it is necessary permanently to provide that the Czechoslovak State should live at peace with all her neighbours

and that her policy, internal and external, should be directed to that end. Just as it is essential for the international position of Switzerland that her policy should be entirely neutral, so an analogous policy is necessary for Czechoslovakia—not only for her own future existence but for the peace of Europe.

In order to achieve this, I recommend

(1) That those parties and persons in Czechoslovakia who have been deliberately encouraging a policy antagonistic to Czechoslovakia's neighbours should be forbidden by the Czechoslovak Government to continue their agitations; and that, if necessary, legal measures should be taken to bring such agitations to an end.

(2) That the Czechoslovak Government should so remodel her foreign relations as to give assurances to her neighbours that she will in no circumstances attack them or enter into any aggressive action against them arising from obligations to other States.

(3) That the principal Powers, acting in the interests of the peace of Europe, should give to Czechoslovakia guarantees of assistance in case of unprovoked aggression against her.

(4) That a commercial treaty on preferential terms should be negotiated between Germany and Czechoslovakia if this seems advantageous to the economic interests of the two countries.

This leads me on to the third question which lay within the scope of my inquiry, viz., the economic problem. This problem centres on the distress and unemployment in the Sudeten German areas, a distress which has persisted since 1930, and is due to various causes. It constitutes a suitable background for political discontent. It is a problem which exists; but to say that the Sudeten German question is entirely or even in the main an economic one is misleading. If a transfer of territory takes place, it is a problem which will for the most part fall to the German Government to solve.

If the policy which I have outlined above recommends itself to those immediately concerned in the present situation, I would further suggest: (*a*) That a representative of the Sudeten German people should have a permanent seat in the Czechoslovak Cabinet. (*b*) That a Commission under a neutral chairman should be appointed to deal with the question of the delimitation of the area to be transferred to Germany and also with controversial points immediately arising from the carrying out of any agreement which may be reached. (*c*) That an international force be organized to keep order in the districts which are to be transferred pending actual transfer, so that Czechoslovak State police, as I have said above, and also Czechoslovak troops, may be withdrawn from this area.

I wish to close this letter by recording my appreciation of the personal courtesy, hospitality and assistance which I and my staff received from the Government authorities, especially Dr. Beneš and Dr. Hodža, from the

representatives of the Sudeten German party with whom we came in contact, and from a very large number of other people in all ranks of life whom we met during our stay in Czechoslovakia.

Yours very sincerely,

RUNCIMAN OF DOXFORD

(xvi) *Extracts from Speech by M. Litvinov, representative of the U.S.S.R. at the Assembly of the League of Nations, September 21, 1938.*[1]

. . . At the present time, a fifth State, Czechoslovakia, is suffering interference in its internal affairs at the hands of a neighbouring State, and is publicly and loudly menaced with attack. One of the oldest, most cultured, most hard-working of European peoples, which acquired its independence as a State after centuries of oppression, to-day or to-morrow may decide to take up arms in defence of that independence.

I am sure that the sympathies, if not of all Governments, then at any rate of all peoples represented at the Assembly, go out to the Czechoslovak people in this its terrible hour of trial; that we all remember the most active part played by Czechoslovakia and its present President, M. Beneš, in the organization and development of the League of Nations; and that all our thoughts are so occupied with the events in Czechoslovakia and around it that we delegates find it difficult to give the necessary attention to the Assembly's agenda—in which Czechoslovakia is not mentioned. There is nothing surprising, therefore, in the fact that the general discussion has centred on what the League of Nations ought to have done, but did not do. . . .

Such an event as the disappearance of Austria passed unnoticed by the League of Nations. Realizing the significance of this event for the fate of the whole of Europe, and particularly of Czechoslovakia, the Soviet Government, immediately after the *Anschluss*, officially approached the other European Great Powers with a proposal for an immediate collective deliberation on the possible consequences of that event, in order to adopt collective preventive measures. To our regret, this proposal, which, if carried out, could have saved us from the alarm which all the world now feels for the fate of Czechoslovakia, did not receive its just appreciation.

Bound to Czechoslovakia by a pact of mutual assistance, the Soviet Union abstained from any intervention in the negotiations of the Czechoslovak Government with the Sudeten Germans, considering this to be the internal business of the Czechoslovak State. We abstained from all advice to the Czechoslovak Government, considering quite inadmissible that it should be asked to make concessions to the Germans, to the detriment of its interests as a State, in order that we should be set free from the necessity of fulfilling our obligations under the treaty bearing our signature. Neither

[1] At the Assembly of the League of Nations. League of Nations *Official Journal*, Special Supplement No. 183, pp. 74–8.

did we offer any advice in the contrary direction. We valued very highly the tact of the Czechoslovak Government, which did not even inquire of us whether we should fulfil our obligations under this pact, since obviously it had no doubt of this, and had no grounds for doubt. When, a few days before I left for Geneva, the French Government for the first time inquired as to our attitude in the event of an attack on Czechoslovakia, I gave in the name of my Government the following perfectly clear and unambiguous reply.

We intend to fulfil our obligations under the pact and, together with France, to afford assistance to Czechoslovakia by the ways open to us. Our War Department is ready immediately to participate in a conference with representatives of the French and Czechoslovak War Departments, in order to discuss the measures appropriate to the moment. Independently of this, we should consider desirable that the question be raised at the League of Nations if only as yet under Article 11, with the object, first, of mobilizing public opinion and, secondly, of ascertaining the position of certain other States, whose passive aid might be extremely valuable. It was necessary, however, to exhaust all means of averting an armed conflict, and we considered one such method to be an immediate consultation between the Great Powers of Europe and other interested States, in order if possible to decide on the terms of a collective *démarche*.

This is how our reply was framed. It was only two days ago that the Czechoslovak Government addressed a formal inquiry to my Government as to whether the Soviet Union is prepared, in accordance with the Soviet-Czech pact, to render Czechoslovakia immediate and effective aid if France, loyal to her obligations, will render similar assistance, to which my Government gave a clear answer in the affirmative.

I believe it will be admitted that both were replies of a loyal signatory of an international agreement and of a faithful servant of the League. It is not our fault if no effect was given to our proposals, which, I am convinced, could have produced the desired results, both in the interests of Czechoslovakia, and in those of all Europe and of general peace. Unfortunately, other steps were taken, which have led, and which could not but lead, to such a capitulation as is bound sooner or later to have quite incalculable and disastrous consequences. . . .

(xvii) *Statement by the Rt. Hon. Neville Chamberlain on leaving for Godesberg, September 22, 1938.*[1]

A peaceful solution of the Czechoslovakia problem is an essential preliminary to a better understanding between the British and German peoples; and that, in turn, is the indispensable foundation of European peace.

European peace is what I am aiming at, and I hope this journey may be the way to get it.

[1] Before leaving Heston aerodrome. *The Times*, September 23, 1938.

(xviii) *Statement by the British Delegation at Godesberg, September 22, 1938.*[1]

The Prime Minister had a conversation with the German Führer, which, beginning at 4 o'clock, was continued until shortly after 7 p.m. It is intended to resume the conversations to-morrow morning.

In the meantime the first essential in the opinion of the Prime Minister is that there should be a determination on the part of all parties and on the part of all concerned to ensure that the local conditions in Czechoslovakia are such as not in any way to interfere with the progress of the conversations.

The Prime Minister appeals most earnestly therefore to everybody to assist in maintaining a state of orderliness and to refrain from action of any kind that would be likely to lead to incidents.

(xix) *Broadcast by President Beneš, September 22, 1938.*[2]

We have had to act in accordance with existing circumstances of which we are all of us well aware. What will happen in the future remains to be seen. I am watching every development calmly and without fear. I have already told you that never in my life have I known fear—and I have no fear now for the future of our State. I have made plans for all eventualities, and I cannot be surprised, whatever may occur. I desire an understanding such as is being worked upon—an understanding between the greater nations of the world. If such an understanding is achieved, provided that it is an honourable one, it will be to the advantage also of our nation. It will mean a general appeasement between England and France and Germany, and between our country and Germany. It will mean also our co-operation with other countries, especially with those of Eastern Europe.

Let us be patient then, and wait, with our strength unweakened and undisturbed by internal conflict, by lack of confidence, or by excitement and passion. We are a capable and realistic people, which has always understood a dangerous situation when it has arisen, and which knows when to act and when to fight. If it should be necessary to fight, we will know how to do so to the last breath. If it is necessary to negotiate, we will negotiate. If we have given way during these difficult days, it is to our honour, and history will prove, some day, that we have given way inevitably and in a progressive spirit, as good Europeans, and that our attitude and actions have been calm, brave, public-spirited and dignified.

I repeat: I see things clearly and I have my plan. I have confidence in our people, in our nation and in our State. Our line of policy is firm, and we are trying to act in a thoughtful manner suited to the circumstances and events, which are now changing so rapidly. I fully uderstand the ezpression of your feelings and your patriotic demonstrations, and I appreciate them, because in their dignified form they are of benefit to the state; but be calm

[1] *The Times*, September 23, 1938. [2] In the evening. Ripka, *op. cit.*, pp. 111–12.

and manly in this crisis, and do not lose your feeling of optimism and that healthy common sense which is so characteristic of us Czechoslovaks.

Our adversaries are expecting our disintegration and would take advantage of disorder or unrest, so it is essential, especially now, during the coming international negotiations, that order shall be maintained. And, above all, let us save our strength. We shall need it. Let us preserve our mental equilibrium. To-day we need it more than ever before. Europe is passing through a great crisis, and we—if we remain true to ourselves, firm in the unity of all our parties and movements, and steadfast in our wisdom and preparedness—we shall pass through it successfully and with honour. I repeat: Have no fear for the future of your Fatherland. There have been worse times than these, and we have survived to see better ones again.

(xx) *First Letter from the Rt. Hon. Neville Chamberlain at Godesberg to Herr Hitler, September 23, 1938.*[1]

Godesberg, September 23, 1938

My dear Reichskanzler,

I think it may clarify the situation and accelerate our conversation if I send you this note before we meet this morning.

I am ready to put to the Czech Government your proposal as to the areas, so that they may examine the suggested provisional boundary. So far as I can see, there is no need to hold a plebiscite for the bulk of the areas, *i.e.*, for those areas which (according to statistics upon which both sides seem to agree) are predominantly Sudeten German areas. I have no doubt, however, that the Czech Government would be willing to accept your proposal for a plebiscite to determine how far, if at all, the proposed new frontier need be adjusted.

The difficulty I see about the proposal you put to me yesterday afternoon arises from the suggestion that the areas should in the immediate future be occupied by German troops. I recognize the difficulty of conducting a lengthy investigation under existing conditions and doubtless the plan you propose would, if it were acceptable, provide an immediate easing of the tension. But I do not think you have realized the impossibility of my agreeing to put forward any plan unless I have reason to suppose that it will be considered by public opinion in my country, in France, and, indeed, in the world generally, as carrying out the principles already agreed upon in an orderly fashion and free from the threat of force. I am sure that an attempt to occupy forthwith by German troops areas which will become part of the Reich at once in principle, and very shortly afterwards by formal delimitation, would be condemned as an unnecessary display of force.

Even if I felt it right to put this proposal to the Czech Government, I am convinced that they would not regard it as being in the spirit of the arrangement which we and the French Government urged them to accept and which

[1] British White Paper, Cmd. 5847.

they have accepted. In the event of German troops moving into the areas as you propose, there is no doubt that the Czech Government would have no option but to order their forces to resist, and this would mean the destruction of the basis upon which you and I a week ago agreed to work together, namely, an orderly settlement of this question rather than a settlement by the use of force.

It being agreed in principle that the Sudeten German areas are to join the Reich, the immediate question before us is how to maintain law and order pending the final settlement of the arrangements for the transfer. There must surely be alternatives to your proposal which would not be open to the objections I have pointed out. For instance, I could ask the Czech Government whether they think that there could be an arrangement under which the maintenance of law and order in certain agreed Sudeten German areas would be entrusted to the Sudeten Germans themselves—by the creation of a suitable force, or by the use of forces already in existence, possibly acting under the supervision of neutral observers.

As you know, I did last night, in accordance with my understanding with you, urge the Czech Government to do all in their power to maintain order in the meantime.

The Czech Government cannot, of course, withdraw their forces, nor can they be expected to withdraw the State Police so long as they are faced with the prospect of forcible invasion; but I should be ready at once to ascertain their views on the alternative suggestion I have made and, if the plan proved acceptable, I would urge them to withdraw their forces and the State Police from the areas where the Sudeten Germans are in a position to maintain order.

The further steps that need be taken to complete the transfer could be worked out quite rapidly.

I am,

Yours faithfully,

NEVILLE CHAMBERLAIN

(xxi) *Letter from Herr Hitler to the Rt. Hon. Neville Chamberlain, September 23, 1938.*[1]

Godesberg, September 23, 1938

Your Excellency,

A thorough examination of your letter, which reached me to-day, as well as the necessity of clearing up the situation definitely, lead me to make the following communication:

For nearly two decades the Germans, as well as the various other nationalities in Czechoslovakia, have been maltreated in the most unworthy manner, tortured, economically destroyed, and, above all, prevented from realizing for themselves also the right of the nations to self-determination.

[1] English version printed in British White Paper, Cmd. 5847.

All attempts of the oppressed to change their lot failed in the face of the brutal will to destruction of the Czechs. The latter were in possession of the power of the State and did not hesitate to employ it ruthlessly and barbarically. England and France have never made an endeavour to alter this situation. In my speech before the Reichstag of the 22nd February,[1] I declared that the German Reich would take the initiative in putting an end to any further oppression of these Germans. I have in a further declaration during the Reich Party Congress given clear and unmistakable expression to this decision. I recognize gratefully that at last, after twenty years, the British Government, represented by your Excellency, has now decided for its part also to undertake steps to put an end to a situation which from day to day, and, indeed, from hour to hour, is becoming more unbearable. For if formerly the behaviour of the Czechoslovak Government was brutal, it can only be described during recent weeks and days as madness. The victims of this madness are innumerable Germans. In a few weeks the number of refugees who have been driven out has risen to over 120,000. This situation, as stated above, is unbearable, and will now be terminated by me.

Your Excellency assures me now that the principle of the transfer of the Sudeten territory to the Reich has, in principle, already been accepted. I regret to have to reply to your Excellency that as regards this point, the theoretical recognition of principles has also been formerly granted to us Germans. In the year 1918 the Armistice was concluded on the basis of the 14 points of President Wilson, which in principle were recognized by all. They were, however, in practice broken in the most shameful way. What interests me, your Excellency, is not the recognition of the principle that this territory is to go to Germany, but solely the realization of this principle, and the realization which both puts an end in the shortest time to the sufferings of the unhappy victims of Czech tyranny, and at the same time corresponds to the dignity of a Great Power. I can only emphasize to your Excellency that these Sudeten Germans are not coming back to the German Reich in virtue of the gracious or benevolent sympathy of other nations, but on the ground of their own will based on the right of self-determination of the nations, and of the irrevocable decision of the German Reich to give effect to this will. It is, however, for a nation an unworthy demand to have this recognition made dependent on conditions which are not provided for in treaties nor are practical in view of the shortness of the time.

I have, with the best intentions and in order to give the Czech nation no justifiable cause for complaint, proposed—in the event of a peaceful solution—as the future frontier, that nationalities frontier which I am convinced represents a fair adjustment between the two racial groups, taking also into account the continued existence of large language islands. I am, in addition, ready to allow plebiscites to be taken in the whole territory which will enable subsequent corrections to be made, in order—so far as it is possible—to meet

[1] The reference is to Herr Hitler's speech of February 20. See above, pp. 12–13.

the real will of the peoples concerned. I have undertaken to accept these corrections in advance. I have, moreover, declared myself ready to allow this plebiscite to take place under the control either of international commissions or of a mixed German-Czech commission. I am finally ready, during the days of the plebiscite, to withdraw our troops from the most disputed frontier areas, subject to the condition that the Czechs do the same. I am, however, not prepared to allow a territory which must be considered as belonging to Germany, on the ground of the will of the people and of the recognition granted even by the Czechs, to be left without the protection of the Reich. There is here no international power or agreement which would have the right to take precedence over German right.

The idea of being able to entrust to the Sudeten Germans alone the maintenance of order is practically impossible in consequence of the obstacles put in the way of their political organization in the course of the last decade, and particularly in recent times. As much in the interest of the tortured, because defenceless, population as well as with regard to the duties and prestige of the Reich, it is impossible for us to refrain from giving immediate protection to this territory.

Your Excellency assures me that it is now impossible for you to propose such a plan to your own Government. May I assure you for my part that it is impossible for me to justify any other attitude to the German people. Since, for England, it is a question at most of political imponderables, whereas, for Germany, it is a question of primitive right of the security of more than three million human beings and the national honour of a great people.

I fail to understand the observation of your Excellency that it would not be possible for the Czech Government to withdraw their forces so long as they were obliged to reckon with possible invasion, since precisely by means of this solution the grounds for any forcible action are to be removed. Moreover, I cannot conceal from your Excellency that the great mistrust with which I am inspired leads me to believe that the acceptance of the principle of the transfer of Sudeten Germans to the Reich by the Czech Government is only given in the hope thereby to win time so as, by one means or another, to bring about a change in contradiction to this principle. For if the proposal that these territories are to belong to Germany is sincerely accepted, there is no ground to postpone the practical resolution of this principle. My knowledge of Czech practice in such matters over a period of long years compels me to assume the insincerity of Czech assurances so long as they are not implemented by practical proof. The German Reich is, however, determined by one means or another to terminate these attempts, which have lasted for decades, to deny by dilatory methods the legal claims of oppressed peoples.

Moreover, the same attitude applies to the other nationalities in this State. They also are the victims of long oppression and violence. In their case, also, every assurance given hitherto has been broken. In their case,

also, attempts have been made by dilatory dealing with their complaints or wishes to win time in order to be able to oppress them still more subsequently. These nations, also, if they are to achieve their rights, will, sooner or later, have no alternative but to secure them for themselves. In any event, Germany, if—as it now appears to be the case—should find it impossible to have the clear rights of Germans in Czechoslovakia accepted by way of negotiation, is determined to exhaust the other possibilities which then alone remain open to her.

(Signed) ADOLF HITLER

(xxii) *Second Letter from the Rt. Hon. Neville Chamberlain at Godesberg to Herr Hitler, September 23, 1938.*[1]

Godesberg, September 23, 1938

My dear Reichskanzler,

I have received your Excellency's communication in reply to my letter of this morning and have taken note of its contents.

In my capacity as intermediary, it is evidently now my duty—since your Excellency maintains entirely the position you took last night—to put your proposals before the Czechoslovak Government.

Accordingly, I request your Excellency to be good enough to let me have a memorandum which sets out these proposals, together with a map showing the area proposed to be transferred, subject to the result of the proposed plebiscite.

On receiving this memorandum, I will at once forward it to Prague and request the reply of the Czechoslovak Government at the earliest possible moment.

In the meantime, until I can receive their reply, I should be glad to have your Excellency's assurance that you will continue to abide by the understanding, which we reached at our meeting on the 14th September and again last night, that no action should be taken, particularly in the Sudeten territory, by the forces of the Reich to prejudice any further mediation which may be found possible.

Since the acceptance or refusal of your Excellency's proposal is now a matter for the Czechoslovak Government to decide, I do not see that I can perform any further service here, whilst, on the other hand, it has become necessary that I should at once report the present situation to my colleagues and to the French Government. I propose, therefore, to return to England.

Yours faithfully,

NEVILLE CHAMBERLAIN

[1] British White Paper, Cmd. 5847.

(xxiii) *Memorandum handed by Herr Hitler to the Rt. Hon. Neville Chamberlain, September 23, 1938.*[1]

Reports which are increasing in number from hour to hour regarding incidents in the Sudetenland show that the situation has become completely intolerable for the Sudeten German people and, in consequence, a danger to the peace of Europe. It is therefore essential that the separation of the Sudetenland agreed to by Czechoslovakia should be effected without any further delay. On the attached map the Sudeten German area which is to be ceded is shaded red. The areas in which, over and above the areas which are to be occupied, a plebiscite is also to be held are drawn in and shaded green.

The final delimitation of the frontier must correspond to the wishes of those concerned. In order to determine these wishes, a certain period is necessary for the preparation of the voting, during which disturbances must in all circumstances be prevented. A situation of parity must be created. The area designated on the attached map as a German area will be occupied by German troops without taking account as to whether in the plebiscite there may prove to be in this or that part of the area a Czech majority. On the other hand, the Czech territory is occupied by Czech troops without regard to the question whether, within this area, there lie large German language islands, the majority of which will without doubt avow their German nationality in the plebiscite.

With a view to bringing about an immediate and final solution of the Sudeten German problem the following proposals are now made by the German Government :

1. Withdrawal of the whole Czech armed forces, the police, the gendarmerie, the customs officials and the frontier guards from the area to be evacuated as designated on the attached map, this area to be handed over to Germany on the 1st October.

2. The evacuated territory is to be handed over in its present condition (see further details in appendix). The German Government agree that a plenipotentiary representative of the Czech Government or of the Czech Army should be attached to the headquarters of the German military forces to settle the details of the modalities of the evacuation.

3. The Czech Government discharges at once to their homes all Sudeten Germans serving in the military forces or the police anywhere in Czech State territory.

4. The Czech Government liberates all political prisoners of German race.

5. The German Government agrees to permit a plebiscite to take place in those areas, which will be more definitely defined, before at latest the 25th November. Alterations to the new frontier arising out of the plebiscite will be settled by a German-Czech or an international commission. The

[1] English version printed in British White Paper, Cmd. 5847.

plebiscite itself will be carried out under the control of an international commission. All persons who were residing in the areas in question on the 28th October, 1918, or were born there prior to this date will be eligible to vote. A simple majority of all eligible male and female voters will determine the desire of the population to belong to either the German Reich or to the Czech State. During the plebiscite both parties will withdraw their military forces out of areas which will be defined more precisely. The date and duration will be settled by the German and Czech Governments together.

6. The German Government proposes that an authoritative German-Czech commission should be set up to settle all further details.

Godesberg, September 23, 1938.

APPENDIX

The evacuated Sudeten German area is to be handed over without destroying or rendering unusable in any way military, commercial or traffic establishments (plants). These include the ground organization of the air service and all wireless stations.

All commercial and traffic materials, especially the rolling-stock of the railway system, in the designated areas, are to be handed over undamaged. The same applies to all utility services (gas-works, power stations, etc.).

Finally, no food-stuffs, goods, cattle, raw materials, etc., are to be removed.

(xxiv) *Extract from Czechoslovak Mobilization Order, September 23, 1938.*[1]

The principal instructions contained in the mobilization order proclaimed in a broadcast late on Friday night[2] and since posted up everywhere are as follows:

A. Consequent upon mobilization the following persons will be called up for active military service over the whole area of the Czechoslovak Republic. . . .[3]

(xxv) *Extract from Statement by M. Litvinov, representative of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, at the Sixth Committee of the Assembly of the League of Nations, September 23, 1938.*[4]

. . . After his statement in the Assembly on the Soviet attitude towards the Czechoslovak problem,[5] M. Litvinoff had heard it said that, seeing that the Soviet Government made its help to Czechoslovakia conditional upon similar help by France, it would appear to be equally culpable of breaking its Pact of mutual assistance with Czechoslovakia. People who said that were obviously unaware, or pretended to be unaware, that the Franco-Soviet and Soviet-Czechoslovak Pacts of mutual assistance were the result of action undertaken for the creation of a regional Pact of mutual assistance, with the participation of Germany and Poland, based on the principle of

[1] *Prager Presse*, September 25, 1938. Translation.
[2] September 23.
[3] Detailed instructions for mobilization followed.
[4] *League of Nations Official Journal*, Special Supplement No. 189, Geneva, 1938, pp. 34–5.
[5] See above, pp. 224–25.

collective assistance. In consequence of the refusal of those two countries, France and Czechoslovakia had preferred, instead of a single Soviet-Franco-Czechoslovak Pact, the conclusion of two bilateral Pacts. Moreover, it was the Czechoslovak Government that had at the time insisted that Soviet-Czechoslovak mutual assistance should be conditional upon assistance by France: that was reflected in the treaty in question.

Thus, the Soviet Government had no obligations to Czechoslovakia in the event of French indifference to an attack on her. In that event, the Soviet Government might come to the aid of Czechoslovakia only in virtue of a voluntary decision on its part, or in virtue of a decision by the League of Nations. But no one could insist on that help as a duty, and in fact the Czechoslovak Government—not only out of formal, but also out of practical considerations—had not raised the question of Soviet assistance independently of assistance by France. Czechoslovakia, after she had already accepted the German-British-French ultimatum, had asked the Soviet Government what its attitude would be; in other words, would it still consider itself bound by the Soviet-Czechoslovak Pact if Germany presented new demands, if the Anglo-German negotiations were unsuccessful and Czechoslovakia decided to defend her frontiers with arms? That second inquiry was quite comprehensible since, after Czechoslovakia had accepted an ultimatum which included the eventual denunciation of the Soviet-Czechoslovak Pact, the Soviet Government had undoubtedly also had the moral right to renounce that Pact. Nevertheless, the Soviet Government, which, for its part, did not seek pretexts for evading the fulfilment of its obligations, had replied to Prague that, in the event of France granting assistance under the conditions mentioned in the Czechoslovak inquiry, the Soviet-Czechoslovak Pact would again enter into force.

M. Litvinoff had permitted himself that digression because only the representative of a Government with a clear conscience and clean hands in the sphere of the fulfilment of international obligations could speak as he did. He must, therefore, repudiate any unjust reproaches addressed to his Government through ignorance or malice, before declaring that the Soviet delegation would be unable to accept a report by the Sixth Committee proposing that the Assembly should take note of a situation created by the unilateral declarations made in that Committee. In that case also, he was convinced that the Soviet delegation was acting in the interests of the League, in the interests of all peoples and in the interests of peace.

(xxvi) *Statement by the Rt. Hon. Neville Chamberlain on his Return from Godesberg, September 24, 1938.*[1]

My first duty now that I have come back is to report to the British and French Governments the result of my mission, and until I have done that, it would be difficult for me to say anything about it.

[1] Broadcast on his arrival at Heston aerodrome early in the afternoon. *The Struggle for Peace.* By the Rt. Hon. Neville Chamberlain. Hutchinson, London. P. 273.

I will only say this. I trust all concerned will continue their efforts to solve the Czechoslovakia problem peacefully, because on that turns the peace of Europe in our time.

(xxvii) *Letter handed by the Czechoslovak Minister to the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, September 25, 1938.*[1]

SIR,

My Government has instructed me just now, in view of the fact that the French statesmen are not arriving in London to-day, to bring to His Majesty's Government's notice the following message without any delay:

The Czechoslovak people have shown a unique discipline and self-restraint in the last few weeks regardless of the unbelievably coarse and vulgar campaign of the controlled German Press and radio against Czechoslovakia and its leaders, especially M. Beneš.

His Majesty's and the French Governments are very well aware that we agreed under the most severe pressure to the so-called Anglo-French plan for ceding parts of Czechoslovakia. We accepted this plan under extreme duress. We had not even time to make any representations about its many unworkable features. Nevertheless, we accepted it because we understood that it was the end of the demands to be made upon us, and because it followed from the Anglo-French pressure that these two Powers would accept responsibility for our reduced frontiers and would guarantee us their support in the event of our being feloniously attacked.

The vulgar German campaign continued.

While Mr. Chamberlain was at Godesberg the following message was received by my Government from His Majesty's and the French representatives at Prague:

> 'We have agreed with the French Government that the Czechoslovak Government be informed that the French and British Governments cannot continue to take the responsibility of advising them not to mobilize.'

My new Government, headed by General Syrový, declared that they accept full responsibility for their predecessor's decision to accept the stern terms of the so-called Anglo-French plan.

Yesterday, after the return of Mr. Chamberlain from Godesberg, a new proposition was handed by His Majesty's Minister in Prague to my Government with the additional information that His Majesty's Government is acting solely as an intermediary and is neither advising nor pressing my Government in any way. M. Krofta, in receiving the plan from the hands of His Majesty's Minister in Prague, assured him that the Czechoslovak Government will study it in the same spirit in which they have co-operated with Great Britain and France hitherto.

My Government has now studied the document and the map. It is a *de*

[1] British White Paper, Cmd. 5847.

facto ultimatum of the sort usually presented to a vanquished nation and not a proposition to a sovereign State which has shown the greatest possible readiness to make sacrifices for the appeasement of Europe. Not the smallest trace of such readiness for sacrifices has as yet been manifested by Herr Hitler's Government. My Government is amazed at the contents of the memorandum. The proposals go far beyond what we agreed to in the so-called Anglo-French plan. They deprive us of every safeguard for our national existence. We are to yield up large proportions of our carefully prepared defences, and admit the German armies deep into our country before we have been able to organize it on the new basis or make any preparations for its defence. Our national and economic independence would automatically disappear with the acceptance of Herr Hitler's plan. The whole process of moving the population is to be reduced to panic flight on the part of those who will not accept the German Nazi régime. They have to leave their homes without even the right to take their personal belongings or, even in the case of peasants, their cow.

My Government wish me to declare in all solemnity that Herr Hitler's demands in their present form are absolutely and unconditionally unacceptable to my Government. Against these new and cruel demands my Government feel bound to make their utmost resistance, and we shall do so, God helping. The nation of St. Wenceslas, John Hus and Thomas Masaryk will not be a nation of slaves.

We rely upon the two great Western democracies, whose wishes we have followed against our own judgment, to stand by us in our hour of trial.

I have, etc.,

JAN MASARYK

(xxviii) *Broadcast by the Czechoslovak Government, September 26, 1938.*[1]

Hostile propaganda has been broadcasting in all languages calumnies of every description against Czechoslovakia in order to make us appear before the world as disturbers of the peace. For the purposes of this campaign our mobilization measures are now being misrepresented as an attempt to upset the negotiations between the British Prime Minister and the Chancellor of the German Reich at Godesberg. We deny this assertion emphatically. It is absolutely untrue and without foundation.

All the world knows that we do not resort to the methods of distortion of facts and misleading of public opinion which are commonly used by the propaganda of our enemies, and that our news and statements are invariably based on incontrovertible facts. It should not therefore be necessary to make a point of saying that the following statement is absolutely trustworthy and indisputable. Nevertheless we reassert with emphasis, to the public at home and abroad, that our present statement on the course of events is a statement of fact, based not only on our Government's official

[1] *Prager Presse*, September 27, 1938. Translation.

documents but also on official communications by the British and French Governments and steps taken by them.

We declare it to be a fact concerning which no one in the world can harbour the slightest doubt that the Czechoslovak Government, on the night of Tuesday to Wednesday, September 21, officially accepted the French Government's proposal to consider seriously, and take steps for, the surrender to the German Reich of certain territories inhabited predominantly by Germans. The Czechoslovak Government made this positive reply in spite of the fact that it went far beyond the bounds of what the Sudeten German Party itself had declared to be a reasonable basis for a solution. The Czechoslovak Government accepted these hard conditions because the two Governments—Britain and France—which had undertaken to act as intermediaries strongly urged it to do so and because we hoped, by accepting the conditions agreed upon by the Prime Minister, Mr. Chamberlain, and the Chancellor, Herr Hitler, at Berchtesgaden, to secure peace not only for Czechoslovakia, but for the whole world. The two Governments added that, should we refuse these offers, France would not stand by her promise of assistance in case we were invaded and that England would thenceforward not be able to interest herself in the subsequent fate of Czechoslovakia.

Following the advice of the two Great Powers, we accepted these hard conditions so that we might not be accused of destroying the possibility of peace in Europe generally and thereby for the whole world. Mr. Chamberlain then carried our positive reply to the Chancellor of the German Reich. Hardly had the British Prime Minister handed in this positive reply at Godesberg, however, than he was confronted with totally different proposals which went much farther than those previously agreed upon at Berchtesgaden. This was another instance of the familiar negotiation tactics employed by the other side, whereby every fresh concession is promptly followed by increased demands under some arbitrary pretext. The British Prime Minister brought Germany's new proposals and conditions from Godesberg, and they were conveyed to the Czechoslovak Government early on Sunday morning. The British Prime Minister was aware, when he received these new conditions at Godesberg, that neither the British nor the French Government would be in a position to advise the Czechoslovak Government to accept them, and that it was no longer possible to recommend Czechoslovakia to remain passive or abstain from defensive measures.

Accordingly, on Friday, September 23, at 6.15 p.m., the French and British Ambassadors stated officially on behalf of their Governments to our Government that neither England nor France could any longer take the responsibility of advising us to remain passive and not to make the necessary military preparations. At the same time they gave us to understand that although they were transmitting the Godesberg memorandum to us, they were offering no further advice concerning our subsequent action. This signifies that the Great Powers do not themselves regard the new conditions as a reliable basis on which to reach agreement.

The Czechoslovak Government met at 8 p.m. on the same day immediately after receiving the two Ambassadors' communication, and came to the conclusion that the international situation made it absolutely essential to take measures of defence against all eventualities. This was the more urgent because, simultaneously, increased activity by armed bands on the frontier could be observed. These bands were armed with weapons of foreign origin with which they attacked our isolated customs-houses and sentries from across the frontier.

Our Government had already issued orders to all frontier officials and sentries to abstain strictly from any action, and particularly not to use fire-arms, even if seriously threatened. There is not a single instance of our forces having trespassed on foreign soil. It was clear, on the other hand, that violation of the frontier—which, until shortly before, had been strictly limited and controlled by the other side—was now taking place unrestrictedly. Bands of aggressors from the neighbouring German territory were making inroads into our State, armed with all manner of weapons—including machine-guns and hand grenades—and provided with steel helmets.

If we had continued to look on passively at this activity, a conflict must inevitably have arisen. In the interest, therefore, of self-preservation—to which every living being in the world has a claim, far more a State which has just given a proof without parallel in history of its intense desire for peace—the Czechoslovak Government decided that further passivity on its part would be a source of conflict and that it might one day be reproached with having facilitated and even caused a breach of the peace by the inadequacy of its defence preparations.

On that Friday night, a few hours after the visit of the British and French Ambassadors, the Czechoslovak Government accordingly decided to order mobilization. This measure was taken solely in order to create conditions which would make it possible to negotiate in an atmosphere of peace and calm. No sensible person can really suppose that little Czechoslovakia's mobilization could be a menace to anybody.

We repeat, therefore, with all emphasis that our mobilization was not undertaken contrary to the advice and indications of the Great Powers of Western Europe, without whose agreement the Czechoslovak Government has not taken a single step during the whole of the conflict in question. Any propaganda which presents these matters in a different light is simply untrue and fraudulent, and its aim is in no sense the preservation, but the destruction of peace.

(xxix) *Extracts from Speeches by Signor Mussolini during his Tour of Italian Cities, September 18–26, 1938.*

(a) *At Trieste, September 18.*[1]

. . . There are times in the life of nations when the men who lead them must not shrink from their responsibilities, but must proudly assume them to the full. What I am about to say to you is not only dictated by the policy of the Rome-Berlin Axis, but finds its historic and present justification not only in the feeling of friendship which unites us to the Magyars, the Poles, and the other nations of what may be called mosaic State No. 2. What I am about to say is dictated by a consciousness which I would call more than Italian—European.

When the problems raised by history reach a tormenting degree of complication, the solution demanded is the simplest, the most logical, the most radical, that which we Fascists call totalitarian. In face of the problem which is now agitating Europe, the solution has but one name: plebiscites. Plebiscites for all the nationalities which demand them; for the nationalities which were forced into the would-be great Czechoslovakia, which to-day reveals its lack of organic consistency.

But there is something else to be said; it is that at a certain point events assume the headlong movement of an avalanche, so that it is necessary to act speedily if it is desired to avoid disorders and complications. This need for rapid action must have been felt by the British Prime Minister when he left London for Munich, a flying messenger of peace, because any delay does not hasten a solution, but makes a clash certain. This solution is already, notwithstanding the campaign of Moscow, penetrating the hearts of the people of Europe. We hope that at this late hour a peaceful solution will be reached. We also hope that if this is not possible, the resulting conflict may be limited and circumscribed. But if this does not happen, and there is a general division of forces for and against Prague, let it be known that Italy's place is already chosen.

Concerning internal affairs, the burning question of the moment is the racial problem. In this sphere also we shall adopt the necessary solutions. Those who try to make it believed that we have obeyed or imitated, or worse, that we have been subject to suggestion, are poor fools whom we do not know whether to pity or despise. The racial problem has not broken out suddenly, as those think who are accustomed to sudden awakenings because they are accustomed to long, sluggish slumbers. It is related to the conquest of the Empire; for history teaches that empires are won by arms, but held by prestige. And prestige demands a clear-cut racial consciousness which is based not only on difference, but on the most definite superiority.

The Jewish problem is therefore merely an aspect of this phenomenon. Our position has been determined by these incontestable considerations of fact. In spite of our policy, world Jewry has for the last sixteen years been

[1] *Il Giornale d'Italia*, September 20, 1938. Translation.

an irreconcilable enemy of Fascism. . . . However, Jews possessing Italian citizenship who have unquestionable military or civil merit in the eyes of Italy and the régime will find understanding and justice. With regard to the others, a policy of separation will be followed. In the end the world will perhaps be astonished by our generosity rather than by our rigour; unless the Jews outside and inside our country, and above all their new and unexpected friends who defend them from too many chairs of learning, constrain us to change our course radically. . . .

(b) *At Gorizia, September 20.*[1]

. . . There is now a ray of light on the horizon, but as we Fascists have always been against premature and untimely optimism, we will wait, before making a pronouncement, until the curtain has fallen on all the acts of the drama. I may add in any case that I am sure I am interpreting your sentiments in saying that if there is a drama, we shall face it.

(c) *At Udine, September 20.*[2]

. . . We have secured our frontiers, we have reconquered Libya, we have liquidated all the old unsettled diplomatic affairs of a defective peace, and we are strong on land, at sea, and in the air as never before. But besides the power of arms, we possess to-day the power of the spirit, which is the most compact moral unity of the entire Italian nation. I wish that some of those gloomy foreigners who are eternally sceptical of Italian realities could be present at this meeting and hear your hurricane cheering. They would have to tear up their useless papers and make an act of contrition; for, comrades, one of the worst ills from which the world is suffering to-day is the flood of lies. Especially where Italy is concerned. For clearly, many foreigners prefer the Italian people of other days; for many foreigners—and those foreigners we have every right to despise—the Italian people should exist merely for the amusement and diversion of people of other countries. All that is finished; irrevocably finished. We prefer to be feared, and hatred does not matter to us because we despise it. It is time that the world should become acquainted with this new Italy—a hard, determined, warlike Italy. The sixteen years of Fascism are reflected in the admirable way in which the Italian people has behaved during these days. Other nations have had crises, have passed through ups and downs, have experienced terror. The Italian people has not lost its calm, and there has been no need to exhort it to keep cool, because twenty years of war, of battles, and a Revolution such as the Fascist Revolution, have made the Italian soul a block of tempered metal. If to-morrow this nation were called upon to face another test, it would not hesitate a single moment. . . .

[1] *Il Giornale d'Italia*, September 21, 1938. Translation.
[2] *Il Popolo d'Italia*, September 21, 1938. Translation.

(d) *At Treviso, September 21.*[1]

. . . If to-day Czechoslovakia is in a position which might be called delicate, this is because it was—I may now say 'was'—not only a Czech-Slovak State, but a Czech-German-Polish-Magyar-Ruthenian-Rumanian-Slovak State. I now insist that since the problem is being faced, it should be settled integrally.

At this moment the British Prime Minister, who has taken the political initiative, is steering his little vessel towards the haven of peace. According to a telegram of the French official agency, the Czech Government, after spending a whole night in discussion, has this morning accepted the Franco-British proposal formulated at the London meeting.

All impartial foreigners have been obliged to note—perhaps unwillingly—that of all the nations of Europe, the one which has remained calmest during this crisis is the Italian. This is due to the Fascist revolution, which created the Italians. . . .

(e) *At Padua, September 24.*[2]

At Gorizia I told you that even though there was a ray of light on the horizon, any optimism with regard to the European situation must be regarded as premature. At Treviso I said that the British Prime Minister was steering the little ship of peace into port; but I did not say that it would arrive. I can now say that the situation is like to-day's weather; in the morning the sky was very grey, but the sun might break through before long.

It might have seemed that with the acceptance by Prague of the so-called Franco-British plan of London, events were drawing to a close. But there happened something which often happens in so-called democratic régimes. The Government which, having accepted that plan, was under a moral obligation to remain in office to apply it, resigned; it was replaced by a general who, everyone says, is very friendly, too friendly, with Moscow. The first act of this new Government was to proclaim a general mobilization. In face of this fact, which came on top of the reign of terror which the Czechs have instituted in the Sudetenland, Germany gave a supreme proof of moderation; she sent her demands to Prague and gave a time-limit up to October 1 for their acceptance. There are thus exactly six days for the rulers of Prague to find the way of wisdom. For it would be really absurd, and I may add criminal, if millions of Europeans were to hurl themselves at one another simply to maintain Dr. Beneš's overlordship over eight different races.

But it would be a grave, an extremely grave error to misinterpret this patient attitude of Germany. In democratic régimes, irresponsibility holds sway, for everyone tries to shift his responsibilities on to the opposition party or his neighbour. In so-called totalitarian countries, such an evasion of responsibility is impossible.

[1] *Il Giornale d'Italia*, September 22, 1938. Translation.
[2] *Ibid.*, September 25, 1938. Translation.

The problem which has now been placed before the conscience of the nations must be solved completely and finally. It is time that it should be solved, and if a conflict should nevertheless break out, it is possible to localize it. But it is now happening that more or less influential parties and currents of opinion in the Western countries think that the time has come to settle accounts with the totalitarian countries. In that case, these parties and currents of opinion will not find themselves faced by two separate countries, but by two countries which form a solid *bloc*. If there should be in Italy any of those men whom I would call men who are always hiding behind the shutters, men whom I call morally bourgeois, I can tell them that they will be immediately suppressed. . . .

(f) *At Belluno, September 24.*[1]

. . . Our adversaries beyond the Alps, still bound by ideologies which are more than out of date—which are dead—do not know us; they are too stupid to be dangerous. They show that they are at least a quarter of a century behind the times. During that quarter of a century, Italy has tempered herself in the fire of four wars. When, at Geneva, 52 States, presided over by the present President of the Republic of Prague, . . . agreed to decree sanctions against Italy, I never doubted a single instant of the manhood and courage of the Italian people. At that time there was current the absolutely ridiculous alternative of guns or butter. Which did we choose? [The crowd shouted: 'Guns!'] But the guns themselves, even though made of tempered steel, would be an inert material if there did not stand behind them men of the same mettle. . . .

(g) *At Vicenza, September 26.*[2]

. . . It may be said that yesterday began what may be called the week of waiting and of passion in Europe. It is now universally recognized that in the peace treaties of 1919, mistakes were made. I have recognized it since 1921. . . . But, when a mistake has been made, what should be done? It should be repaired. For, according to the wisdom of old, to err is human, but to persevere in error is diabolical. Not only do people not wish to repair the error which they committed by swelling Czechoslovakia beyond measure, but they wish to maintain that error. And for this the peoples of Europe are to fly at one another's throats. But until the contrary is proved, I cannot believe that this will happen; it would be one of the most tragic paradoxes of human history. . . .

Up to now, Italy has taken no military measures, but if others continue to call up their reservists and to mass them on the frontiers, none of you, obviously, will be surprised if Italy does the same. . . .

[1] *Il Popolo d'Italia*, September 25, 1938. Translation.
[2] *Il Giornale d'Italia*, September 27, 1938. Translation.

(h) *At Verona, September 26.*[1]

. . . It is impossible not to recognize and appreciate the efforts which the British Prime Minister has made to find a solution for the problem of the day. It is also necessary to recognize the patience which Germany has shown up to now. The German memorandum did not depart from the lines which were approved at the London meeting. It is quite clear that if the Czechs were left to rely on their own strength, they would be the first to recognize that it was not worth while entering on a conflict concerning the outcome of which there could be no doubt. If there is at present any man in Europe who is more qualified than another to realize what is happening, that man is the President of the Czechoslovak Republic. He was one of the most determined, if not one of the greatest, of those who brought about the disintegration of the Habsburg Dual Monarchy. At that time he spoke of a Bohemian nation. . . .

. . . Geneva is in that condition which doctors call comatose. All those who oppose Italy end by becoming so. . . .

There are still a few days in which to find a peaceful solution. If it is not found, an almost superhuman effort will be needed to avert a conflict. If it does break out, it can, during the first period, be localized. I still believe that Europe will not be willing to subject itself to fire and steel and will not set itself on fire in order to cook the rotten egg of Prague. Europe has many tasks, but certainly the least urgent of them is to add to the number of war cemeteries of which there are so many on the frontiers of States.

But a third period must be contemplated, that in which the character of the conflict will be such that we shall be directly involved. And then we will not have, and we shall not permit, any hesitation. I may add that the sequence of these three phases may be extraordinarily rapid.

It is useless for the diplomats to toil in order to save Versailles. The Europe which was built at Versailles, often with an enormous ignorance of geography and history—that product of Versailles is at death's door. Its fate is being decided this week. And in this week a new Europe may arise —the Europe of justice for all and of reconciliation between peoples. . . .

(xxx) *Letter from the Rt. Hon. Neville Chamberlain to Herr Hitler, September 26, 1938.*[2]

London, September 26, 1938

My dear Reichskanzler,

In my capacity as intermediary I have transmitted to the Czechoslovakian Government the memorandum which your Excellency gave me on the occasion of our last conversation.

The Czechoslovakian Government now inform me that, while they adhere to their acceptance of the proposals for the transfer of the Sudeten German

[1] *Il Giornale d'Italia*, September 27, 1938. Translation. [2] British White Paper, Cmd. 5847.

areas on the lines discussed by my Government and the French Government and explained by me to you on Thursday last, they regard as wholly unacceptable the proposal in your memorandum for the immediate evacuation of the areas and their immediate occupation by German troops, these processes to take place before the terms of cession have been negotiated or even discussed.

Your Excellency will remember that in my letter to you of Friday last I said that an attempt to occupy forthwith by German troops areas which will become part of the Reich at once in principle and very shortly afterwards by formal delimitation, would be condemned as an unnecessary display of force, and that, in my opinion, if German troops moved into the areas that you had proposed, I felt sure that the Czechoslovakian Government would resist and that this would mean the destruction of the basis upon which you and I a week ago agreed to work together, namely, an orderly settlement of this question rather than a settlement by the use of force. I referred also to the effect likely to be produced upon public opinion in my country, in France and, indeed, in the world generally.

The development of opinion since my return confirms me in the views I expressed to you in my letter and in our subsequent conversation.

In communicating with me about your proposals, the Government of Czechoslovakia point out that they go far beyond what was agreed to in the so-called Anglo-French plan. Czechoslovakia would be deprived of every safeguard for her national existence. She would have to yield up large proportions of her carefully prepared defences and admit the German armies deep into her country before it had been organized on the new basis or any preparations had been made for its defence. Her national and economic independence would automatically disappear with the acceptance of the German plan. The whole process of moving the population is to be reduced to panic flight.

I learn that the German Ambassador in Paris has issued a *communiqué* which begins by stating that as a result of our conversations at Godesberg your Excellency and I are in complete agreement as to the imperative necessity to maintain the peace of Europe. In this spirit I address my present communication to you.

In the first place, I would remind your Excellency that as the Czechoslovakian Government adhere to their acceptance of the proposals for the transfer of the Sudeten-German areas there can be no question of Germany 'finding it impossible to have the clear rights of Germans in Czechoslovakia accepted by way of negotiation'. I am quoting the words at the end of your Excellency's letter to me of Friday last.[1]

On the contrary, a settlement by negotiation remains possible and, with a clear recollection of the conversations which you and I have had and with an equally clear appreciation of the consequences which must follow the abandonment of negotiation and the substitution of force, I ask your Excellency to agree that representatives of Germany shall meet representatives

[1] See p. 231.

of the Czechoslovakian Government to discuss immediately the situation by which we are confronted with a view to settling by agreement the way in which the territory is to be handed over. I am convinced that these discussions can be completed in a very short time, and if you and the Czechoslovakian Government desire it, I am willing to arrange for the representation of the British Government at the discussions.

In our conversation, as in the official *communiqué* issued in Germany, you said the only differences between us lay in the method of carrying out an agreed principle. If this is so, then surely the tragic consequences of a conflict ought not to be incurred over a difference in method.

A conference such as I suggest would give confidence that the cession of territory would be carried into effect, but that it would be done in an orderly manner with suitable safeguards.

Convinced that your passionate wish to see the Sudeten German question promptly and satisfactorily settled can be fulfilled without incurring the human misery and suffering that would inevitably follow on a conflict I most earnestly urge you to accept my proposal.

I am,

Yours faithfully,

NEVILLE CHAMBERLAIN

(xxxi) *Letter from the Czechoslovak Minister in London to the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, September 26, 1938.*[1]

Sir,

I have communicated to my Government the Prime Minister's question which he put to me yesterday afternoon and for which he wished an answer. This question of the Prime Minister's, as I understood it, I transmitted to Prague as follows:

> 'Although Herr Hitler did say that the memorandum handed to the Czechoslovak Government by His Majesty's Government was his last word, and although Mr. Chamberlain doubts very much that he could induce Herr Hitler to change his mind at this late hour, the Prime Minister may, under circumstances, make a last effort to persuade Herr Hitler to consider another method of settling peacefully the Sudeten German question, namely, by means of an international conference attended by Germany, Czechoslovakia and other Powers which would consider the Anglo-French plan and the best method of bringing it into operation. He asked whether the Czechoslovak Government would be prepared to take part in this new effort of saving the peace.'

To this question I have now received the following answer of my Government:

> 'The Czechoslovak Government would be ready to take part in an international conference where Germany and Czechoslovakia, among

[1] British White Paper, Cmd. 5847.

other nations, would be represented, to find a different method of settling the Sudeten German question from that expounded in Herr Hitler's proposals, keeping in mind the possible reverting to the so-called Anglo-French plan. In the note which Mr. Masaryk delivered to Mr. Chamberlain yesterday afternoon,[1] mention was made of the fact that the Czechoslovak Government, having accepted the Anglo-French note under the most severe pressure and extreme duress, had no time to make any representations about its many unworkable features. The Czechoslovak Government presumes that, if a conference were to take place, this fact would not be overlooked by those taking part in it.'

My Government, after the experiences of the last few weeks, would consider it more than fully justifiable to ask for definite and binding guarantees to the effect that no unexpected action of an aggressive nature would take place during the negotiations, and that the Czechoslovak defence system would remain intact during that period.

I have, etc.,
JAN MASARYK

(xxxii) *Communiqué published by the Czechoslovak Government, September 26, 1938.*[2]

During the night of September 24–25 the British Legation in Prague, acting as an intermediary, transmitted to the Czechoslovak Government the Memorandum of the German Chancellor, Herr Hitler, which had been delivered to the British Prime Minister, Mr. Chamberlain, during his conversations at Godesberg. This Memorandum was received by the Czechoslovak Government on the understanding that it was based in principle on the Anglo-French proposals of September 19, which had been decided upon at Berchtesgaden and which they, acting on the advice of their British and French friends, had accepted, although they were aware of the heavy sacrifices which that acceptance would entail. They believed, however, that by these sacrifices they would assure the free development in the future of the Czechoslovak State and that they would obtain the international guarantees which were promised.

A closer study of this Memorandum has shown clearly, however, that it is not a question of the Anglo-French Plan of September 19, but of quite new demands, which fundamentally go far beyond the framework of the Anglo-French proposals. This Memorandum represents, so far as one can understand it, entirely new demands made by Germany on Czechoslovakia in a manner which shows no desire to reach agreement, but merely a nakedly brutal design to destroy the viability and independence of the Czechoslovak State.

The character of this Memorandum, which passes over in silence the question of possible guarantees of the Czechoslovak State, can best be seen

[1] See pp. 235–6. [2] Published in the Press. Ripka, *op. cit.*, pp. 163–7.

from the fact that it abandons the basis of the Anglo-French proposals, which was the cession to Germany of Sudeten German territory with a population more than 50 per cent German and demands, in addition to those territories, further large areas which are predominantly Czech. The realization of the German plan would mean the annexation by Germany of about 3,750,000 Czechoslovak citizens, of whom 2,800,000 are German and more than 800,000 Czechoslovak by race. Since the number of Czechs who live in the predominantly German parts of the Czech provinces is considered to be about 380,000, it is evident that the new proposal envisages the annexation of predominantly Czech territories containing nearly 450,000 Czechs.

Moreover, the Memorandum does not stop short even with the satisfaction of this requirement, but demands that in yet other predominantly Czech territories a plebiscite should be held to decide whether they shall belong to Czechoslovakia or to Germany.

The Memorandum concerns a territory with 1,300,000 inhabitants, of whom 1,100,000 are Czechs and 145,000 are Germans. It means that in all 820,000 Czechs would be annexed by Germany, while within the borders of the Czech provinces there would remain only 100,000 Germans. The figures are only approximate and are, of course, based on the Census of 1930.

It is evident from this new Memorandum that the German Reich's Chancellor has put aside the pretext of self-determination and justice for the Germans in the Czech lands, and adopted a policy of demanding a territory which not only was never German, but also is not inhabited by racially German inhabitants. The Reich's Chancellor has not troubled even to mention the question of what guarantees of national existence would be given to the Czech minority in Germany, despite the fact that the present German nationality policy, as is practised to-day towards the Poles and Lusatian Serbs in the German Reich, is a policy of ruthless denationalization.

From the economic point of view, the territorial claims made in Herr Hitler's Memorandum also reveal a wish to destroy all possibility of independent life for the Czechoslovak Republic. They strike at the very foundations of the economic structure of Czechoslovakia by depriving her of vast industrial and agricultural resources. They disrupt her territorial integrity and break up her system of communications, not only in the Czech provinces, but indeed throughout the Republic. If these claims were conceded, the Republic would be deprived of all its industrial centres, with exception of Prague, Zlín and Plzeň, while the latter would, of course, be situated on the very frontier. Czechoslovakia would be deprived of her hop-production; she would be deprived of a large part of her forests, which are the basis for her paper and wood industry; she would lose the greater part of her iron, cotton, glass, ceramic, chemical and many other industries. All those industries, upon which depends the Czechoslovak export trade, would be destroyed or crippled. The natural result of this would be a lowering of the standard of living of the population and an increase of unemployment and of emigration.

The Czechoslovak Republic would at the same time find herself faced with the new problem of looking after the masses of Czech and German people who would leave the territory annexed by Germany for fear of the totalitarian and brutal Nazi régime.

Closely connected with the economic losses with which Czechoslovakia is thus threatened are the catastrophic effects in the sphere of communications which the satisfaction of those claims would entail. The annexation of the territories demanded in Herr Hitler's Memorandum would cut the main rail and road communications of the Republic. Direct communication between Prague and North Slovakia would be impossible, as would also be communication between Prague and South-Eastern and Northern Moravia. The communications of the whole Republic would be disorganized and the State itself torn into three parts without any effective and direct communications between them. At the same time, Czechoslovakia would lose her docks on the Elbe and her access to Bratislava. In other words, she would be completely crippled.

Compliance with Hitler's Memorandum would cripple the Republic also from a military point of view. The country, deprived of its natural mountain frontiers, narrowed by the tearing away of the vast German, as well as of the mixed and Czech, districts, and with its western portion joined with the eastern only by a narrow corridor, would be at the mercy of its powerful neighbours, and more particularly of Germany. This situation would be accentuated by the fact that the Republic would be deprived of its armament industries and of its principal defences, and would be unable, under the new territorial conditions, to construct new ones. In fact, compliance with Hitler's Memorandum would mean placing the whole of the western part of the Republic, i.e. Bohemia and Moravia, at the mercy of Germany.

Since one cannot suppose that Hitler's Memorandum is based on ignorance of the nationality and economic situation of the Republic, one must regard it as deliberately designed to reduce the Czechoslovak State to a condition of absolute economic and political impotence and thus to prepare for the final domination of the Central European zone by the German Reich. The Czechoslovak Government has given ample proof of its sincere endeavour to solve the Sudeten German problem by going to the utmost limits of concession, and even accepting the Anglo-French proposals as the basis for an agreement. This firm and definite desire remains unchanged by the formation of a new Government, under the Inspector-General of the Armed Forces, General Syrový, and this Government enjoys the confidence of all the Czechoslovak parties of the former Coalition Government.

The Czechoslovak Government is persuaded that it is still possible to come to an agreement and to maintain peace, provided only that the Western Powers adhere to their proposals, which were agreed upon at Berchtesgaden and which were laid before the Czechoslovak Government on September 19 and were accepted.

(xxxiii) *Extracts from Speech by Herr Hitler, Führer and Chancellor of the German Reich, September 26, 1938.*[1]

German fellow-countrymen and fellow-countrywomen, on 20 February before the members of the German Reichstag I expressed for the first time a fundamental demand of an absolute character.[2] At that time the whole nation heard me and it understood me. *One* statesman failed to share in this understanding. He has been removed and the promise which I made at that time has been fulfilled. Then for the second time I spoke on this same demand before the Parteitag of the Reich. And again the nation heard this demand. To-day I now come before the nation and for the first time I speak before the people itself, just as I did in the time of our great fight, and you know what that means. For the world there is no longer room for any doubt: now it is not a leader or one man who speaks: now the German people speaks.

If I am now the spokesman of this German people, then I know: at this second the whole people in its millions agrees word for word with my words, confirms them, and makes them its own oath![3] Let the other statesmen ask themselves whether that is also true in their case!

The question which in these last months and weeks has moved us so profoundly has long been familiar to us: it is not so much Czechoslovakia: it is rather Mr. Beneš. In this name is concentrated all that which to-day moves millions, which causes them to despair or fills them with a fanatical resolution.

But why was it that this question could rise to such significance? I wish, my fellow-countrymen, quite briefly to explain to you once again the character and the aims of German foreign policy. In contradistinction to the many democratic States German foreign policy is fixed and conditioned by a *Weltanschauung*. The *Weltanschauung* of this new Reich is directed to maintaining and to securing the existence of our German people. We have no interest in oppressing other peoples. We wish to seek our blessedness after our own fashion:[4] the others can do so in their own way. This view, which in our *Weltanschauung* is racially conditioned, leads to a limitation of our foreign policy: that is to say the aims of our foreign policy are not unlimited, they are not determined by chance, but they are grounded on the determination to serve the German people alone, to maintain it in our world and to safeguard its existence.

What is then the position to-day? You know that formerly under the watchword 'The Right of the Peoples to Self-Determination' the German people, as well as others, was filled with a belief in super-State help and therefore allowed itself to the last extreme to renounce any resort to its own

[1] In the Sportpalast, Berlin. Baynes, *op. cit.*, Vol. II, pp. 1508–27.

[2] German: *unabdingbarer Art.*

[3] The text in the *Völkischer Beobachter* reads *macht sie zu meinem eigenen Schwur:* the sense demands *zu seinem.*

[4] German: *Wir wollen nach unserer Fasson selig werden:* the Frederician phrase. (Notes by Professor Baynes.)

strength. . . . You know that this trust of those days was most shamefully betrayed! The result was the Treaty of Versailles and of the frightful consequences of this Treaty you are all aware. You all still remember how our people was first robbed of its arms and how the unarmed people was later ill-treated! You know the frightful fate which fell upon us and pursued us for a decade and a half. And you also know that if, in spite of this, Germany has once more become great, free, and strong, then for this she has to thank only her own strength. The world about us has contributed nothing to that result. On the contrary the world has tried to keep us down and oppress us so long as it was possible, until at length from the German people itself there grew up the strength to put an end to this unworthy existence and once more to pursue the path which befits a free and great nation.

Although now to-day through our own efforts we have once more become free and strong, yet we are not moved by any hatred against other nations. We bear no grudge. What happened we know: the peoples are not to be held responsible for that, but only a small conscienceless clique of international profit-makers seeking their business ends, who do not hesitate, if necessary, to let whole nations go to ruin if only their despicable interests are served. Therefore we nurse no hatred against neighbouring peoples and that we have also proved.

[*German Disarmament Proposals*]

We had hardly begun the restoration of Germany to equality of rights when, as the clearest sign of our renunciation of a policy of 'Revanche' upon the rest of the world, I proposed a series of agreements which were intended to lead to a limitation of armaments. My first proposal was: Germany in any event demands equality of rights, but she is prepared to renounce any further use of defensive forces or arms if the other peoples will follow suit: that is to say general disarmament, if necessary, down to the last machine-gun! This proposal was not even taken as a basis for discussion.

I made a second proposal: Germany is ready to limit her army to 200,000 men on condition the other States also disarm to the same level. That proposal, too, was rejected.

I made yet another proposal: Germany is ready, if the others wish it, to renounce the use of all heavy arms, the so-called 'weapons of aggression', tanks, bombing aeroplanes—even if necessary to renounce the use of aeroplanes altogether—heavy and the heaviest artillery. Once more the proposal was rejected. I went further and now proposed an international regulation binding all European States with the maintenance in each State of an army of a strength of 300,000 men. This proposal also was rejected.

I brought forward still further proposals: limitation of air-fleets, abolition of bombing, absolute abolition of poisoned gas-warfare, protection of districts not lying in the fighting-line, abolition at least of the heaviest artillery, abolition of the heaviest tanks. That too was rejected. It was all in vain!

[*German Rearmament*]

When thus for two years I had made to the world offer on offer and when these offers always met with rejection and then once more rejection, I gave orders that the German army should be brought to the best attainable condition. And now I can proudly admit: we did then certainly complete an armament such as the world has never yet seen. I have offered disarmament (*Waffenlosigkeit*) as long as it was possible. But when that was rejected then I formed, I admit, no half-hearted decision. I am a National Socialist and an old German front-line soldier! If they do not wish the world to be without arms, good: then, German people, do you, too, now carry your arms!

I have in fact armed in these five years. I have spent milliards on this armament: that the German people must now know! I have seen to it that a new army should be provided with the most modern armament known. I have given to my friend Goering the order: Make me now an air-arm which can protect Germany in the face of any conceivable attack. Thus we have built up a military force (*Wehrmacht*) of which to-day the German people can be proud and which the world will respect if at any time it makes its appearance. We have created for our protection the best air-defence, the best tank-defence which is to be found on earth. In these five years day and night work has been carried on. Only in one single sphere have I succeeded in bringing about an understanding. To this subject I shall return. But in spite of this I have continued to follow up the ideas of the limitation of armaments and of a policy of disarmament. I have really in these years pursued a practical peace policy. I have approached all the apparently impossible problems with the firm resolve to solve them peacefully even when there was the danger of making more or less serious renunciations on Germany's part. I myself am a front-line soldier and I know how grave a thing war is. I wanted to spare the German people such an evil. Problem after problem I have tackled with the set purpose to make every effort to render possible a peaceful solution.

[*Relations with Poland*]

The most difficult problem which faced me was the relation between Germany and Poland. There was a danger that the conception of a 'hereditary enmity' might take possession of our people and of the Polish people. That I wanted to prevent. I know quite well that I should not have succeeded if Poland at that time had had a democratic constitution. For these democracies which are overflowing with phrases about peace are the most bloodthirsty instigators of war. But Poland at that time was governed by no democracy but by a *man*. In the course of barely a year it was possible to conclude an agreement which, in the first instance for a period of ten years, on principle removed the danger of a conflict. We are all convinced that this agreement will bring with it a permanent pacification. We realize that here are two peoples which must live side by side and that neither of

them can destroy the other. A State with a population of thirty-three millions will always strive for an access to the sea. A way to an understanding had therefore to be found. It has been found and it will be ever further developed. The decisive point is that both Governments and all reasonable and intelligent folk in both peoples and countries should have the firm determination continuously to improve relations. It was a real achievement in the cause of peace which is of more value than all the chatter in the Palace of the League of Nations at Geneva.

At this time I also sought gradually to establish good and lasting relations with the other nations. We have given guarantees for the States in the West, and to all those States bordering on our frontiers we have given assurances of the inviolability of their territory so far as Germany is concerned. These are no mere words. That is our sacred determination. We have no interest in breaking the peace.

These German offers also met with a growing understanding. Gradually ever more peoples are freeing themselves from that insane infatuation of Geneva which, I might say, serves no policy of an obligation to peace but rather a policy of obligation to war. They are freeing themselves, and they begin to see the problems soberly: they are ready for understanding and for peace.

[*Relations with Great Britain*]

I went further and offered the hand to England. I have voluntarily renounced the idea of ever again entering upon a competition in fleet-building in order to give to the British Empire the feeling of security. And that I have not done because I was not able to build above the limit fixed: let no one have any illusions on that score: I acted thus solely in order to maintain a lasting peace between the two peoples. But it must be admitted that here one condition must be observed; it will not do that one party should say: I am determined never again to wage war and to this end I offer you a voluntary limitation of my armaments at 35 per cent, while the other party declares: If it suits me I shall wage war again from time to time. Such an agreement is morally justified only when both peoples solemnly promise that they are determined never again to wage war with each other. Germany has this determination. We all desire to hope that amongst the English people those who share this determination may gain the upper hand!

[*Relations with France*]

I went further. Directly after the restoration of the Saar territory which was decided by a plebiscite I declared to France that there were now absolutely no differences outstanding between us. I said that for us the Alsace-Lorraine question no longer existed. It is a frontier district. The people of this country during the most recent decades has never really been asked for its own opinion. We have the feeling that the inhabitants of this province

will be happiest if they are not fought over again. All of us do not wish for any war with France. We want nothing from France—positively nothing! And when the Saar territory had returned to the Reich thanks to the loyal execution of the treaties by France—that I desire to reaffirm in this place —I solemnly declared: for the future all territorial differences between France and Germany have been removed. To-day I cannot any longer see any difference between us. Here are two great peoples who both wish to work and live. And they will live their lives best if they work together.

[*Relations with Italy*]

After this irrevocable renunciation, made once for all, I turned to a further problem which was easier to solve than others because here the common *weltanschaulich* basis forms a favourable condition for a readier mutual understanding—the problem of the relation of Germany to Italy.

It is true that the solution of this problem is only in part to be put to my credit, in part it is due to the rare genius of that great man whom the Italian people has the good fortune to be able to possess as its Leader. This relation has long ago overstepped the sphere of a pure economic or political expediency: it has passed beyond treaties and alliances and has become a true, strong union of hearts. Here an axis has been formed represented by two peoples who both have come to be united, alike in ideology[1] and in politics, in a close indissoluble friendship.

Here, too, I have taken a final step—once and for all—fully conscious of my responsibility before my fellow-countrymen. I have banished from the world a problem that from henceforth simply does not exist for us. However bitter that may be for the individual, with us in the last resort it is the interest of the people as a whole which stands above everything. And this interest is: to be able to work in peace! This whole work for peace, my fellow-countrymen, is no mere empty phrase, but this work is reinforced through deeds which no lying mouth can destroy.

[*Austria*]

Two problems still remained. Here I was bound to make a reservation. Ten million Germans found themselves beyond the frontiers of the Reich in two great self-contained areas of settlement, Germans who wished to return to their Reich as their homeland. This number—ten millions—is no small affair: here it is a question of a quarter as many people as make up the population of France. And if for over forty years France never gave up her claim to the few millions of the French population of Alsace-Lorraine, then we had a right before God and the world to maintain our claim to these ten million Germans. My fellow-countrymen, there is a point at which concession must cease because otherwise it would become ruinous weakness. I should have no right to take my stand before the history of Germany had I been willing in simple indifference to sacrifice these ten millions. I should

[1] German: *weltanschaulich*. (Note by Professor Baynes.)

then also have no moral right to be the leader of this people. I have taken upon myself sacrifices and renunciations enough: here was the limit beyond which I could not go!

How true that was has been proved through the plebiscite in Austria. At that time a glowing profession of faith was made, a profession of faith such as the rest of the world had certainly not expected. But we know by experience: a plebiscite for the democracies is superfluous or even harmful the moment it does not lead to the result that they themselves expect. In spite of this, this problem was solved to the satisfaction of the whole great German people.

[*Czechoslovakia: Attack on President Beneš*]

And now before us stands the last problem that must be solved and will be solved. It is the last territorial claim which I have to make in Europe, but it is the claim from which I will not recede and which, God willing, I will make good.

The history of the problem is as follows: in 1918 under the watchword 'The Right of the Peoples to Self-Determination' Central Europe was torn in pieces and was newly formed by certain crazy so-called 'statesmen'. Without regard for the origin of the peoples, without regard for either their wish as nations or for economic necessities Central Europe at that time was broken up into atoms and new so-called States were arbitrarily formed. To this procedure Czechoslovakia owes its existence. This Czech State began with a single lie and the father of this lie was named Beneš. This Mr. Beneš at that time appeared in Versailles and he first of all gave the assurance that there was a Czechoslovak nation. He was forced to invent this lie in order to give to the slender number of his own fellow-countrymen a somewhat greater range and thus a fuller justification. And the Anglo-Saxon statesmen, who were, as always, not very adequately versed in respect of questions of geography or nationality, did not at that time find it necessary to test these assertions of Mr. Beneš. Had they done so, they could have established the fact that there is no such thing as a Czechslovak nation but only Czechs and Slovaks and that the Slovaks did not wish to have anything to do with the Czechs but . . . (*the rest of the sentence was drowned in a tumultuous outburst of applause*).

So in the end through Mr. Beneš these Czechs annexed Slovakia. Since this State did not seem fitted to live, out of hand three and a half million Germans were taken in violation of their right to self-determination and their wish for self-determination. Since even that did not suffice, over a million Magyars had to be added, then some Carpathian Russians, and at last several hundred thousand Poles.

That is this State which then later proceeded to call itself Czechoslovakia —in violation of the right of the peoples to self-determination, in violation of the clear wish and will of the nations to which this violence had been done. When I speak to you here it goes without saying that I should

sympathize with the fate of all these oppressed peoples, with the fate of Poles, Hungarians, and Ukrainians. I am naturally spokesman only for the fate of my Germans.

At the time that Mr. Beneš lied this State into being, he gave a solemn pledge to divide it on the model of the Swiss system into cantons; for amongst the democratic statesmen there were some who still had some twinges of conscience. We all know how Mr. Beneš has redeemed his pledge to introduce this cantonal system. He began his reign of terror. Even at that time the Germans already attempted to protest against this arbitrary violence. They were shot down. After that a war of extermination began. In these years of the 'peaceful' development of Czechoslovakia nearly 600,000 Germans had to leave Czechoslovakia. This happened for a very simple reason: otherwise they would have had to starve!

The whole development from the year 1918 up to 1938 showed one thing clearly: Mr. Beneš was determined slowly to exterminate the German element. And this to a certain extent he has achieved. He has hurled countless people into the profoundest misery. He has managed to make millions of people fearful and anxious. Through the continuous employment of his methods of terrorism he has succeeded in reducing to silence these millions while at the same time it also became clear what were the 'international' duties of this State.

No longer was any secret made of the fact that this State was intended, if necessary, to be employed against Germany. A French Minister for Air, Pierre Cot, has expressed this wish quite soberly: 'We need the State,' he said, 'because from this State German business life and German industry can be most easily destroyed with bombs.' And then Bolshevism uses this State as the gateway through which it can find entry. It is not we who have sought this contact with Bolshevism, but Bolshevism uses this State in order to possess a canal leading into Central Europe.

And now the shameless part of this story begins. This State whose Government is in the hands of a minority compels the other nationalities to co-operate in a policy which will oblige them one of these days to shoot at their own brothers. Mr. Beneš demands of the German: 'if I wage war against Germany, then you have to shoot against the Germans. And if you refuse to do this, you are a traitor against the State and I will have you yourself shot.' And he makes the same demand of Hungary and Poland. He demands of the Slovaks that they should support aims to which the Slovak people are completely indifferent. For the Slovak people wishes to have peace—and not adventures. Mr. Beneš thus actually turns these folk either into traitors to their country or traitors to their people. Either they betray their people, are ready to fire on their fellow-countrymen, or Mr. Beneš says: 'You are traitors to your country and you will be shot for that by me.' Can there be anything more shameless than to compel folk of another people, in certain circumstances, to fire on their own fellow-countrymen only because a ruinous, evil, and criminal Government so

demands it? I can here assert: when we had occupied Austria, my first order was: no Czech needs to serve, rather he must not serve, in the German Army. I have not driven him to a conflict with his conscience.

But he who opposes Mr. Beneš is also sent to his death in the economic sphere. This fact the democratic world-apostles cannot lie away. In this State of Mr. Beneš the consequences for the nationalities have been appalling. I speak only for the Germans. It is they who have the highest death-rate of all the German tribes, their poverty in children is the highest, their unemployment is the most frightful. How long is such a condition to last? For twenty years the Germans in Czechoslovakia have had to watch these conditions and the German people in the Reich has had to look on these conditions, not because it was at any time prepared to accept this state of affairs but simply because it was powerless and in the world of democracies could not help itself in face of these torturers. Yes, when anywhere a traitor to his country is imprisoned, when a man who from the pulpit hurls down his abuse is taken into custody, then there is excitement in England and indignation in America. But when hundreds of thousands are driven into exile, when tens of thousands come into prison, and thousands are butchered that does not move these true-blue world democrats in the slightest degree. We have learned much in these years. For them we feel a profound contempt.

[*Attitude of Italy*]

There is but a single Great Power and one man at its head who have understanding for the distress of our people. And that is—I may, I think, give his name—my great friend, Benito Mussolini. What he has done at this time, and the attitude taken up by the Italian people—this we shall not forget! And if some time the hour of a similar distress should come for Italy then I will stand before the German people and call upon it to take the same attitude. And even then it will not be two States which act in self-defence but a *bloc*!

[*Crisis of May 21*]

In the Reichstag on 20 February of this year I stated that in the life of the ten million Germans beyond our frontiers there must come a change. Mr. Beneš has now taken a different course. He instituted a still more ruthless oppression. He set on foot a still greater terrorism. There began a period of disbanding of associations, of vetos, confiscations, and the like. This continued until at last 21 May came. And you cannot deny, my fellow-countrymen, that we have exhibited a truly unexampled patience. This 21 May was intolerable. I have given its history at the Parteitag of the Reich. In Czechoslovakia at last an election was to take place which could not be postponed any longer. Then Mr. Beneš invented a way to intimidate the Germans in Czechoslovakia: the military occupation of the [Sudeten] districts.

This military occupation even now he intends to continue for the future in the hope that no one will venture to oppose him so long as his myrmidons are in the country. It was that insolent lie of 21 May—that Germany had mobilized—that now had to serve to cover the Czech mobilization, to excuse it, and to supply a motive. What followed you know: an infamous international world-wide agitation.

Germany had not called a man to the colours: it never thought for a moment to solve this problem by military intervention. Still I always hoped that the Czechs at the last minute would realize that this tyranny could not be maintained any longer. But Mr. Beneš adopted the standpoint that, protected by France and by England, one could do anything with Germany with impunity—nothing could happen to him. And above all: when all other strings failed, behind him stood Soviet Russia.

[*Germany's Demands*]

And so the answer of this man was now more than before: Shoot down, arrest, imprison—the fate of all those who in any way failed to please him. Thus it was that there came my demand in Nuremberg. This demand was quite clear: for the first time I there expressed the claim that now at last—almost twenty years since the statements of President Wilson—for these three and a half millions the right of self-determination must come into force. And once again Mr. Beneš gave his answer: more deaths, more imprisonments, more arrests. The Germans began perforce to flee.

And then came England. I have told Mr. Chamberlain quite distinctly what we regard now as the sole possibility of a solution. It is the most natural solution that there can be. I know that *all* nationalities no longer wish to remain with Dr. Beneš, but I am in the first place spokesman of the Germans, and for these Germans I have now spoken and asserted that I am no longer willing to look on calm and inactive and see how this madman in Prague thinks that he can undisturbed ill-treat three and a half million human beings. And I have left him in no doubt that now at last German patience has really come to an end: I have left him in no doubt that, though it is a characteristic of our German mentality to bear something for a long time and again and again to raise no protest, yet one day the moment comes when it has to stop! And now England and France have sent to Czechoslovakia the only possible demand—to set free the German area and to surrender it to the Reich.

We are now accurately informed on the conversations which Dr. Beneš conducted at that time. Faced by the declaration of England and of France that they would no longer support Czechoslovakia if at last the fate of these peoples was not changed and the areas liberated Mr. Beneš found a way of escape. He conceded that these districts must be surrendered. That was what he stated, but what did he do? He did not surrender the area but the Germans he now drives out! And that is now the point at which the game comes to an end. Mr. Beneš had hardly spoken when he began his military

subjugation afresh—only with still greater violence. We see the appalling figures: on one day 10,000 fugitives, on the next 20,000, a day later, already 37,000, again two days later 41,000, then 62,000, then 78,000: now 90,000, 107,000, 137,000 and to-day 214,000. Whole stretches of country were depopulated, villages are burned down, attempts are made to smoke out the Germans with hand-grenades and gas. Mr. Beneš, however, sits in Prague and is convinced: 'Nothing can happen to me: in the end England and France stand behind me.'

And now, my fellow-countrymen, I believe that the time has come when one must mince matters no longer. If anyone for twenty years has borne such a shame, such a disgrace, such a misfortune as we have done, then in very truth it cannot be denied that he is a lover of peace. When anyone has the patience which we have shown then in very truth it cannot be said that he is bellicose. For in the last resort Mr. Beneš has seven million Czechs, but here there stands a people of over seventy-five millions.

[*The Godesberg Memorandum*]

I have now placed a memorandum containing a last and final German proposal in the hands of the British Government. This memorandum contains nothing save the putting into effect of what Mr. Beneš has already promised. The content of this proposal is very simple:

That area which in its people is German and has the wish to be German comes to Germany, and that, too, not only when Mr. Beneš has succeeded in driving out perhaps one or two million Germans, but now, and that immediately! I have here chosen that frontier which on the basis of the material which has existed for decades on the division of people and language in Czechoslovakia is the just frontier-line. But in spite of this I am more just than Mr. Beneš and I have no wish to exploit the power which we possess. I have therefore laid it down from the outset that this area will be placed under German supremacy (*Oberhoheit*) because it is essentially settled by Germans, the final delimitation of the frontier, however, I then leave to the vote of our fellow-countrymen themselves who are in the area! I have therefore laid down that in this area there must then be held a plebiscite. And in order that no one can say that the procedure of the plebiscite might be unjust, I have chosen as the basis for this plebiscite the Statute that governed the Saar Plebiscite.

Now I am and was prepared, so far as I am concerned, to allow a plebiscite to be held throughout the area. But Mr. Beneš and his friends objected. They wished that a plebiscite should be allowed only in certain parts of the area. Good, I have yielded the point. I was even prepared to allow the plebiscite to be subject to the inspection of international Commissions of Control. I went even further and agreed to leave the delimitation of the frontier to a German-Czech Commission. Mr. Chamberlain suggested: might it not be an international Commission? To this, too, I agreed. I even wished during this period of the plebiscite to withdraw again the troops, and I have

to-day declared my readiness to invite for this period the British Legion, which offered me its services, to go into these districts and there maintain calm and order. And I was further ready to allow the international Commission to fix the final frontier and to hand over all details of procedure to a Commission composed of Germans and Czechs.

The content of this memorandum is nothing else than the practical execution of what Mr. Beneš has already promised and that too under the most complete international guarantees. Mr. Beneš now says that this memorandum is 'a new situation'. And in what in fact does this 'new situation' consist? It consists in this: that this time—exceptionally—the promise made by Mr. Beneš must also be kept! That is for Mr. Beneš the 'new situation'. What is there that Mr. Beneš has not promised at some time in his life? And no promise has been kept! Now for the first time he has got to keep to something.

Mr. Beneš says: 'We cannot go back from this area.' Mr. Beneš has then understood the transfer of this area to mean that the legal title is recognized as belonging to the German Reich but the area is still to be subject to the violence of the Czechs. That is now past!

I have demanded that now after twenty years Mr. Beneš should at last be compelled to come to terms with the truth. On 1 October he will have to hand over to us this area.

[*Personal Attack on President Beneš*]

Mr. Beneš now places his hopes on the world! And he and his diplomats make no secret of the fact. They state: it is our hope that Chamberlain will be overthrown, that Daladier will be removed, that on every hand revolutions are on the way. They place their hope on Soviet Russia. He still thinks then that he will be able to evade the fulfilment of his obligations.

And then I can say only one thing: now two men stand arrayed one against the other: there is Mr. Beneš and here stand I. We are two men of a different make-up. In the great struggle of the peoples while Mr. Beneš was sneaking about through the world, I as a decent German soldier did my duty. And now to-day I stand over against this man as the soldier of my people!

[*Denial of further territorial claims*]

I have only a few statements still to make: I am grateful to Mr. Chamberlain for all his efforts. I have assured him that the German people desires nothing else than peace, but I have also told him that I cannot go back behind the limits set to our patience. I have further assured him, and I repeat it here, that when this problem is solved there is for Germany no further territorial problem in Europe. And I have further assured him that at the moment when Czechoslovakia solves her problems, that means when the Czechs have come to terms with their other minorities, and that peaceably and not through oppression, then I have no further interest in the Czech State. And that is guaranteed to him! We want no Czechs!

[*Ultimatum*]

But in the same way I desire to state before the German people that with regard to the problem of the Sudeten Germans my patience is now at an end! I have made Mr. Beneš an offer which is nothing but the carrying into effect of what he himself has promised. The decision now lies in his hands: Peace or War! He will either accept this offer and now at last give to the Germans their freedom or we will go and fetch this freedom for ourselves. The world must take note that in four and a half years of war and through the long years of my political life there is one thing which no one could ever cast in my teeth: I have never been a coward!

Now I go before my people as its first soldier and behind me—that the world should know—there marches a people and a different people from that of 1918!

If at that time a wandering scholar was able to inject into our people the poison of democratic catchwords—the people of to-day is no longer the people that it was then. Such catchwords are for us like wasp-stings: they cannot hurt us: we are now immune.

In this hour the whole German people will unite with me! It will feel my will to be its will. Just as in my eyes it is its future and its fate which give me the commission for my action. And we wish now to make our will as strong as it was in the time of our fight, the time when I, as a simple unknown soldier, went forth to conquer a Reich and never doubted of success and final victory. Then there gathered close about me a band of brave men and brave women, and they went with me. And so I ask you, my German people, take your stand behind me, man by man, and woman by woman. In this hour we all wish to form a common will and that will must be stronger than every hardship and every danger. And if this will is stronger than hardship and danger, then one day it will break down hardship and danger.

We are determined!

Now let Mr. Beneš make his choice!

(xxxiv) *Statement by the Rt. Hon. Neville Chamberlain, September 26, 1938.*[1]

I have read the speech of the German Chancellor[2] and I appreciate his references to the efforts I have made to save the peace. I cannot abandon those efforts since it seems to me incredible that the peoples of Europe who do not want war with one another should be plunged into a bloody struggle over a question on which agreement has already been largely obtained.

It is evident that the Chancellor has no faith that the promises made will be carried out. These promises were made, not to the German Government direct, but to the British and French Governments in the first instance. Speaking for the British Government we regard ourselves as morally

[1] To the Press. *The Struggle for Peace.* By the Rt. Hon. Neville Chamberlain. Hutchinson, London. Pp. 273–4.

[2] See pp. 249–60.

responsible for seeing that the promises are carried out fairly and fully, and we are prepared to undertake that they shall be so carried out with all reasonable promptitude, provided that the German Government will agree to the settlement of terms and conditions of transfer by discussion and not by force.

I trust that the Chancellor will not reject this proposal, which is made in the same spirit of friendliness as that in which I was received in Germany and which, if it is accepted, will satisfy the German desire for the union of Sudeten Germans with the Reich without the shedding of blood in any part of Europe.

(xxxv) *British Official Statement, September 26, 1938.*[1]

It is stated in official quarters that during the last week Mr. Chamberlain has tried with the German Chancellor to find the way of settling peacefully the Czechoslovak question. It is still possible to do so by negotiation.

The German claim to the transfer of the Sudeten areas has already been conceded by the French, British, and Czechoslovak Governments. But if in spite of all efforts made by the British Prime Minister, a German attack is made upon Czechoslovakia, the immediate result must be that France will be bound to come to her assistance, and Great Britain and Russia will certainly stand by France.

It is still not too late to stop this great tragedy and for the peoples of all nations to insist on settlement by free negotiation.

(xxxvi) *President Roosevelt's Appeals for Peace.*[2]

(*a*) *President Roosevelt's First Message to Dr. Beneš, Herr Hitler, Mr. Chamberlain, and M. Daladier, September 26, 1938.*

The fabric of peace on the continent of Europe, if not throughout the rest of the world, is in immediate danger. The consequences of its rupture are incalculable. Should hostilities break out the lives of millions of men, women and children in every country involved will most certainly be lost under circumstances of unspeakable horror. The economic system of every country involved is certain to be shattered. The social structure of every country involved may well be completely wrecked.

The United States has no political entanglements. It is caught in no mesh of hatred. Elements of all Europe have formed its civilization. The supreme desire of the American people is to live in peace. But in the event of a general war they face the fact that no nation can escape some measure of the consequences of such a world catastrophe.

[1] *Hansard*, March 1, 1939, col. 1230.

[2] All the documents printed under this number, except M. Daladier's letter, for which a separate reference is given, are from the U.S. State Department, Press Releases, Vol. XIX, No. 470.

The traditional policy of the United States has been the furtherance of the settlement of international disputes by pacific means. It is my conviction that all people under the threat of war to-day pray that peace may be made before, rather than after, war.

It is imperative that peoples everywhere recall that every civilized nation of the world voluntarily assumed the solemn obligations of the Kellogg-Briand Pact of 1928 to solve controversies only by pacific methods. In addition, most nations are parties to other binding treaties obligating them to preserve peace. Furthermore, all countries have to-day available for such peaceful solution of difficulties which may arise, treaties of arbitration and conciliation to which they are parties.

Whatever may be the differences in the controversies at issue and however difficult of pacific settlement they may be, I am persuaded that there is no problem so difficult or so pressing for solution that it cannot be justly solved by the resort to reason rather than by the resort to force.

During the present crisis the people of the United States and their Government have earnestly hoped that the negotiations for the adjustment of the controversy which has now arisen in Europe might reach a successful conclusion. So long as these negotiations continue so long will there remain the hope that reason and the spirit of equity may prevail and that the world may thereby escape the madness of a new resort to war.

On behalf of the 130 millions of people of the United States of America and for the sake of humanity everywhere I most earnestly appeal to you not to break off negotiations looking to a peaceful, fair, and constructive settlement of the questions at issue.

I earnestly repeat that so long as negotiations continue, differences may be reconciled. Once they are broken off reason is banished and force asserts itself.

And force produces no solution for the future good of humanity.

FRANKLIN D. ROOSEVELT

(*b*) *Reply from the Rt. Hon. Neville Chamberlain, September 26, 1938.*

Please convey following message to President:

His Majesty's Government hail with gratitude the weighty message that the President of the United States has addressed to them and to certain other Governments in this critical time. It is indeed essential to remember what is at stake and to weigh the issues with all gravity before embarking on a course from which there may be no retreat.

His Majesty's Government have done and are doing their very utmost to secure a peaceful solution of the present difficulties and they will relax no effort so long as there remains any prospect of achieving that object. The Prime Minister is even to-day making a further earnest appeal for settlement by negotiation in which His Majesty's Government would be ready to lend their good offices. The President's words can but encourage all those who

sincerely desire to co-operate in this endeavour. His Majesty's Government for their part respond to the President's appeal in all sincerity and without reserve and they most earnestly hope that the other Governments to which it is addressed will do likewise.

(c) *Reply from M. Daladier, September 26, 1938.*[1]

Votre appel émouvant me parvient à Londres au moment même où, en étroite collaboration avec le gouvernement britannique, des efforts suprêmes sont tentés par la France pour sauvegarder toute possibilité de règlement amiable du conflit qui menace la paix. J'attache un prix particulier à entendre rappeler aussi solennellement, sous votre haute autorité morale, l'attachement du peuple américain tout entier aux principes qui ont été reconnus et consacrés publiquement par tous les signataires du pacte Kellogg.

Fidèles pour notre part à l'esprit comme à la lettre de ces engagements, nous poursuivons avec une ténacité qu'aucune difficulté ne découragera la recherche de toute procédure ou formule d'entente compatible avec la dignité et les intérêts vitaux des partis en cause.

Nous avons confiance de servir jusqu'au bout l'idéal de justice et de paix qui a toujours uni nos deux peuples.

ÉDOUARD DALADIER

(d) *Reply from President Beneš, September 26, 1938.*

MR. PRESIDENT:

I am deeply moved by your cable message. It reached me at a moment when our country and our nation are feeling so intensely the menace of war. For twenty years our successive Governments have pursued a policy of peace. They have abided by the principle of settling all international disputes by peaceful means. They have concluded treaties of arbitration. They have supported the peace policy of the League of Nations and they have never offered [?][2] against all that line of conduct. Our Government also signed the Briand-Kellogg Pact and will in no case do anything that would violate it. Although Czechoslovakia has already made greatest sacrifices in the negotiations up to now, sacrifices which touch the country's vital interests, it does not break off negotiations, desirous of seeing the conflict solved by peaceful means by agreement. Czechoslovakia has also signed a treaty of arbitration with Germany, has already proposed to settle the present dispute under its terms and is ready to renew this offer. Czechoslovakia is grateful to you, Mr. President, for your message, a message which in these grave moments can contribute towards a just solution of the dispute. I believe that even to-day the dispute could be settled in a spirit of equity without resort to force and the whole Czechoslovak nation still hopes this will be the case. The

[1] *Le Temps*, September 28, 1938. [2] Query as printed in the Press Releases.

Czechoslovak nation would defend itself were it attacked but it is profoundly convinced with you that in the end war solves no problem and that this is a case in which reason, a sense of humanity and the principle of justice should triumph.

DR. EDUARD BENEŠ

(e) Reply from Herr Hitler, September 26, 1938.

In your telegram received by me on September 26, Your Excellency addressed to me an appeal in the name of the American people, in the interest of the maintenance of peace not to break off the negotiations regarding the dispute which has arisen in Europe and to strive for a peaceful, honourable and constructive settlement of this question. Be assured that I can fully appreciate the lofty intent on which your remarks are based, and that I share in every respect your opinion regarding the unforeseeable consequences of a European war. Precisely for this reason, however, I can and must refuse all responsibility of the German people and their leaders, if the further development, contrary to all my efforts up to the present, should actually lead to the outbreak of hostilities. In order to arrive at a fair judgment regarding the Sudeten German problem under discussion, it is indispensable to consider the incidents, in which, in the last analysis, the origin of this problem and its dangers has its cause. In 1918, the German people laid down their arms in the firm confidence that by the conclusion of peace with their enemies at that time the principles and ideals would be realized which had been solemnly announced by President Wilson and had been just as solemnly accepted as binding by all the belligerent Powers. Never in history has the confidence of a people been more shamefully betrayed than it was then. The peace conditions imposed on the conquered nations in the Paris suburbs treaties have fulfilled nothing of the promises given. Rather have they created a political régime in Europe which made of the conquered nations world pariahs without rights and which must be recognized in advance by every discerning person as untenable. One of the points in which the character of the dictates of 1919 was the most openly revealed was the founding of the Czechoslovak State, and the establishment of its boundaries without any consideration of history and nationality. The Sudetenland was also included therein, although this area had always been German, and although its inhabitants, after the destruction of the Hapsburg monarchy, had unanimously declared their desire for annexation to the German Reich. Thus the right of self-determination, which had been proclaimed by President Wilson as the most important basis of national life, was simply denied to the Sudeten Germans. But that was not enough. In the treaties of 1919, certain obligations with regard to the German people, which, according to the text, were far-reaching, were imposed on the Czechoslovak State. These obligations also were disregarded from the first. The League of Nations has completely failed to guarantee the fulfilment of these obligations in connexion with the task

assigned to it. Since then the Sudetenland has been engaged in the severest struggle for the maintenance of its Germanism. It was a natural and inevitable development that after the recovery of strength by the German Reich and after the reunion of Austria with it, the urge of the German-Sudetens for maintenance of their culture and for closer union with Germany increased. Despite the loyal attitude of the Sudeten German party and its leaders, the difference with the Czechs became ever stronger. From day to day it became ever clearer that the Government in Prague was not disposed really to consider seriously the most elementary rights of the Sudeten Germans. Rather did it attempt with ever more violent methods the Czechization of the Sudetenland. It was inevitable that this procedure would lead to ever greater and more serious tensions. The German Government at first did not intervene in any way in this development of things, and maintained its calm restraint, even when the Czechoslovak Government, in May of this year, proceeded to a mobilization of its army, under the purely fictitious pretext of German troop concentrations. The renunciation of military counter-measures at that time in Germany, however, only served to strengthen the uncompromising attitude of the Government in Prague. This has been clearly shown by the course of the negotiations of the Sudeten German party with the Government regarding a peaceful adjustment. These negotiations produced the conclusive proof that the Czechoslovak Government was far from thoroughly grasping the problem of the Sudeten Germans and bringing about an equitable solution. Consequently conditions in the Czechoslovak State, as is generally known, have in the last few weeks become utterly intolerable. Political persecution and economic oppression have plunged the Sudeten Germans into extreme misery. To characterize these circumstances it is enough to refer to the following. There are at present 214,000 Sudeten German refugees who had to leave their house and home in their ancestral country and flee across the German border, as they saw therein the last and only possibility to escape from the revolting Czecho-slovak régime of violence and bloodiest terror. Countless dead, thousands of injured, ten thousands of persons arrested and imprisoned, desolated villages are the accusing witnesses before world opinion of an outbreak of hostilities carried out for a long time by the Prague Government, which you in your telegram rightly fear. Entirely aside from the German economic life in the Sudeten German territory, for 20 years systematically destroyed by the Czech Government, which already shows all the signs of ruin, which you anticipate as the result of an outbreak of war, these are the facts which compelled me in my Nuremberg speech of September 13 to state before the whole world that the deprivation of rights of the three and one-half millions of Germans in Czechoslovakia must be stopped and that these people, if they of themselves cannot find justice and help, must receive both from the German Reich. However, to make a last attempt to reach the goal in a peaceful way, I made concrete proposals for the solution of the problem in a memorandum delivered on September 23 to the British Premier, which in

the meantime has been made public. Since the Czechoslovak Government had previously declared itself already to be in agreement with the British and French Governments that the Sudeten German settlement area would be separated from the Czechoslovak State and joined to the German Reich, the proposals of the German memorandum contemplate nothing else than to bring about a prompt and equitable fulfilment of that Czechoslovak promise. It is my conviction that you, Mr. President, when you realize the whole development of the Sudeten German problem from its inception to the present day, will recognize that the German Government has truly not been lacking either in patience or a sincere desire for a peaceful understanding. It is not Germany who is to blame for the fact that there is any Sudeten German problem at all, and that the present unjustifiable circumstances have arisen from it. The terrible fate of the people affected by the problem no longer admits of a further postponement of its solution. The possibilities of arriving at a just settlement by agreement, are therefore exhausted with the proposals of the German memorandum. It does not rest with the German Government, but with the Czechoslovak Government alone, to decide whether it wants peace or war.

ADOLF HITLER

(*f*) *President Roosevelt's Second Message to Herr Hitler, September 26, 1938.*[1]

I desire to acknowledge Your Excellency's reply to my telegram of September 26. I was confident that you would coincide in the opinion I expressed regarding the unforeseeable consequences and the incalculable disaster which would result to the entire world from the outbreak of a European war.

The question before the world to-day, Mr. Chancellor, is not the question of errors of judgment or of injustices committed in the past. It is the question of the fate of the world to-day and to-morrow. The world asks of us who at this moment are heads of nations the supreme capacity to achieve the destinies of nations without forcing upon them as a price, the mutilation and death of millions of citizens.

Resort to force in the Great War failed to bring tranquillity. Victory and defeat were alike sterile. That lesson the world should have learned. For that reason above all others I addressed on September 26 my appeal to Your Excellency and to the President of Czechoslovakia and to the Prime Ministers of Great Britain and of France.

The two points I sought to emphasize were, first, that all matters of difference between the German Government and the Czechoslovak Government could and should be settled by pacific methods; and, second, that the threatened alternative of the use of force on a scale likely to result in a general war is as unnecessary as it is unjustifiable. It is, therefore, supremely important that negotiations should continue without interruption until a fair and constructive solution is reached.

[1] Sent by cable on the night of September 27.

My conviction on these two points is deepened because responsible statesmen have officially stated that an agreement in principle has already been reached between the Government of the German Reich and the Government of Czechoslovakia, although the precise time, method and detail of carrying out that agreement remain at issue.

Whatever existing differences may be, and whatever their merits may be—and upon them I do not and need not undertake to pass—my appeal was solely that negotiations be continued until a peaceful settlement is found, and that thereby a resort to force be avoided.

Present negotiations still stand open. They can be continued if you will give the word. Should the need for supplementing them become evident, nothing stands in the way of widening their scope into a conference of all the nations directly interested in the present controversy. Such a meeting to be held immediately—in some neutral spot in Europe—would offer the opportunity for this and correlated questions to be solved in a spirit of justice, of fair dealing, and, in all human probability, with greater permanence.

In my considered judgment, and in the light of the experience of this century, continued negotiations remain the only way by which the immediate problem can be disposed of upon any lasting basis.

Should you agree to a solution in this peaceful manner I am convinced that hundreds of millions throughout the world would recognize your action as an outstanding historic service to all humanity.

Allow me to state my unqualified conviction that history, and the souls of every man, woman, and child whose lives will be lost in the threatened war will hold us and all of us accountable should we omit any appeal for its prevention.

The Government of the United States has no political involvements in Europe, and will assume no obligations in the conduct of the present negotiations. Yet in our own right we recognize our responsibilities as a part of a world of neighbours.

The conscience and the impelling desire of the people of my country demand that the voice of their Government be raised again and yet again to avert and to avoid war.

FRANKLIN D. ROOSEVELT

(g) *Telegram from the President of the Argentine Republic to the President of the United States, September 26, 1938.*[1]

The call to peace which the President has just addressed to Chancellor Hitler and President Beneš has found in the Argentine people and Government a warm and sympathetic adherence as an expression of an ideal of right which is the traditional basis of our international policy. The whole

[1] Telegrams in support of President Roosevelt's appeal were also sent by the Presidents of Bolivia, Brazil, Colombia, Costa Rica, Cuba, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Salvador, Haiti, Honduras, Nicaragua, Paraguay, Peru, Uruguay, and Venezuela.

Republic supports the gesture with which the great American Democracy joins the forces of peace and expresses its wishes that it may be definitely strengthened, thereby saving the future of Europe to whose destinies it feels that it is intimately bound. Accept [etc.]

ROBERTO M. ORTIZ

(xxxvii) *Letter from Herr Hitler to the Rt. Hon. Neville Chamberlain, September 27, 1938.*[1]

Berlin, September 27, 1938

Dear Mr. Chamberlain,

I have in the course of the conversations once more informed Sir Horace Wilson, who brought me your letter of the 26th September, of my final attitude. I should like, however, to make the following written reply to certain details in your letter:

The Government in Prague feels justified in maintaining that the proposals in my memorandum of the 23rd September went far beyond the concession which it made to the British and French Governments and that the acceptance of the memorandum would rob Czechoslovakia of every guarantee for its national existence. This statement is based on the argument that Czechoslovakia is to give up a great part of her prepared defensive system before she can take steps elsewhere for her military protection. Thereby the political and economic independence of the country is automatically abolished. Moreover, the exchange of population proposed by me would turn out in practice to be a panic-stricken flight.

I must openly declare that I cannot bring myself to understand these arguments or even admit that they can be regarded as seriously put forward. The Government in Prague simply passes over the fact that the actual arrangement for the final settlement of the Sudeten German problem, in accordance with my proposals, will be made dependent not on a unilateral German petition[2] or on German measures of force, but rather, on the one hand, on a free vote under no outside influence, and, on the other hand, to a very wide degree on German-Czech agreement on matters of details to be reached subsequently. Not only the exact definition of the territories in which the plebiscite is to take place, but the execution of the plebiscite and the delimitation of the frontier to be made on the basis of its result, are in accordance with my proposals to be met independently of any unilateral decision by Germany. Moreover, all other details are to be reserved for agreement on the part of a German-Czech commission.

In the light of this interpretation of my proposals and in the light of the cession of the Sudeten population areas, in fact agreed to by Czechoslovakia, the immediate occupation by German contingents demanded by me represents no more than a security measure which is intended to guarantee a quick

[1] English version printed in British White Paper, Cmd. 5847.
[2] ? decision (footnote in White Paper).

and smooth achievement of the final settlement. This security measure is indispensable. If the German Government renounced it and left the whole further treatment of the problem simply to normal negotiations with Czechoslovakia, the present unbearable circumstances in the Sudeten German territories which I described in my speech yesterday would continue to exist for a period, the length of which cannot be foreseen. The Czechoslovak Government would be completely in a position to drag out the negotiations on any point they liked, and thus to delay the final settlement. You will understand after everything that has passed that I cannot place such confidence in the assurances received from the Prague Government. The British Government also would surely not be in a position to dispose of this danger by any use of diplomatic pressure.

That Czechoslovakia should lose a part of her fortifications is naturally an unavoidable consequence of the cession of the Sudeten German territory agreed to by the Prague Government itself. If one were to wait for the entry into force of the final settlement in which Czechoslovakia had completed new fortifications in the territory which remained to her, it would doubtless last months and years. But this is the only object of all the Czech objections. Above all, it is completely incorrect to maintain that Czechoslovakia in this manner would be crippled in her national existence or in her political and economic independence. It is clear from my memorandum that the German occupation would only extend to the given line, and that the final delimitation of the frontier would take place in accordance with the procedure which I have already described. The Prague Government has no right to doubt that the German military measures would stop within these limits. If, nevertheless, it desires such a doubt to be taken into account the British and, if necessary, also the French Government can guarantee the quick fulfilment of my proposal. I can, moreover, only refer to my speech yesterday in which I clearly declared that I regret the idea of any attack on Czechoslovak territory, and that under the condition which I laid down I am even ready to give a formal guarantee for the remainder of Czechoslovakia. There can, therefore, be not the slightest question whatsoever of a check to the independence of Czechoslovakia. It is equally erroneous to talk of an economic rift. It is, on the contrary, a well-known fact that Czechoslovakia after the cession of the Sudeten German territory would constitute a healthier and more unified economic organism than before.

If the Government in Prague finally evinces anxiety also in regard to the state of the Czech population in the territories to be occupied, I can only regard this with surprise. It can be sure that, on the German side, nothing whatever will occur which will preserve for those Czechs a similar fate to that which has befallen the Sudeten Germans consequent on the Czech measures.

In these circumstances, I must assume that the Government in Prague is only using a proposal for the occupation by German troops in order, by distorting the meaning and object of my proposal, to mobilize those forces

in other countries, in particular in England and France, from which they hope to receive unreserved support for their aim and thus to achieve the possibility of a general warlike conflagration. I must leave it to your judgment whether, in view of these facts, you consider that you should continue your effort, for which I should like to take this opportunity of once more sincerely thanking you, to spoil such manœuvres and bring the Government in Prague to reason at the very last hour.

(Signed) ADOLF HITLER

(xxxviii) *Broadcast Speech by the Rt. Hon. Neville Chamberlain, September 27, 1938.*[1]

To-morrow Parliament is going to meet, and I shall be making a full statement of the events which have led up to the present anxious and critical situation. An earlier statement would not have been possible when I was flying backwards and forwards across Europe, and the position was changing from hour to hour. But to-day there is a lull for a brief time, and I want to say a few words to you, men and women of Britain and the Empire, and perhaps to others as well.

First of all I must say something to those who have written to my wife or myself in these last weeks to tell us of their gratitude for my efforts and to assure us of their prayers for my success. Most of these letters have come from women—mothers or sisters of our own countrymen. But there are countless others besides—from France, from Belgium, from Italy, even from Germany, and it has been heart-breaking to read of the growing anxiety they reveal and their intense relief when they thought, too soon, that the danger of war was past.

If I felt my responsibility heavy before, to read such letters has made it seem almost overwhelming. How horrible, fantastic, incredible it is that we should be digging trenches and trying on gas-masks here because of a quarrel in a far-away country between people of whom we know nothing. It seems still more impossible that a quarrel which has already been settled in principle should be the subject of war.

I can well understand the reasons why the Czech Government have felt unable to accept the terms which have been put before them in the German memorandum. Yet I believe after my talks with Herr Hitler that, if only time were allowed, it ought to be possible for the arrangements for transferring the territory that the Czech Government has agreed to give to Germany to be settled by agreement under conditions which would assure fair treatment to the population concerned.

You know already that I have done all that one man can do to compose this quarrel. After my visits to Germany I have realized vividly how Herr Hitler feels that he must champion other Germans, and his indignation that grievances have not been met before this. He told me privately, and last

[1] *The Struggle for Peace.* By the Rt. Hon. Neville Chamberlain. Hutchinson, London. Pp. 274–6.

night he repeated publicly, that after this Sudeten German question is settled, that is the end of Germany's territorial claims in Europe.

After my first visit to Berchtesgaden I did get the assent of the Czech Government to proposals which gave the substance of what Herr Hitler wanted, and I was taken completely by surprise when I got back to Germany and found that he insisted that the territory should be handed over to him immediately, and immediately occupied by German troops without previous arrangements for safeguarding the people within the territory who were not Germans, or did not want to join the German Reich.

I must say that I find this attitude unreasonable. If it arises out of any doubts that Herr Hitler feels about the intentions of the Czech Government to carry out their promises and hand over the territory, I have offered on the part of the British Government to guarantee their words, and I am sure the value of our promise will not be underrated anywhere. I shall not give up the hope of a peaceful solution, or abandon my efforts for peace, as long as any chance for peace remains. I would not hesitate to pay even a third visit to Germany if I thought it would do any good. But at this moment I see nothing further that I can usefully do in the way of mediation.

Meanwhile there are certain things we can and shall do at home. Volunteers are still wanted for air-raid precautions, for fire brigade and police services, and for the Territorial units. I know that all of you, men and women alike, are ready to play your part in the defence of the country, and I ask you all to offer your services, if you have not already done so, to the local authorities, who will tell you if you are wanted and in what capacity.

Do not be alarmed if you hear of men being called up to man the anti-aircraft defences or ships. These are only precautionary measures such as a Government must take in times like this. But they do not necessarily mean that we have determined on war or that war is imminent.

However much we may sympathize with a small nation confronted by a big and powerful neighbour, we cannot in all circumstances undertake to involve the whole British Empire in war simply on her account. If we have to fight it must be on larger issues than that. I am myself a man of peace to the depths of my soul. Armed conflict between nations is a nightmare to me; but if I were convinced that any nation had made up its mind to dominate the world by fear of its force, I should feel that it must be resisted. Under such a domination life for people who believe in liberty would not be worth living; but war is a fearful thing, and we must be very clear, before we embark on it, that it is really the great issues that are at stake, and that the call to risk everything in their defence, when all the consequences are weighed, is irresistible.

For the present I ask you to await as calmly as you can the events of the next few days. As long as war has not begun, there is always hope that it may be prevented, and you know that I am going to work for peace to the last moment. Good night.

(xxxix) *Statement issued from the Headquarters of the British Legion, September 27, 1938.*[1]

The President of the British Legion, Major-General Sir Frederick Maurice, with the consent of the Prime Minister, flew to Berlin on Sunday night[2] to place certain proposals before Herr Hitler—to the effect that if agreement could be reached between Germany and Czechoslovakia the British Legion offered its services as an impartial and neutral body in the areas concerned. Sir Frederick Maurice returned to London on Monday evening[1] and placed Herr Hitler's reply before the Prime Minister.

(xl) *Declaration of Neutrality by General Franco, September 27, 1938.*[4]

We are suffering too severely from war, and we know too well the horror it entails to desire that other nations should suffer from them. We have no cause to mix ourselves in other people's affairs. We desire to remain neutral. We have no wish to create difficulties for anyone. Therefore severe orders have been issued for all commentaries on the situation to remain moderate and to be objective. I trust that the catastrophe will be avoided, and have confidence that reason will yet prevail.

(xli) *Personal Messages sent by the Rt. Hon. Neville Chamberlain to Herr Hitler and Signor Mussolini, September 28, 1938.*[5]

(*a*) *To Herr Hitler*

After reading your letter I feel certain that you can get all essentials without war and without delay.

I am ready to come to Berlin myself at once to discuss arrangements for transfer with you and representatives of Czech Government, together with representatives of France and Italy if you desire.

I feel convinced we could reach agreement in a week. However much you distrust Prague Government's intentions, you cannot doubt power of British and French Governments to see that promises are carried out fairly and fully and forthwith. As you know I have stated publicly that we are prepared to undertake that they shall be so carried out.

I cannot believe that you will take responsibility of starting a world war which may end civilization for the sake of a few days' delay in settling this long-standing problem.

(*b*) *To Signor Mussolini*

I have to-day addressed last appeal to Herr Hitler to abstain from force to settle Sudeten problem, which I feel sure can be settled by a short discussion and will give him the essential territory, population and protection

[1] *The Times*, September 27, 1938. [2] September 25. [3] September 26.
[4] Made to the Press at Burgos. *The Times*, September 28, 1938.
[5] British White Paper, Cmd. 5848.

for both Sudetens and Czechs during transfer. I have offered myself to go at once to Berlin to discuss arrangements with German and Czech representatives and, if the Chancellor desires, representatives also of Italy and France.

I trust your Excellency will inform German Chancellor that you are willing to be represented and urge him to agree to my proposal which will keep all our peoples out of war. I have already guaranteed that Czech promises shall be carried out and feel confident full agreement could be reached in a week.

(xlii) *Extracts from Speech by the Rt. Hon. Neville Chamberlain, Prime Minister, September 28, 1938.*[1]

Shortly before the House adjourned at the end of July I remember that some questions were addressed to me as to the possibility of summoning the House before the time arranged, and during the Recess, in certain eventualities. Those eventualities referred to possible developments in Spain. But the matter which has brought us together to-day is one which even at that time was already threatening but which, I think, we all hoped would find a peaceful solution before we met again. Unhappily those hopes have not been fulfilled. To-day we are faced with a situation which has had no parallel since 1914.

To find the origins of the present controversy it would be necessary to go back to the constitution of the State of Czechoslovakia with its heterogeneous population. No doubt at the time when it was constituted it seemed to those then responsible that it was the best arrangement that could be made in the light of conditions as they then supposed them to exist. I cannot help reflecting that if Article XIX of the Covenant providing for the revision of the Treaties by agreement had been put into operation, as was contemplated by the framers of the Covenant, instead of waiting until passion became so exasperated that revision by agreement became impossible, we might have avoided the crisis. For that omission all Members of the League must bear their responsibility. I am not here to apportion blame among them.

The position that we had to face in July was that a deadlock had arisen in the negotiations which had been going on between the Czechoslovak Government and the Sudeten Germans and that fears were already entertained that if it were not speedily broken the German Government might presently intervene in the dispute. For His Majesty's Government there were three alternative courses that we might have adopted. Either we could have threatened to go to war with Germany if she attacked Czechoslovakia, or we could have stood aside and allowed matters to take their course, or, finally, we could attempt to find a peaceful settlement by way of mediation. The first of those courses we rejected. We had no treaty liabilities to Czechoslovakia. We always refused to accept any such obligations. Indeed, this

[1] In the House of Commons. *Hansard*, September 28, 1938. cols. 5–26.

country, which does not readily resort to war, would not have followed us if we had tried to lead it into war to prevent a minority from obtaining autonomy, or even from choosing to pass under some other Government.

[*Lord Runciman's Mission*]

The second alternative was also repugnant to us. However remote this territory may be, we knew, of course, that a spark once lighted there might give rise to a general conflagration, and we felt it our duty to do anything in our power to help the contending parties to find agreement. We addressed ourselves to the third course, the task of mediation. We knew that the task would be difficult, perhaps even perilous, but we felt that the object was good enough to justify the risk, and when Lord Runciman had expressed his willingness to undertake our mission, we were happy to think that we had secured a mediator whose long experience and well-known qualities of firmness, of tact, and of sympathy gave us the best hopes of success. That in the end Lord Runciman did not succeed was no fault of his, and we, and indeed all Europe, must ever be grateful to him and to his staff for their long and exhausting efforts on behalf of peace, in the course of which they gained the esteem and the confidence of both sides.

On 21st September Lord Runciman addressed a letter to me reporting the results of his mission. That letter is printed in the White Paper—it is document No. 1—but perhaps I may conveniently mention some of the salient points of his story. On 7th June the Sudeten German party had put forward certain proposals which embodied the eight points of Herr Henlein's speech at Carlsbad on 24th April. The Czechoslovak Government, on their side, had embodied their proposals in a draft Nationality Statute, a Language Bill, and an Administrative Reform Bill. By the middle of August it had become clear to Lord Runciman that the gap between these two proposals was too wide to permit of negotiations between the parties on that basis. In his capacity as mediator, he was successful in preventing the Sudeten German party from closing the door upon further negotiations, and he was largely instrumental in inducing Dr. Beneš to put forward new proposals on 21st August, which appear to have been regarded by the Sudeten party leaders as a suitable basis for the continuance of negotiations. The prospects of negotiations being carried through to a successful conclusion were, however, handicapped by the recurrence of incidents in Czechoslovakia, involving casualties both on the Czech and Sudeten German side.

On 1st and 2nd September Herr Henlein went to Berchtesgaden to consult with Herr Hitler about the situation. He was the bearer of a message from Lord Runciman to Herr Hitler, expressing the hope that he would give his approval and support to the continuance of the negotiations going on in Prague. No direct reply was communicated to Lord Runciman by Herr Henlein, but the latter returned convinced of Herr Hitler's desire for a peaceful solution, and after his return it became clear that the Sudeten leaders insisted upon complete satisfaction of the eight Carlsbad points,

so-called, in any solution that might be reached. The House will see that during August Lord Runciman's efforts had been directed, with a considerable degree of success, towards bringing the Sudeten and Czechoslovak Government negotiators closer together.

[*Negotiations up to the Nuremberg Congress*]

In the meantime, however, developments in Germany itself had been causing considerable anxiety to His Majesty's Government. On 28th July the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs had written a personal letter to the German Minister of Foreign Affairs, Herr von Ribbentrop, expressing his regret at the latter's statement to Sir Nevile Henderson, our Ambassador in Berlin, that the German Government must reserve its attitude towards Lord Runciman's mission and regard the matter as one of purely British concern. The Secretary of State had gone on to express the hope that the German Government would collaborate with His Majesty's Government in facilitating a peaceful solution of the Sudeten question and so opening the way to establishing relations between Great Britain and Germany on a basis of mutual confidence and co-operation.

But early in August we received reports of military preparations in Germany on an extensive scale. They included the calling up of reservists, the service of second-year recruits beyond the beginning of October, when they would normally have been released, the conscription of labour for the completion of German fortifications on her Western frontier, and measures which empowered the military authorities to conscript civilian goods and services. These measures, which involved a widespread dislocation of civilian life, could not fail to be regarded abroad as equivalent to partial mobilization, and they suggested that the German Government were determined to find a settlement of the Sudeten question by the autumn. In these circumstances His Majesty's Ambassador in Berlin was instructed, in the middle of August, to point out to the German Government that these abnormal measures could not fail to be interpreted abroad as a threatening gesture towards Czechoslovakia, that they must therefore increase the feeling of tension throughout Europe, and that they might compel the Czechoslovak Government to take precautionary measures on their side. The almost certain consequence would be to destroy all chance of successful mediation by Lord Runciman's mission and perhaps endanger the peace of every one of the great Powers of Europe. This, the Ambassador added, might also destroy the prospects of the resumption of Anglo-German conversations. In these circumstances it was hoped that the German Government might be able to modify their military measures in order to avoid these dangers.

To these representations Herr von Ribbentrop replied in a letter in which he refused to discuss the military measures referred to and expressed the opinion that the British efforts in Prague had only served to increase Czech intransigence. In face of this attitude His Majesty's Government, through the Chancellor of the Exchequer, who happened to be speaking at Lanark

on 27th August[1]—drew attention again to some words which I had used on 24th March in this House. He declared that there was nothing to add to or to vary in the statement which I had made. Perhaps I may just refresh the memories of hon. Members by reading that statement of 24th March once again:[2] . . .

Towards the end of August further events occurred which marked the increasing seriousness of the situation. The French Government, in consequence of information which had reached them about the moving of several German divisions towards their frontier, took certain precautionary measures themselves, including the calling up of reserves to man the Maginot Line. On 28th August Sir Nevile Henderson had been recalled to London for consultation and a special meeting of Ministers was held on 30th August to consider his report and the general situation. On the 31st he returned to Berlin and he gave Baron von Weizsäcker, the State Secretary at the Wilhelmstrasse, a strong personal warning regarding the probable attitude of His Majesty's Government in the event of German aggression against Czechoslovakia, particularly if France were compelled to intervene. On 1st September the Ambassador saw Herr von Ribbentrop and repeated to him, as a personal and most urgent message, the warning he had already given to the State Secretary on the previous day.

In addressing these personal warnings through Sir Nevile Henderson and in making the reference to Czechoslovakia contained in the Chancellor of the Exchequer's speech on 27th August, His Majesty's Government desired to impress the seriousness of the situation upon the German Government without risking a further aggravation of the situation by any formal representations, which might have been interpreted by the German Government as a public rebuff, as had been the case in regard to our representations of 21st May. His Majesty's Government also had to bear in mind the close approach of the Nazi Party Congress at Nuremburg, which was to open on 5th September and to last until the 12th. It was to be anticipated that the German Chancellor would feel himself compelled to make some public statement regarding the Sudeten question, and it therefore appeared necessary, in addition to warning the German Government of the attitude of His Majesty's Government in the United Kingdom, to make every effort in Prague to secure a resumption of negotiations between the Czechoslovak Government and the Sudeten representatives on a basis which would give hope of a rapid and satisfactory settlement.

Accordingly, His Majesty's Minister at Prague saw Dr. Beneš on 3rd September and emphasized to him that it was vital in the interests of Czechoslovakia to offer immediately and without reservation those concessions without which the Sudeten question could not be immediately settled. His Majesty's Government were not in a position to say whether anything less than the full Carlsbad programme would suffice. They certainly felt that the

[1] See *Documents* for 1938, Vol. I, pp. 89–91.
[2] The Prime Minister quoted the passage which appears on p. 122, lines 34 to end of page.

Czechoslovak Government should go forthwith and unreservedly to the limit of concessions. Lord Runciman strongly supported Mr. Newton's representations to Dr. Beneš, but both Lord Runciman and Mr. Newton drew Dr. Beneš's attention to the importance of reaching a settlement before Herr Hitler's expected pronouncement at Nuremberg and to the dangerous international situation resulting from the German military preparations. Dr. Beneš responded to these representations, which were made in the best interests of Czechoslovakia, by putting forward proposals afterwards known as the Fourth Plan, which were communicated to the Sudeten German representatives on 6th September. In Lord Runciman's opinion this plan embodied almost all the requirements of the eight Carlsbad points and formed a very favourable basis for the resumption of negotiations. In forming this opinion he was guided partly by his own examination of the Czech Government's plan and partly by the favourable reception that was accorded to it by the Sudeten negotiators.

Since the opening proclamation of the Nuremberg Congress had not contained any reference to the Czechoslovak question, and the recent attitude of Herr Hitler and other leading German personalities indicated that Germany welcomed the continuation of negotiations in Prague, the prospects of a satisfactory solution of the Sudeten question on the basis of autonomy within the Czechoslovak State appeared not unpromising on the publication of the Czechoslovak Government's Fourth Plan on 7th September. The publication of the Fourth Plan was, unfortunately, however, immediately followed by a serious incident at Mährisch-Ostrau. It would appear from the investigations of the British observer that the importance of this incident was very much exaggerated. The immediate result was a decision on the part of the Sudeten leaders not to resume negotiations until this incident had been liquidated. Immediately measures were taken by the Czechoslovak Government to liquidate it, but further incidents took place on 11th September near Eger, and, in spite of Lord Runciman's efforts to bring both parties together, negotiations could not be resumed before Herr Hitler's speech winding up the Nuremberg Congress on 12th September.

In view of the unsatisfactory development of the situation in Czechoslovakia, and of the danger that Herr Hitler's speech might close the door to further negotiations, His Majesty's Government made further efforts to exercise a restraining influence upon the German Government. The French Government had shown themselves particularly insistent that nothing should be left undone to make the attitude of His Majesty's Government clear to the Chancellor himself. Sir Nevile Henderson was at Nuremberg from 9th September to the 12th, and he took every opportunity to impress upon leading German personalities, such as Field Marshal Goering, Herr von Ribbentrop, Dr. Goebbels, Baron von Neurath and Baron von Weizsäcker, the attitude of His Majesty's Government as set forth in my speech on 24th March and repeated by my right hon. Friend on 27th August. Our Ambassador reported that there could be no grounds for any doubts in the

minds of the German Government as a result of his efforts, and as such action might have had a contrary effect to what was intended, it was decided not to make any personal representations to Herr Hitler himself. The French Government were informed of the warnings which had been conveyed by Sir Nevile Henderson at Nuremberg.

On 9th September the Cabinet met to consider the situation and decided to take certain precautionary naval measures, including the commissioning of mine-layers and mine-sweepers. On 11th September I made a statement to the Press, which received widespread publicity, stressing in particular the close ties uniting Great Britain and France and the probability in certain eventualities of this country going to the assistance of France. On the morning of 12th September the Cabinet met again, but they decided that no further action could usefully be taken before Herr Hitler's speech at Nuremberg that evening.

[*Effects of Herr Hitler's Nuremberg Speech*]

In his speech on 12th September Herr Hitler laid great stress upon the defensive military measures taken on Germany's western frontier. In his references to Czechoslovakia he reminded the world that on 22nd February he had said that the Reich would no longer tolerate further oppression or persecution of the Sudeten Germans. They demanded the right of self-determination, he said, and they were supported in their demand by the Reich. Therefore, for the first time this speech promised the support of the Reich to the Sudeten Germans if they could not obtain satisfaction for themselves, and for the first time it publicly raised the issue of self-determination. He did not, however, close the door upon further negotiations in Prague, nor did he demand a plebiscite. As the speech was also accompanied by pacifying references to Germany's frontiers with Poland and France, its general effect was to leave the situation unchanged, with a slight diminution of the tension.

The speech, however, and in particular Herr Hitler's reference to German support for the cause of the Sudeten Germans, had an immediate and unfortunate effect among those people. Demonstrations took place throughout the Sudetenland, resulting in an immediate extension of the incidents which had already begun on 11th September. Serious rioting occurred, accompanied by attacks upon Czech police and officials, and by 14th September, according to official Czechoslovak figures, there had been 21 killed and 75 wounded, the majority of whom were Czechs. Martial law was immediately proclaimed in the affected districts. On the evening of 13th September Herr Henlein and other Sudeten leaders assembled at Eger and sent a telegram to the Czechoslovak Government declaring that they could not be responsible for the consequences of martial law and the special Czech emergency measures if they were not immediately withdrawn. Attempts by Lord Runciman's Mission to bring the Sudeten leaders into discussion with the Czechoslovak Government failed, and on 14th September Herr Henlein

issued a proclamation stating that the Carlsbad Points were no longer enough and that the situation called for self-determination. Thereupon, Herr Henlein fled to Germany, where, it is understood, he has since occupied himself with the formation of a Sudeten legionary organization reported to number 40,000 men. In these circumstances Lord Runciman felt that no useful purpose would be served by his publishing a plan of his own.

The House will recall that by the evening of 14th September a highly critical situation had developed in which there was immediate danger of the German troops now concentrated upon the frontier entering Czechoslovakia to prevent further incidents occurring in Sudetenland, and fighting between the Czech forces and the Sudeten Germans, although reliable reports indicated that order had been completely restored in those districts by 14th September. On the other hand, the Czechoslovak Government might have felt compelled to mobilize at once and so risk provoking a German invasion. In either event German invasion might have been expected to bring into operation French obligations to come to the assistance of Czechoslovakia, and so lead to a European War in which this country might well have been involved in support of France.

[*Mr. Chamberlain's Visit to Berchtesgaden*]

In those circumstances I decided that the time had come to put into operation a plan which I had had in my mind for a considerable period as a last resort. One of the principal difficulties in dealing with totalitarian Governments is the lack of any means of establishing contact with the personalities in whose hands lie the final decisions for the country. So I resolved to go to Germany myself to interview Herr Hitler and find out in personal conversation whether there was yet any hope of saving the peace. I knew very well that in taking such an unprecedented course I was laying myself open to criticism on the ground that I was detracting from the dignity of a British Prime Minister, and to disappointment, and perhaps even resentment, if I failed to bring back a satisfactory agreement. But I felt that in such a crisis, where the issues at stake were so vital for millions of human beings, such considerations could not be allowed to count.

Herr Hitler responded to my suggestion with cordiality, and on 15th September I made my first flight to Munich. Thence I travelled by train to Herr Hitler's mountain home at Berchtesgaden. I confess I was astonished at the warmth of the approval with which this adventure was everywhere received, but the relief which it brought for the moment was an indication of the gravity with which the situation had been viewed. At this first conversation, which lasted for three hours and at which only an interpreter was present besides Herr Hitler and myself, I very soon became aware that the position was much more acute and much more urgent than I had realized. In courteous but perfectly definite terms, Herr Hitler made it plain that he had made up his mind that the Sudeten Germans must have the right of self-determination and of returning, if they wished, to the Reich. If they

could not achieve this by their own efforts, he said, he would assist them to do so, and he declared categorically that rather than wait he would be prepared to risk a world war. At one point he complained of British threats against him, to which I replied that he must distinguish between a threat and a warning, and that he might have just cause of complaint if I allowed him to think that in no circumstances would this country go to war with Germany, when, in fact, there were conditions in which such a contingency might arise.

So strongly did I get the impression that the Chancellor was contemplating an immediate invasion of Czechoslovakia that I asked him why he had allowed me to travel all that way, since I was evidently wasting my time. On that he said that if I could give him there and then an assurance that the British Government accepted the principle of self-determination he would be quite ready to discuss ways and means of carrying it out; but, if, on the contrary, I told him that such a principle could not be considered by the British Government, then he agreed that it was of no use to continue our conversations. I, of course, was not in a position to give there and then such an assurance, but I undertook to return at once to consult with my colleagues if he would refrain from active hostilities until I had had time to obtain their reply. That assurance he gave me, provided, he said, that nothing happened in Czechoslovakia of such a nature as to force his hand. That assurance has remained binding ever since. I have no doubt whatever now, looking back, that my visit alone prevented an invasion, for which everything was ready. It was clear to me that with the German troops in the positions they then occupied there was nothing that anybody could do that would prevent that invasion unless the right of self-determination were granted to the Sudeten Germans and that quickly. That was the sole hope of a peaceful solution.

I came back to London next day, and that evening the Cabinet met and it was attended by Lord Runciman who, at my request, had also travelled from Prague on the same day. Lord Runciman informed us that although, in his view, the responsibility for the final breach in the negotiations at Prague rested with the Sudeten extremists, nevertheless, in view of recent developments, the frontier districts between Czechoslovakia and Germany where the Sudeten population was in the majority, should be given the full right of self-determination at once. He considered the cession of territory to be inevitable and thought it should be done promptly. Measures for a peaceful transfer could be arranged between the two Governments. Germans and Czechs, however, would still have to live side by side in many other areas of Czechoslovakia, and in those areas Lord Runciman thought that a basis ought to be sought for local autonomy on the lines of the Fourth Plan, which had been published by the Czechoslovak Government on the seventh of this month. Moreover, he considered that the integrity and security of Czechoslovakia could only be maintained if her policy, internal and external, was directed to enabling her to live at peace with all her neighbours. For

this purpose, in his opinion, her policy should be entirely neutral, as in the case of Switzerland. This would involve assurances from Czechoslovakia that in no circumstances would she attack any of her neighbours and it would also mean guarantees from the principal Powers of Europe against aggression.

Lord Runciman recommended that, in order to carry out the policy he was advocating, an international commission should be invited to deal with the delimitation of the area transferred to Germany and with controversial points arising from the execution of whatever agreement was reached. He also recommended the organization of an international force to keep order in the transferred districts, so that the Czechoslovak troops and police might be withdrawn as soon as possible.

[*The Anglo-French Proposals*]

Naturally, His Majesty's Government felt it necessary to consult the French Government before they replied to Herr Hitler, and, accordingly, M. Daladier and M. Bonnet were invited to fly to London for conversations with British Ministers on 18th September. Perhaps I may read the *communiqué* which was issued after those conversations, and which read as follows:[1] . . .

During these conversations the representatives of the two Governments were guided by a desire to find a solution which would not bring about a European War, and, therefore, a solution which would not automatically compel France to take action in accordance with her obligations.

It was agreed that the only means of achieving this object was to accept the principle of self-determination, and, accordingly, the British and the French Ministers in Prague were instructed to inform the Czechoslovak Government that the further maintenance within the boundaries of the Czechoslovak State of the districts mainly inhabited by Sudeten Germans could not continue any longer without imperilling the interests of Czechoslovakia herself and of European peace. The Czechoslovak Government were, therefore, urged to agree immediately to the direct transfer to the Reich of all areas with over 50 per cent Sudeten inhabitants. An international body was to be set up to deal with questions like the adjustment of frontiers and the possible exchange of populations on the basis of the right to opt.

The Czechoslovak Government were informed that, to meet their natural desire for security for their future, His Majesty's Government would be prepared, as a contribution to the pacification of Europe, to join in an international guarantee of the new boundaries of the Czechoslovak State against unprovoked aggression. Such a guarantee would safeguard the independence of Czechoslovakia by substituting a general guarantee against unprovoked aggression in place of the existing treaties with France and Soviet Russia, which involve reciprocal obligations of a military character. In urging this solution upon the Czechoslovak Government, the British and French

[1] See p. 213.

Governments took account of the probability that the Czechoslovak Government would find it preferable to deal with the problem by the method of direct transfer rather than by means of a plebiscite, which would involve serious difficulties as regards other nationalities in Czechoslovakia.

In agreeing to guarantee the future boundaries of Czechoslovakia against unprovoked aggression, His Majesty's Government were accepting a completely new commitment as we were not previously bound by any obligations towards Czechoslovakia other than those involved in the Covenant of the League.

The Czechoslovak Government replied on 20th September to these representations by suggesting that the Sudeten dispute should be submitted to arbitration under the terms of the German-Czechoslovak Arbitration Treaty of 1926. The British and French Ministers in Prague were, however, instructed to point out to the Czechoslovak Government that there was no hope of a peaceful solution on this basis, and, in the interests of Czechoslovakia and of European peace, the Czechoslovak Government was urged to accept the Anglo-French proposals immediately. This they did immediately and unconditionally on 21st September. His Majesty's Minister in Prague was instructed on 22nd September to inform Dr. Beneš that His Majesty's Government were profoundly conscious of the immense sacrifices to which the Czechoslovak Government had agreed, and the great public spirit they had shown. These proposals had naturally been put forward in the hope of averting a general disaster and saving Czechoslovakia from invasion. The Czechoslovak Government's readiness to go to such extreme limits of concession had assured her of a measure of sympathy which nothing else could have aroused.

[*Hungarian and Polish Claims*]

That Government resigned on 22nd September, but it was immediately succeeded by a Government of National concentration under General Syrový, Inspector-General of the Army, and it has been emphasized in Prague that this Government is not a military dictatorship and has accepted the Anglo-French proposals. We had hoped that the immediate problem of the Sudeten Germans would not be further complicated at this particular juncture by the pressing of the claims of the Hungarian and Polish minorities. These minorities have, however, consistently demanded similar treatment to that accorded to the Sudeten minority, and the acceptance of the Anglo-French proposals, involving the cession of the predominantly Sudeten German territories, has led to a similar demand for cession of the territory predominantly inhabited by Polish and Hungarian minorities being advanced by the Hungarian and Polish Governments. The Hungarian Minister in London and the Polish Ambassador in London made representations to His Majesty's Government in this sense on 19th and 20th September. Representations were also made in Prague on 21st and 22nd September. His Majesty's Government have taken note of these representations, and

have replied that they were at present concentrating all their efforts on the Sudeten problem, on the solution of which the issue of peace and war in Europe depended. They fully appreciated the interest of the Hungarian and Polish Governments in their respective minorities in Czechoslovakia, but hoped they would do nothing in the present delicate situation to extend the scope of the present crisis. The Polish Government has expressed considerable dissatisfaction at this reply, and emphasized that the Polish claims require urgent settlement. Troop movements have taken place in the direction of Teschen and considerable popular feeling has been aroused in Poland. The Hungarian Government has been encouraged by the visits of the Regent to Field Marshal Goering at Rominten on 20th September and of the Prime Minister, Minister for Foreign Affairs and Chief of the General Staff to Berchtesgaden on 21st September. Mobilization measures have been taken to double the strength of the Hungarian Army.

[*Mr. Chamberlain's Visit to Godesberg*]

In view of these developments, the task of finding a solution of the Sudeten German problem was still further complicated. However, on the 22nd I went back to Germany to Godesberg on the Rhine, where the Chancellor had appointed a meeting place as being more convenient for me than the remote Berchtesgaden. Once again I had a very warm welcome in the streets and villages through which I passed, demonstrating to me the desire of the German people for peace, and on the afternoon of my arrival I had my second meeting with the Chancellor. During my stay in London the Government had worked out with the French Government arrangements for effecting the transfer of the territory proposed, and also for delimiting the final frontier. I explained these to Herr Hitler—he was not previously aware of them—and I also told him about the proposed guarantee against unprovoked aggression.

On that point of a guarantee he made no objection, but said he could not enter into a guarantee unless other Powers, including Italy, were also guarantors. I said, I had not asked him to enter into a guarantee but I had intended to ask him whether he was prepared to conclude a pact of non-aggression with the new Czechoslovakia. He said he could not enter into such a pact while other minorities in Czechoslovakia were still unsatisfied; but hon. Members will see that he has since put his views in a more positive form, and said that when they are satisfied he will then be prepared to join in an international guarantee. At this particular time, however, no further discussion took place between us on the subject of a guarantee. Herr Hitler said he could not accept the other proposals I had described to him, on the ground that they were too dilatory and offered too many opportunities for further evasion on the part of the Czechs. He insisted that a speedy solution was essential, on account of the oppression and terrorism to which the Sudeten Germans were being subjected, and he proceeded to give me the main outlines of the proposal which he subsequently embodied in a memorandum

—except that he did not in this conversation actually name any time-limit.

Hon. Members will realize the perplexity in which I found myself, faced with this totally unexpected situation. I had been told at Berchtesgaden that if the principle of self-determination were accepted Herr Hitler would discuss with me the ways and means of carrying it out. He told me afterwards that he never for one moment supposed that I should be able to come back and say that the principle was accepted. I do not want hon. Members to think that he was deliberately deceiving me—I do not think so for one moment—but, for me, I expected that when I got back to Godesberg I had only to discuss quietly with him the proposals that I had brought with me; and it was a profound shock to me when I was told at the beginning of the conversation that these proposals were not acceptable, and that they were to be replaced by other proposals of a kind which I had not contemplated at all.

I felt that I must have a little time to consider what I was to do. Consequently, I withdrew, my mind full of foreboding as to the success of my mission. I first, however, obtained from Herr Hitler an extension of his previous assurance, that he would not move his troops pending the results of the negotiations. I, on my side, undertook to appeal to the Czech Government to avoid any action which might provoke incidents. I have seen speculative accounts of what happened on the next day, which have suggested that long hours passed whilst I remained on one side of the Rhine and Herr Hitler on the other because I had difficulty in obtaining this assurance from him about the moving of his troops. I want to say at once that that is purely imaginary. There was no such difficulty. I will explain in a moment what did cause the delay; but the assurance was given readily, and it has been, as I have said before, abided by right up to the present time.

We had arranged to resume our conversation at half-past eleven the next morning, but, in view of the difficulties of talking with a man through an interpreter and of the fact that I could not feel sure that what I had said to Herr Hitler had always been completely understood and appreciated by him, I thought it would be wise to put down on paper some comments upon these new proposals of his and let him have them some time before the talks began. Accordingly, I wrote him a letter—which is No. 3 in the White Paper[1]—which I sent to him. I sent that soon after breakfast. It will be seen that in it I declared my readiness to convey the proposals to the Czechoslovak Government, but I pointed out what seemed to me to be grave difficulties in the way of their acceptance. On the receipt of this letter, the Chancellor intimated that he would like to send a written reply. Accordingly, the conversations were postponed. The reply was not received until well into the afternoon.

I had hoped that this delay might mean that some modification was being worked out, but when I received the letter—which is No. 4[2]—I found, to my disappointment, that, although it contained some explanation, it offered no

[1] See pp. 227–28. [2] See pp. 228–31.

modification at all of the proposals which had been described to me the night before. Accordingly, I replied as in document No. 5,[1] asking for a memorandum of the proposals and a copy of the map for transmission to Prague, and intimating my intention to return to England. The memorandum[2] and the map were handed to me at my final interview with the Chancellor, which began at half-past ten that night and lasted into the small hours of the morning, an interview at which the German Foreign Secretary was present, as well as Sir Nevile Henderson and Sir Horace Wilson; and, for the first time, I found in the memorandum a time-limit. Accordingly, on this occasion I spoke very frankly. I dwelt with all the emphasis at my command on the risks which would be incurred by insisting on such terms, and on the terrible consequences of a war, if war ensued. I declared that the language and the manner of the document, which I described as an ultimatum rather than a memorandum, would profoundly shock public opinion in neutral countries, and I bitterly reproached the Chancellor for his failure to respond in any way to the efforts which I had made to secure peace. In spite of these plain words, this conversation was carried on on more friendly terms than any that had yet preceded it, and Herr Hitler informed me that he appreciated and was grateful for my efforts, but that he considered that he had made a response since he had held back the operations which he had planned and that he had offered in his proposal to Czechoslovakia a frontier very different from the one which he would have taken as the result of military conquest.

I think I should add that before saying farewell to Herr Hitler I had a few words with him in private, which I do not think are without importance. In the first place he repeated to me with great earnestness what he had said already at Berchtesgaden, namely, that this was the last of his territorial ambitions in Europe and that he had no wish to include in the Reich people of other races than Germans. In the second place he said, again very earnestly, that he wanted to be friends with England and that if only this Sudeten question could be got out of the way in peace he would gladly resume conversations. It is true he said, 'There is one awkward question, the Colonies . . . butth at is not a matter for war', and, alluding to the mobilization of the Czechoslovakian Army, which had been announced to us in the middle of our conversations and had given rise to some disturbance, he said, about the Colonies, 'There will be no mobilization about that.'

I may now briefly recapitulate the contents of the Memorandum. It proposed immediate separation from Czechoslovakia of the areas shaded on the map. These areas included all areas in which Sudeten Germans constituted more than 50 per cent of the population, and some additional areas. These were to be completely evacuated by Czech soldiers and officials and occupied by German troops by 1st October. A plebiscite was to be held in November, and according to the results a definitive frontier was to be settled by a German-Czech or an International Commission; that is to say, the frontier

[1] See p. 231. [2] See pp. 232–33.

would be altered according as the majority were either Germans or Czechs on one side or the other. In addition, certain other areas, marked in green, were to be the subject of a plebiscite but these were to remain in the occupation of Czech troops. Both German and Czech troops were to be withdrawn from the disputed areas during the plebiscite and all further details were to be settled by a joint German-Czech Commission.

[*Negotiations after Godesberg*]

I returned to London on 24th September, and arrangements were made for the German Memorandum and map to be communicated directly to the Czech Government, who received them that evening. On Sunday, the 25th, we received from Mr. Masaryk, the Czech Minister here, the reply of the Czech Government, which stated that they considered Herr Hitler's demands in their present form to be absolutely and unconditionally unacceptable. This reply was communicated to the French Ministers, M. Daladier and M. Bonnet, who arrived that same evening and exchanged views with us on the situation. Conversations were resumed the next morning, when the French Ministers informed us that if Czechoslovakia were attacked France would fulfil her Treaty obligations, and in reply we told them that if as a result of these obligations French forces became actively engaged in hostilities against Germany, we should feel obliged to support them.

Meanwhile, as a last effort to preserve peace I sent Sir Horace Wilson to Berlin on the 26th, with a personal message to Herr Hitler to be delivered before the speech that Herr Hitler was to make in Berlin at eight o'clock that night. The French Ministers entirely approved this initiative and issued a *communiqué* to that effect at midday. Sir Horace Wilson took with him a letter—No. 9 on the White Paper[1]—from me, pointing out that the reception of the German Memorandum by the Czechoslovak Government and public opinion in the world generally had confirmed the expectation which I had expressed to him at Godesberg. I, therefore, made a further proposal with a view to rendering it possible to get a settlement by negotiation rather than by military force, namely, that there should be immediate discussions between German and Czechoslovak representatives in the presence of British representatives. Sir Horace Wilson arrived in Berlin on the afternoon of the 26th and he presented his letter to Herr Hitler, who listened to him, but expressed the view that he could not depart from the procedure of the memorandum, as he felt conferences would lead to further intolerable procrastinations.

I should tell the House how deeply impressed on my mind by my conversations with Herr Hitler and by every speech he has made, is his rooted distrust and disbelief in the sincerity of the Czech Government. That has been one of the governing factors in all this difficult story of negotiation.

In the meantime after reading Herr Hitler's speech in Berlin, in which he, as I say, expressed his disbelief in the intention of the Czech Government to

[1] See pp. 243–45.

carry out their promises, I issued a statement in which I offered, on behalf of the British Government, to guarantee that the promises they had made to us and the French Government should be carried out. But yesterday morning Sir Horace Wilson resumed his conversations with Herr Hitler, and finding his views apparently still unchanged, he by my instructions repeated to him in precise terms what I said a few minutes ago was the upshot of our conversations with the French, namely, that if the Czechs reject the German Memorandum and Germany attacks Czechoslovakia, we had been informed by the French Government that they would fulfil their obligations to Czechoslovakia, and that should the forces of France in consequence become actively engaged in hostilities against Germany the British Government would feel obliged to support them.

The next document in the White Paper refers to a conversation which I had with M. Masaryk as to whether the Czechoslovak Government would take part in such a conference as I had proposed to Herr Hitler, and the Czech Government replied accepting the proposal under certain conditions which are set out in their letter.[1] Now the story which I have told the House brings us up to last night. About 10.30 I received from Herr Hitler a reply to my letter sent by Sir Horace Wilson. It is printed in the White Paper.[2] A careful perusal of this letter indicates certain limitations on Herr Hitler's intentions which were not included in the Memorandum, and also gives certain additional assurances. There is, for example, a definite statement that troops are not to move beyond the red line, that they are only to preserve order, that the plebiscite will be carried out by a free vote under no outside influence, and that Herr Hitler will abide by the result, and, finally, that he will join the international guarantee of the remainder of Czechoslovakia once the minorities questions are settled. Those are all reassuring statements as far as they go, and I have no hesitation in saying, after the personal contact I had established with Herr Hitler, that I believe he means what he says when he states that. But the reflection which was uppermost in my mind when I read his letter to me was that once more the differences and the obscurities had been narrowed down still further to a point where really it was inconceivable that they could not be settled by negotiations. So strongly did I feel this, that I felt impelled to send one more last letter —the last last—to the Chancellor. I sent him the following personal message:[3] . . .

At the same time I sent the following personal message to Signor Mussolini:[4] . . .

In reply to my message to Signor Mussolini, I was informed that instructions had been sent by the Duce to the Italian Ambassador in Berlin to see Herr von Ribbentrop at once and to say that while Italy would fulfil completely her pledges to stand by Germany, yet, in view of the great importance of the request made by His Majesty's Government to Signor Mussolini, the latter hoped Herr Hitler would see his way to postpone action

[1] See pp. 245–46. [2] See pp. 268–70. [3] See p. 272. [4] See pp. 272–73.

which the Chancellor had told Sir Horace Wilson was to be taken at 2 p.m. to-day for at least 24 hours so as to allow Signor Mussolini time to re-examine the situation and endeavour to find a peaceful settlement. In response, Herr Hitler has agreed to postpone mobilization for 24 hours.

[*Invitation to Munich Meeting*]

Whatever views hon. Members may have had about Signor Mussolini in the past, I believe that everyone will welcome his gesture of being willing to work with us for peace in Europe. That is not all. I have something further to say to the House yet. I have now been informed by Herr Hitler that he invites me to meet him at Munich to-morrow morning, He has also invited Signor Mussolini and M. Daladier. Signor Mussolini has accepted and I have no doubt M. Daladier will also accept. I need not say what my answer will be. [*Interruption*]. We are all patriots, and there can be no hon. Member of this House who did not feel his heart leap that the crisis has been once more postponed to give us once more an opportunity to try what reason and good-will and discussion will do to settle a problem which is already within sight of settlement. Mr. Speaker, I cannot say any more. I am sure that the House will be ready to release me now to go and see what I can make of this last effort. Perhaps they may think it will be well, in view of this new development, that this Debate shall stand adjourned for a few days, when perhaps we may meet in happier circumstances.

(xlii) *Broadcast Statement by M. Daladier, September 28, 1938.*[1]

J'avais annoncé que je ferais ce soir une communication au pays sur la situation internationale, mais j'ai été saisi, au début de cet après-midi, d'une invitation du gouvernement allemand à rencontrer demain à Munich, le chancelier Hitler, MM. Mussolini et Chamberlain. J'ai accepté cette invitation.

Vous comprendrez qu'à la veille d'une négociation aussi importante, j'ai le devoir d'ajourner les explications que je voulais vous donner. Mais, avant mon départ, je tiens à adresser au peuple de France mes remerciements pour son attitude pleine de courage et de dignité.

Je tiens à remercier surtout les Français qui ont été rappelés sous les drapeaux pour le sang-froid et la résolution dont ils ont donné une preuve nouvelle.

Ma tâche est rude. Depuis le début des difficultés que nous traversons, je n'ai pas cessé un seul jour de travailler de toutes mes forces à la sauvegarde de la paix et des intérêts vitaux de la France. Je continuerai demain cet effort avec la pensée que je suis en plein accord avec la nation toute entière.

[1] Before leaving for Munich. *Le Temps*, September 30, 1938.

(xliv) *Agreement Concluded at Munich on September 29, 1938.*[1]

Germany, the United Kingdom, France and Italy, taking into consideration the agreement, which has been already reached in principle for the cession to Germany of the Sudeten German territory, have agreed on the following terms and conditions governing the said cession and the measures consequent thereon, and by this agreement they each hold themselves responsible for the steps necessary to secure its fulfilment:

1. The evacuation will begin on the 1st October.

2. The United Kingdom, France and Italy agree that the evacuation of the territory shall be completed by the 10th October, without any existing installations having been destroyed and that the Czechoslovak Government will be held responsible for carrying out the evacuation without damage to the said installations.

3. The conditions governing the evacuation will be laid down in detail by an international commission composed of representatives of Germany, the United Kingdom, France, Italy and Czechoslovakia.

4. The occupation by stages of the predominantly German territory by German troops will begin on the 1st October. The four territories marked on the attached map will be occupied by German troops in the following order: the territory marked No. I on the 1st and 2nd of October, the territory marked No. II on the 2nd and 3rd of October, the territory marked No. III on the 3rd, 4th and 5th of October, the territory marked No. IV on the 6th and 7th of October. The remaining territory of preponderantly German character will be ascertained by the aforesaid international commission forthwith and be occupied by German troops by the 10th of October.

5. The international commission referred to in paragraph 3 will determine the territories in which a plebiscite is to be held. These territories will be occupied by international bodies until the plebiscite has been completed. The same commission will fix the conditions in which the plebiscite is to be held, taking as a basis the conditions of the Saar plebiscite. The commission will also fix a date, not later than the end of November, on which the plebiscite will be held.

6. The final determination of the frontiers will be carried out by the international commission. This commission will also be entitled to recommend to the four Powers, Germany, the United Kingdom, France and Italy, in certain exceptional cases minor modifications in the strictly ethnographical determination of the zones which are to be transferred without plebiscite.

7. There will be a right of option into and out of the transferred territories, the option to be exercised within six months from the date of this agreement. A German-Czechoslovak commission shall determine the details of the option, consider ways of facilitating the transfer of population and settle questions of principle arising out of the said transfer.

[1] British White Paper, Cmd. 5848.

8. The Czechoslovak Government will within a period of four weeks from the date of this agreement release from their military and police forces any Sudeten Germans who may wish to be released, and the Czechoslovak Government will within the same period release Sudeten German prisoners who are serving terms of imprisonment for political offences.

ADOLF HITLER
NEVILLE CHAMBERLAIN
ÉDOUARD DALADIER
Munich, September 29, 1938 BENITO MUSSOLINI

Annex to the Agreement

His Majesty's Government in the United Kingdom and the French Government have entered into the above agreement on the basis that they stand by the offer, contained in paragraph 6 of the Anglo-French proposals of the 19th September,[1] relating to an international guarantee of the new boundaries of the Czechoslovak State against unprovoked aggression.

When the question of the Polish and Hungarian minorities in Czechoslovakia has been settled, Germany and Italy for their part will give a guarantee to Czechoslovakia.

ADOLF HITLER
NEVILLE CHAMBERLAIN
ÉDOUARD DALADIER
Munich, September 29, 1938 BENITO MUSSOLINI

Declaration

The Heads of the Governments of the four Powers declare that the problems of the Polish and Hungarian minorities in Czechoslovakia, if not settled within three months by agreement between the respective Governments, shall form the subject of another meeting of the Heads of the Governments of the four Powers here present.

ADOLF HITLER
NEVILLE CHAMBERLAIN
ÉDOUARD DALADIER
Munich, September 29, 1938 BENITO MUSSOLINI

Supplementary Declaration

All questions which may arise out of the transfer of the territory shall be considered as coming within the terms of reference to the international commission.

ADOLF HITLER
NEVILLE CHAMBERLAIN
ÉDOUARD DALADIER
Munich, September 29, 1938 BENITO MUSSOLINI

[1] See p. 214.

(xlv) *Joint Declaration by the Rt. Hon. Neville Chamberlain and Herr Hitler, September 30, 1938.*[1]

We, the German Führer and Chancellor and the British Prime Minister, have had a further meeting to-day and are agreed in recognizing that the question of Anglo-German relations is of the first importance for the two countries and for Europe.

We regard the agreement signed last night and the Anglo-German Naval Agreement as symbolic of the desire of our two peoples never to go to war with one another again.

We are resolved that the method of consultation shall be the method adopted to deal with any other questions that may concern our two countries, and we are determined to continue our efforts to remove possible sources of difference and thus to contribute to assure the peace of Europe.

(xlvi) *Statement by M. Daladier, September 30, 1938.*[2]

Je pense que la réunion de Munich peut marquer une date historique dans la vie de l'Europe. Grâce à la haute compréhension des représentants des grandes puissances occidentales, la guerre a été évitée et une paix honorable assurée à tous les peuples.

J'ai eu le plaisir de constater moi-même qu'il n'y a, en Allemagne, aucun sentiment de haine ou d'hostilité contre la France. Soyez sûrs que les Français n'éprouvent eux-mêmes aucun sentiment d'hostilité contre l'Allemagne, et il en a été ainsi même dans la période de tension diplomatique et de préparatifs militaires que nous venons de traverser.

Les deux peuples doivent s'entendre cordialement, et je suis heureux de consacrer mes forces à cette entente nécessaire et féconde.

J'ai déjà remercié le Führer et le maréchal Goering, ainsi que le ministre des affaires étrangères, M. von Ribbentrop, de la cordialité de leur accueil.

Veuillez aussi transmettre tous mes remerciements au peuple de Munich.

(xlvii) *Second Statement by M, Daladier. September 30, 1938.*[3]

Je reviens d'Allemagne. Les négociations ont été certes difficiles, mais j'ai la conviction profonde que l'accord conclu était indispensable au maintien de la paix en Europe. J'ai également la certitude aujourd'hui que, grâce au désir de concessions mutuelles et grâce à l'esprit de collaboration qui a animé l'action des quatre grandes puissances occidentales, la paix est sauvée.

[1] *The Struggle for Peace.* By the Rt. Hon. Neville Chamberlain. Hutchinson, London. P. 302.
[2] On his return from Munich, to the Paris representatives of the D.N.B. Agency. *Le Temps*, October 1, 1938.
[3] On his arrival at Le Bourget. *Le Temps*, October 1, 1938.

(xlviii) *Message from the Rt. Hon. Neville Chamberlain to M. Daladier, October 1, 1938.*[1]

On my return to London I wish to express to you my grateful appreciation of your loyal and helpful co-operation throughout these recent days of anxiety, and my admiration of the courage and dignity with which you have represented your great country.

In the declaration which the German Chancellor and I signed yesterday we have agreed that our respective peoples are united in their desire for peace and for friendly consultation in all differences that may arise.

Closely united as are the hearts of our peoples, I know that these sentiments are true of your country no less than of my own. I look forward to renewed and continuous co-operation with you in further efforts for the consolidation of European peace through an extension of the good will and confidence which so happily inspires the relations between our two countries.

(xlix) *Letter from M. Daladier to Mr. Chamberlain, October 4, 1938.*[2]

Cher Monsieur Chamberlain,

Je vous remercie de votre message qui a profondément touché la nation française. Les sentiments que vous exprimez correspondent aux miens.

La France a senti, au cours de cette crise, se resserrer encore les liens de cordiale amitié et d'estime qui l'unissent à la nation britannique.

Comme tous mes compatriotes, j'ai admiré votre ardente volonté de paix, votre haute et ferme compréhension des intérêts vitaux de nos deux pays et des obligations particulières de la France.

Notre collaboration n'est exclusive d'aucune autre entente. Je suis convaincu que, pour l'avenir, elle restera le gage le plus sûr de la paix.

ÉDOUARD DALADIER

(l) *Statements on the Munich Agreement made in the Debate in Parliament, October 3–6, 1938.*

(a) *Extracts from Speech by the Rt. Hon. Neville Chamberlain, Prime Minister, October 3, 1938.*[3]

. . . When the House met last Wednesday, we were all under the shadow of a great and imminent menace. War, in a form more stark and terrible than ever before, seemed to be staring us in the face. Before I sat down, a message had come which gave us new hope that peace might yet be saved, and to-day, only a few days after, we all meet in joy and thankfulness that the prayers of millions have been answered, and a cloud of anxiety has been lifted from our hearts. Upon the Members of the Cabinet the strain of the responsibility of these last few weeks has been almost overwhelming. Some

[1] *The Times*, October 3, 1938. [2] *Le Temps*, October 5, 1938.
[3] In the House of Commons. *Hansard*, October 3, 1938, cols. 40–50.

of us, I have no doubt, will carry the mark of it for the rest of our days. Necessarily, the weight fell heavier upon some shoulders than others. While all bore their part, I would like here and now to pay an especial tribute of gratitude and praise to the man upon whom fell the first brunt of those decisions which had to be taken day by day, almost hour by hour. The calmness, patience, and wisdom of the Foreign Secretary, and his lofty conception of his duty, not only to this country but to all humanity, were an example to us all, and sustained us all through the trials through which we have been passing.

Before I come to describe the Agreement which was signed at Munich in the small hours of Friday morning last, I would like to remind the House of two things which I think it is very essential not to forget when those terms are being considered. The first is this: We did not go there to decide whether the predominantly German areas in the Sudetenland should be passed over to the German Reich. That had been decided already. Czechoslovakia had accepted the Anglo-French proposals. What we had to consider was the method, the conditions and the time of the transfer of the territory. The second point to remember is that time was one of the essential factors. All the elements were present on the spot for the outbreak of a conflict which might have precipitated the catastrophe. We had populations inflamed to a high degree; we had extremists on both sides ready to work up and provoke incidents; we had considerable quantities of arms which were by no means confined to regularly organized forces. Therefore, it was essential that we should quickly reach a conclusion, so that this painful and difficult operation of transfer might be carried out at the earliest possible moment and concluded as soon as was consistent with orderly procedure, in order that we might avoid the possibility of something that might have rendered all our attempts at peaceful solution useless.

[*Comparison of Godesberg Memorandum and Munich Agreement*]

The House will remember that when I last addressed them I gave them some account of the Godesberg Memorandum, with the terms of which I think they are familiar. They will recollect also that I myself at Godesberg expressed frankly my view that the terms were such as were likely to shock public opinion generally in the world and to bring their prompt rejection by the Czechoslovak Government. Those views were confirmed by the results, and the immediate and unqualified rejection of that Memorandum by the Czechoslovak Government was communicated to us at once by them. What I think the House will desire to take into consideration first, this afternoon, is what is the difference between those unacceptable terms and the terms which were included in the Agreement signed at Munich, because on the difference between those two documents will depend the judgment as to whether we were successful in what we set out to do, namely, to find an orderly instead of a violent method of carrying out an agreed decision.

I say, first of all, that the Godesberg Memorandum, although it was cast

in the form of proposals, was in fact an ultimatum, with a time-limit of six days. On the other hand, the Munich Agreement reverts to the Anglo-French plan, the plan referred to in the Preamble, though not in express terms, and it lays down the conditions for the application, on the responsibility of the four Powers and under international supervision, of the main principle of that Memorandum. Again, under the Munich Agreement evacuation of the territory which is to be occupied by German military forces and its occupation by those forces is to be carried out in five clearly defined stages between October 1 and October 10, instead of having to be completed in one operation by October 1. Thirdly, the line up to which German troops will enter into occupation is no longer the line as laid down in the map which was attached to the Godesberg Memorandum. It is a line which is to be fixed by an International Commission. On that Commission both Germany and Czechoslovakia are represented. I take the fourth point. Under the Godesberg Memorandum the areas on the Czech side of this German line laid down in the map which were to be submitted to a plebiscite were laid down on that map by Germany, whereas those on the German side of the line were left undefined. Under the Munich Agreement all plebiscite areas are to be defined by the International Commission. The criterion is to be the predominantly German character of the area, the interpretation of that phrase being left to the Commission. I am bound to say that the German line, the line laid down in the map, did take in a number of areas which could not be called predominantly German in character.

Then, Sir, it will be remembered that, according to the Godesberg Memorandum, the occupation of plebiscite areas by German and Czech troops respectively was to be up to the time of the plebiscite. They were then to be withdrawn while the plebiscite was being held. Under the Munich Agreement these plebiscite areas are to be occupied at once by an international force. The Godesberg Memorandum did not indicate on what kind of areas the vote would be based. Accordingly, there were fears entertained on the side of the Czechs that large areas might be selected, which would operate to the disadvantage of the Czechoslovaks. In the Munich arrangement it is stated that the plebiscite is to be based on the conditions of the Saar plebiscite, and that indicates that the vote is to be taken by small administrative areas. Under the Munich arrangement the Czech Government, while it is bound to carry out the evacuation of the territories without damaging existing installations, is not placed under the objectionable conditions of the appendix to the Godesberg Memorandum, to which much exception was taken, in that it was provided that no foodstuffs, cattle or raw material were to be removed. Under the Godesberg Memorandum the detailed arrangements for the evacuation were to be settled by Germans and Czechs alone, and I think there were many who thought that such an arrangement did not give the Czechs much chance of making their voices heard. Well, Sir, under the Munich Agreement the conditions of evacuation are to be laid down in detail by the International Commission.

Again, the Munich arrangement includes certain very valuable provisions which found no place at all in the Godesberg Memorandum, such as the Article regarding the right of option: that is option to leave the territory and pass into Czech territory, provisions for facilitating the transfer of populations, the supplementary declaration which provides that all other questions arising out of the transfer of territory are to be referred to the International Commission, and, finally, the one which gives the Czechs the period of four weeks for the release of the Sudeten Germans from the army and the police, and for the release of Sudeten German political prisoners instead of demanding that those things should be done by October 1—— [*Interruption.*]

The joint guarantee, which is given under the Munich Agreement to the Czechoslovak State by the Governments of the United Kingdom and France against unprovoked aggressions upon their boundaries, gives to the Czechs an essential counterpart which was not to be found in the Godesberg Memorandum, and it will not be unnoted that Germany will also undertake to give a guarantee on the question of Polish and Hungarian minorities being settled. Finally, there is a declaration by the Four Powers that if the problems of the Polish and Hungarian minorities in Czechoslovakia are not settled within three months by agreement between the respective Governments, another meeting of the Four Powers will be held to consider them— [*Interruption*]. I think that every fair-minded, every serious-minded man who takes into consideration the modifications which I have described— modifications of the Memorandum—must agree that they are of very considerable extent and that they are all in the same direction. To those who dislike an ultimatum, but who were anxious for a reasonable and orderly procedure, every one of those modifications is a step in the right direction. It is no longer an ultimatum, but it is a method which is carried out largely under the supervision of an international body.

Before giving a verdict upon this arrangement, we should do well to avoid describing it as a personal or a national triumph for anyone. The real triumph is that it has shown that representatives of four great Powers can find it possible to agree on a way of carrying out a difficult and delicate operation by discussion instead of by force of arms, and thereby they have averted a catastrophe which would have ended civilization as we have known it. . . .

[*Loan to Czechoslovakia*]

I say in the name of this House and of the people of this country that Czechoslovakia has earned our admiration and respect for her restraint, for her dignity, for her magnificent discipline in face of such a trial as few nations have ever been called upon to meet. General Syrový said the other night in his broadcast:

> 'The Government could have decided to stand up against overpowering forces, but it might have meant the death of millions.'

The army, whose courage no man has ever questioned, has obeyed the order of their President, as they would equally have obeyed him if he had told them to march into the trenches. It is my hope, and my belief, that under the new system of guarantees, the new Czechoslovakia will find a greater security than she has ever enjoyed in the past. We must recognize that she has been put in a position where she has got to reconstruct her whole economy, and that in doing that she must encounter difficulties, which it would be practically impossible for her to solve alone. We have received from the Czechoslovak Government, through their Minister in London, an appeal to help them to raise a loan of £30,000,000 by a British Government guarantee. I believe that the House will feel with the Government that that is an appeal which should meet with a sympathetic and even a generous response. . . .

His Majesty's Government are informing the Czechoslovak Government that we are prepared immediately to arrange for an advance of £10,000,000, which would be at that Government's disposal for their urgent needs. How this advance will be related to the final figure which may be decided upon hereafter is for the future. . . .

[*Attitude of other Powers*]

I pass from that subject, and I would like to say a few words in respect of the various other participants, besides ourselves, in the Munich Agreement. After everything that has been said about the German Chancellor to-day and in the past, I do feel that the House ought to recognize the difficulty for a man in that position to take back such emphatic declarations as he had already made amidst the enthusiastic cheers of his supporters, and to recognize that in consenting, even though it were only at the last moment, to discuss with the representatives of other Powers those things which he had declared he had already decided once for all, was a real and a substantial contribution on his part. With regard to Signor Mussolini, his contribution was certainly notable and perhaps decisive. It was on his suggestion that the final stages of mobilization were postponed for 24 hours to give us an opportunity of discussing the situation, and I wish to say that at the Conference itself both he and the Italian Foreign Secretary, Count Ciano, were most helpful in the discussions. It was they who, very early in the proceedings, produced the Memorandum which M. Daladier and I were able to accept as a basis of discussion. I think that Europe and the world have reason to be grateful to the head of the Italian Government for his work in contributing to a peaceful solution.

M. Daladier had in some respects the most difficult task of all four of us, because of the special relations uniting his country and Czechoslovakia, and I should like to say that his courage, his readiness to take responsibility, his pertinacity and his unfailing good humour were invaluable throughout the whole of our discussions. There is one other Power which was not represented at the Conference and which nevertheless we felt to be exercising a

constantly increasing influence. I refer, of course, to the United States of America. Those messages of President Roosevelt, so firmly and yet so persuasively framed, showed how the voice of the most powerful nation in the world could make itself heard across 3,000 miles of ocean and sway the minds of men in Europe.

In my view the strongest force of all, one which grew and took fresh shapes and forms every day was the force not of any one individual, but was that unmistakable sense of unanimity among the peoples of the world that war somehow must be averted. The peoples of the British Empire were at one with those of Germany, of France and of Italy, and their anxiety, their intense desire for peace, pervaded the whole atmosphere of the conference, and I believe that that, and not threats, made possible the concessions that were made. I know the House will want to hear what I am sure it does not doubt, that throughout these discussions the Dominions, the Governments of the Dominions, have been kept in the closest touch with the march of events by telegraph and by personal contact, and I would like to say how greatly I was encouraged on each of the journeys I made to Germany by the knowledge that I went with the good wishes of the Governments of the Dominions. They shared all our anxieties and all our hopes. They rejoiced with us that peace was preserved, and with us they look forward to further efforts to consolidate what has been done.

[*Anglo-German Declaration*]

Ever since I assumed my present office my main purpose has been to work for the pacification of Europe, for the removal of those suspicions and those animosities which have so long poisoned the air. The path which leads to appeasement is long and bristles with obstacles. The question of Czechoslovakia is the latest and perhaps the most dangerous. Now that we have got past it, I feel that it may be possible to make further progress along the road to sanity.

My right hon. Friend[1] has alluded in somewhat bitter terms to my conversation last Friday morning with Herr Hitler. I do not know why that conversation should give rise to suspicion, still less to criticism. I entered into no pact. I made no new commitments. There is no secret understanding. Our conversation was hostile to no other nation. The objects of that conversation, for which I asked, was to try to extend a little further the personal contact which I had established with Herr Hitler and which I believe to be essential in modern diplomacy. We had a friendly and entirely non-committal conversation, carried on, on my part, largely with a view to seeing whether there could be points in common between the head of a democratic Government and the ruler of a totalitarian State. We see the result in the declaration which has been published. . . .[2]

I believe there are many who will feel with me that such a declaration, signed by the German Chancellor and myself, is something more than a pious

[1] Mr. Duff Cooper, in his personal statement on his resignation. [2] See p. 291.

expression of opinion. In our relations with other countries everything depends upon there being sincerity and good-will on both sides. I believe that there is sincerity and good-will on both sides in this declaration. That is why to me its significance goes far beyond its actual words. If there is one lesson which we should learn from the events of these last weeks it is this, that lasting peace is not to be obtained by sitting still and waiting for it to come. It requires active, positive efforts to achieve it. No doubt I shall have plenty of critics who will say that I am guilty of facile optimism, and that I should disbelieve every word that is uttered by rulers of other great States in Europe. I am too much of a realist to believe that we are going to achieve our paradise in a day. We have only laid the foundations of peace. The superstructure is not even begun.

For a long period now we have been engaged in this country in a great programme of rearmament, which is daily increasing in pace and in volume. Let no one think that because we have signed this agreement between these four Powers at Munich we can afford to relax our efforts in regard to that programme at this moment. Disarmament on the part of this country can never be unilateral again. We have tried that once, and we very nearly brought ourselves to disaster. If disarmament is to come it must come by steps, and it must come by the agreement and the active co-operation of other countries. Until we know that we have obtained that co-operation and until we have agreed upon the actual steps to be taken, we here must remain on guard. . . .

While we must renew our determination to fill up the deficiencies that yet remain in our armaments and in our defensive precautions, so that we may be ready to defend ourselves and make our diplomacy effective—[*Interruption*]—yes I am a realist—nevertheless I say with an equal sense of reality that I do see fresh opportunities of approaching this subject of disarmament opening up before us, and I believe that they are at least as hopeful to-day as they have been at any previous time. It is to such tasks—the winning back of confidence, the gradual removal of hostility between nations until they feel that they can safely discard their weapons, one by one, that I would wish to devote what energy and time may be left to me before I hand over my office to younger men.

(b) *Extracts from Speech by the Rt. Hon. Viscount Halifax, Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, October 3, 1938.*[1]

[*Soviet Russia and the Negotiations*]

. . . There are two other aspects of what has passed to which your Lordships will rightly expect me to make some reference. I shall be asked by noble Lords opposite why we consented to the omission of Russia—so closely connected with Czechoslovakia—from these discussions. I would venture . . . to repeat here what I said to the Soviet Ambassador a day or two ago.

[1] In the House of Lords. *Hansard*, October 3, 1938, cols. 1306–9.

Five days ago it seemed to us vital, if war was to be avoided, somehow or other to get matters on to a basis of negotiation; but if we were to face the facts—and nothing was to be gained but rather everything was to be lost by not facing them—we were obliged to recognize that in present circumstances the heads of the German and Italian Governments would almost certainly—at least without much preliminary discussion for which there was no time—be reluctant to sit in conference with a Soviet representative. Accordingly, if our principal purpose was to ensure negotiation, we were bound to have regard to the practical conditions within which alone this purpose could be secured. But the fact that it was impossible, if we were to talk to the German and Italian Governments in those days at all, to include the Soviet Government directly in those conversations, in no way signified any weakening of the desire on our part, any more no doubt than on that of the French Government, to preserve our understanding and relations with the Soviet Government.

[*Guarantee of the Frontiers of Czechoslovakia*]

The other matter on which I must say something is the guarantee which is referred to in the Annex to the Munich Arrangement and which first found place in the Anglo-French proposals of September 19.[1] . . . By that offer they stand under the terms of the Annex to the Munich Agreements[2] . . . I understand, and largely share, what will be the feeling of many of your Lordships as to the assumption by this country of a new and difficult commitment, concerned, as it might be held, with something that was not a direct or vital interest of this country. I can anticipate from another quarter the criticism that a guarantee, given at the very moment that existing treaty and covenant obligations had failed to prevent the quasi-forcible disruption of the Czechoslovak State, proclaimed by inference its own futility. Both these criticisms are weighty and must be met. As to the first, we felt that if we were, in conjunction with the French Government, to press the Czechoslovak Government to accept proposals so drastic as those which we thought it right to lay before them in the Anglo-French plan, in order to preserve Europe as a whole from war, we were bound ourselves to make a counter contribution to balance the reduction of Czechoslovakia's defensive strength. In no other circumstances, I think, should we have felt morally justified in pressing her Government to go so far.

As to the second, I would say three things. The first is this. Nothing has been more persistently pressed upon me during the last two or three anxious months than this. If only Great Britain would say clearly and unmistakably for all to hear that she would resist any unprovoked aggression on Czechoslovakia, no such unprovoked aggression would be made. We never felt able to use that language; but so far as there was force in that argument—and I do not underrate it—the deterrent value of such a statement will be in full

[1] Lord Halifax quoted the relevant passage. See p. 214, no. 6.
[2] Lord Halifax quoted the relevant passage. See p. 290.

force under such a guarantee as we have expressed our willingness to give. The second thing I would say is this. To guarantee a Czechoslovakia including within her borders restless and dissatisfied minorities was one thing; to guarantee Czechoslovakia when these explosive minority questions have been adjusted is quite another. And lastly, the guarantee itself is reinforced and buttressed by two other vital elements. First, Germany and Italy have expressed their readiness to guarantee Czechoslovakia when the other minority questions have been settled; and secondly, Great Britain and Germany have mutually expressed their desire to resolve any differences arising between them through consultation. In these circumstances I hope that your Lordships will be prepared to take the view that we were right to feel the moral obligation to play our part in stabilizing the new situation more weighty than our natural objection to undertake on behalf of this country a new liability. There are, of course, a great many questions connected with this guarantee that will require more careful consideration than it has yet been possible to give to them. Such will be whether its form should be joint or several, what States should be invited to assume its obligations, and in what circumstances these obligations should be held to arise. These matters, and possibly others, will of necessity be matters for early exchange of view between the several Governments concerned.

No one will deny—even as presented in the Munich Agreement—how bitter has been the sacrifice demanded of the Czechoslovak Government, affecting so vitally the social, political and economic structure of the State. Nor has it been made less bitter by the presentation on the morrow of these demands of further demands from the Polish Government backed by the ultimatum, to which the Czechoslovak Government has felt obliged in all the circumstances to accede. There is no one of your Lordships who would not wish at this time to pay his tribute and extend his sympathy to President Beneš and his people. No head of a State could have been faced with a more cruel and merciless dilemma. The choice lay between accepting the reduction—some would say the mutilation—of his State and, on the other hand, exposing it to certain conquest and devastation, with the added horror of plunging the whole of Europe, and more than Europe, into war as well. Faced by that grim dilemma, President Beneš chose the path of peace, and I cannot believe but that the judgment of history will accord to him a special place for the wisdom of his choice. So far as we ourselves are concerned, let us make no mistake; without his help, it would have been impossible to avoid a European war. Therefore it behoves us all to be grateful to him, and to do what we can to assist the Czechs, once more as they have done through history, to rise superior to the sacrifice that these hours have demanded. . . .

(c) *Extracts from Speech by the Rt. Hon. Sir Samuel Hoare, Secretary of State for the Home Department, October 3, 1938.*[1]

[*Contact with Soviet Russia*]

. . . The hon. Gentleman opposite . . . asked me why there was not closer consultation in these critical weeks with the Government of the Soviet Republic. That Government was under a Treaty obligation similar to that of France, and dependent upon it, to go to the assistance of Czechoslovakia in certain circumstances. The Russian guarantee was only to come into operation when the French guarantee was already operating. M. Litvinoff indicated, indeed he made a public declaration at Geneva on 21st September,[2] that the Soviet Government was ready to give all possible help if France came to the assistance of Czechoslovakia. As I have explained, that is all that Russia was under Treaty bound to do. Her action would have been consequent upon that of France, and it was therefore natural that there should have been consultation, as in fact there was, between France and the Soviet Republic and His Majesty's Government, in view of their different positions. We were content to let the French Government take the lead in consulting with the Russian Government, whose position was analogous to theirs. . . . The Foreign Secretary had an exchange of views with the Soviet Ambassador before the latter left, and at Geneva the British delegates maintained the contact. The Soviet Ambassador was received again, quite recently, at the Foreign Office, after his return to London. . . .

I say with all deliberation that, when once Germany rearmed and became powerful, and when once the Anschluss took place, the strategic frontier of the republic was turned . . . we faced the fact that owing to the geographical position of Czechoslovakia it mattered not who might win or lose the war, Czechoslovakia would almost inevitably be destroyed. . . . Supposing that at the end of the war we emerged the victors . . . then we should be confronted with a position in which Czechoslovakia as we know it to-day would have been destroyed, and I do not believe that the negotiators of the peace treaty in any conditions would ever recreate its old frontiers. . . .

[*Representations made to Czechoslovakia*]

From May onwards, and, indeed, from a much earlier date,[3] I remember making myself, when I was Foreign Secretary, representations to the Czechoslovak Government that they must settle this Sudeten question. . . . From May onwards we have continually pressed them and told them that it was vital in their own interests and in the interests of the peace of Europe that this question should be settled. . . .

[*Guarantee of Czechoslovak Frontier*]

I do not take the view that the international guarantee will be useless. I do not take the view that the Czechoslovak Republic, when it no longer

[1] In the House of Commons. *Hansard*, October 3, 1938, cols. 152–6. [2] See pp. 224–25.

[3] In this passage the speaker was replying to Mr. Alexander's question whether the Government made any representation to Czechoslovakia in May 1938.

has within its bounds these minority problems, need be weaker than it is to-day. As I said just now, its strategic frontier had already been turned by the Austrian Anschluss. I myself believe that the international guarantee in which we have taken part will more than compensate for the loss of a strategic frontier that in any case could not have prevented the destruction, owing to geographical reasons, of the Czechoslovak Republic. . . . I draw a clear distinction between the Czechoslovakia of the future when these sources of trouble, these minority questions, have been solved and the Czechoslovakia of to-day, which has within its bounds this constant source of destruction. Further than that, the guarantee that I contemplate is a guarantee that I believe will be more effective than either the Franco-Czech Treaty or the Soviet-Czech Treaty. I contemplate a guarantee in which all the great Powers will, in one way or another, take part.

Let me say to the hon. Gentleman opposite who asked me a specific question that we do not in any way contemplate the exclusion of Russia. I believe that the guarantee, coupled, it may be, with pacts of non-aggression given by this country, France, Russia, Germany and Italy, with the minorities question settled in Czechoslovakia, may make the new Republic as safe as Switzerland has been for many generations in the past on the Continent of Europe. . . .

(d) *Extracts from Speech by the Rt. Hon. Sir Thomas Inskip, Minister for the Co-ordination of Defence, October 4, 1938.*[1]

[*Guarantee of Czechoslovakia*]

. . . The question has been raised whether our guarantee to Czechoslovakia is already in operation. The House will realize that the formal Treaty of Guarantee has yet to be drawn up and completed in the normal way, and . . . there are some matters which must await settlement between the Governments concerned. Until that has been done, technically the guarantee cannot be said to be in force. His Majesty's Government, however, feel under a moral obligation to Czechoslovakia to treat the guarantee as being now in force. In the event, therefore, of an act of unprovoked aggression against Czechoslovakia, His Majesty's Government would certainly feel bound to take all steps in their power to see that the integrity of Czechoslovakia is preserved.

(e) *Extracts from Speech by the Rt. Hon. Sir John Simon, Chancellor of the Exchequer, October 5, 1938.*[2]

[*Question of a Four-Power Pact*]

. . . During the Debate . . . my right hon. Friend the Member for Warwick and Leamington[3] . . . inquired whether the development of the Munich

[1] In the House of Commons. *Hansard*, October 4, 1938, col. 303.
[2] In the House of Commons. *Hansard*, October 5, 1938, cols. 345–6.
[3] Mr. Eden.

meeting would be the formation of a Four-Power pact. I wish to make an observation on that subject. If the question is whether we are willing to enter into friendly consultation, in conjunction with France and Italy and Germany, upon the problems of Europe, then I say, 'Most emphatically'. It has, in fact, been a dominant aim of the policy of the Prime Minister and the Government to see whether it is possible, instead of maintaining an unbridgeable gulf for all purposes between democracies and dictatorships, in the interests of European peace for them and us to live side by side. But if on the other hand the question is whether we are contemplating an exclusive Four-Power pact . . . which will attempt, in disregard of other States great and small and without communication to them, to impose its will upon Europe, then I say on behalf of the Government with equal emphasis that that is not and never has been the policy of His Majesty's Government.

As the Home Secretary stated on Monday, it is our hope that Russia will be willing to join in the guarantee of Czechoslovakia. It is most important that she should do so. The Government have no intention whatever of excluding Russia or trying to exclude Russia from any future settlement of Europe. If outstanding differences are to be resolved it must be on the basis of free consultation with all European Powers. My right hon. friend was quite right when he emphasized the importance of securing the co-operation of the smaller Powers of Europe. They are always valuable allies for peace. Our object is to buttress and strengthen peace in every way we can, and it does not in the least follow, because you have close contacts with France or Germany or Italy, that this precludes close contacts with other nations too. . . .

(li) *Extracts from Broadcast by Mr. Sumner Welles, United States Under-Secretary of State, October 3, 1938.*[1]

. . . Last week, modern civilization passed through the valley of the shadow of death. The great Powers of Europe were within a few hours of hurling their peoples into a general European war, which would not only have cost the lives of millions of human beings, but which would in all probability have entailed the obliteration for many years to come of all of those things which the civilized world has painstakingly built up over a period of many centuries, and which to you and to me make life worth living.

In accordance with the consistent practice of this administration of informing the people of the United States of the full facts concerning the conduct of their foreign relations, I shall lay before you to-night the history of the actions of your Government during these past eight days.

On Saturday, September 24, it had become evident that the conversations which had been taking place between the Government of the German Reich

[1] U.S. State Department, Press Releases, Vol XIX, No. 471.

and the Government of Great Britain for a peaceful solution of the controversy between Germany and Czechoslovakia, were in danger of breaking down. It was reported to the President that in all likelihood should Germany invade the territory of Czechoslovakia, the Government of France would declare war upon Germany, and that the British Government would find it impossible to remain aloof from the hostilities which would ensue. The German army was in a state of mobilization, and steps toward mobilization of both the French and British military and naval forces were being taken. Military preparations were likewise being made in other European countries. The Government of Czechoslovakia had mobilized its forces. The markets of the world were showing repercussions of fear and apprehension. Foreign currencies were under increasing pressure, and insurance rates were soaring to almost record levels.

Throughout the course of the following day all information received by the President from our missions abroad indicated an increasing tension and a greater likelihood that war might break out in the immediate future. In entire accordance with the policy of this Government to remain aloof from political involvements abroad, but yet at the same time, within the limitations of our traditional doctrine, to contribute in every practicable manner toward the maintenance of world peace, the President at 1 o'clock on the morning of Monday, September 26, sent an identic message to the President of Czechoslovakia, to the Chancellor of Germany, and to the Prime Ministers of Great Britain and of France, urging that negotiations for a peaceful solution of the controversy should not be broken off, and that no resort be made to force, nor to the threat of force. Copies of this appeal were sent to the Polish and Hungarian Governments, each of which was advancing claims against the Government of Czechoslovakia for a prompt solution of their various minority questions. . . .[1]

By 10 o'clock in the morning the President had received replies from the Prime Ministers of Great Britain and of France assuring him of their desire to avoid recourse to force and of their willingness to search for a peaceful solution. About three hours later a moving message in the same sense was received from the President of Czechoslovakia. On the evening of the same day the President received a response to his appeal from the Chancellor of the German Reich. . . .[2]

Throughout the night of September 26, and as the hours advanced during the day of September 27, there was cumulative evidence that the situation in Europe was moving rapidly toward an apparently inevitable climax. From the reply made by the German Chancellor in his message to the President as well as from information which reached the President from our American envoys abroad, the conclusion seemed inescapable that negotiations had ceased and that Germany was prepared to move in accordance with the terms of her communication to the other Powers.

[1] Mr. Sumner Welles read the text of the message. See pp. 261–62.
[2] Mr. Sumner Welles summarized Herr Hitler's reply. See pp. 264–66.

Believing, as this Government does, in the moral force of public opinion, the President, early in the afternoon of September 27, sent urgent instructions to our representatives throughout the world, to express the opinion of this Government to the Governments to which they were accredited, that the situation in Europe was so critical and the consequences of war would be so disastrous that no step should be overlooked or omitted that might possibly contribute to the maintenance of peace. The other Governments were informed of the urgent appeal which the President had already addressed to the nations directly involved in the controversy, urging the importance of keeping negotiations alive and seeking a just settlement of the dispute through peaceful means, and they were told that this Government believed that should all Governments send comparable messages, the effect of such expressions of opinion might possibly even at that late date influence the course of events and aid in the preservation of peace. It was made clear in every instance that this suggestion on our part did not in any way imply any opinion as to the merits of the dispute.

Many of the American republics had already spontaneously taken action in this sense as soon as they had learned of the President's original appeal to the European Powers. And no development of recent times has been more significant than the solidarity of the American nations in their plea for peace. All Governments, without exception, which the President addressed, expressed their appreciation of the action taken, and in many instances took similar steps. Many others were preparing to do so when changing circumstances made such a step unnecessary.

Simultaneously, early in the afternoon of September 27, the President sent through the American Ambassador in Rome a personal and confidential appeal to the Chief of the Italian Government, informing him of the action which he had already taken in the interest of peace, and asking whether Signor Mussolini would not also extend his help in the continuation of efforts to arrive at an agreement upon the questions at issue by negotiation or by other pacific means rather than by resort to force. While this message was not formally placed in the hands of Signor Mussolini until 4 o'clock in the afternoon of the following day, the purport of the President's appeal was known to the Italian Government about quarter before 10 o'clock on the morning of September 28.

As the minutes passed on Tuesday afternoon, there was no question but that Europe was on the brink of war. Clashes between the Czech forces and the Sudeten Germans were increasing in severity. The British fleet was fully mobilized. The British territorial reserves had been called out. Vast mobilization decrees had been issued in France. German merchant vessels throughout the world had been recalled to home waters and were leaving the ports where they were with the utmost rapidity. Stock markets were crashing. The evacuation of children and civilian populations from European capitals was under way. Requests had been received by this Government to take over the interests of foreign Governments in view of

the likelihood of war. Finally, information of unquestioned authenticity had been received by this Government that 2 o'clock in the afternoon had been fixed for the entrance of the German armies into Czechoslovakia.

The President then reached the conclusion that in the interest of peace he must make one further appeal, and this time solely to the German Chancellor. At 10 o'clock on the night of September 27, he sent the following message. . . .[1]

This message from the President was received in Berlin and known to the German Chancellor by 7 o'clock in the morning of Wednesday.

The dramatic events of the next few hours are known to you all. The machinery of diplomacy was working without cease. In addition to the President's message which I have already mentioned, Signor Mussolini received a further message from the British Prime Minister, asking that he communicate directly with the German Chancellor to urge a postponement of military action and an attempt to find a peaceful solution through further negotiations. The Chief of the Italian Government immediately added the powerful weight of his own personal appeal to the representations already made to Chancellor Hitler. Before noon on Wednesday, the German Chancellor had requested the Prime Ministers of Great Britain and France and the Chief of the Italian Government to meet with him at Munich. As you likewise know, the conference there held has prevented the outbreak of war.

In all that your Government has said and done during these last days, it was pursuing the course best calculated to aid in preserving peace and in ensuring the safety of this country.

All of us must surely sympathize with the distress and suffering of the many human beings who, as the result of the readjustments now under way, are forced to leave their homes and seek their fortunes in alien surroundings and under new auspices. But upon the merits of the decisions reached in Munich, to use the President's words, we do not need, nor do we intend, to pass. Every man and woman in the United States, however, shares in the universal feeling of relief that war has been averted. Can anyone doubt that the cry for peace, not only on the part of the people of this country, but on the part of peoples throughout the world during these past days has been an impelling factor in the prevention of the conflict?

To-day, perhaps more than at any time during the past two decades, there is presented the opportunity for the establishment by the nations of the world of a new world order based upon justice and upon law. For peace is not negative. It is not merely the momentary abstention from a resort to war. Peace is, in its very essence, positive. And permanent peace can only come from a rededication of themselves by the nations to these tenets in their relationships: the observance of the sanctity of the pledged word; non-intervention in the internal affairs of other countries; the settlement of disputes and the revision of treaties whenever necessary by peaceful

[1] Mr. Sumner Welles read the text of the message. See pp. 266–67.

negotiation and in a spirit of equity rather than by resort to the use of force or to the threat of force; and respect by all nations for the just rights of others in the same measure in which they expect their own just rights to be observed. . . .

(lii) *Extract from Speech by M. Daladier, French Prime Minister, October 4, 1938.*[1]

Au cours des semaines que nous venons de vivre, le monde a pu se demander, avec angoisse, s'il n'allait pas être précipité dans la guerre. Aujourd'hui, venant vous rendre compte de notre action, je peux vous dire que, dans cette crise, nous avons sauvé la paix.

Pendant ces derniers temps, j'ai peu parlé parce que j'avais beaucoup à agir. On me reprochait même d'être l'homme le plus silencieux de France. En ce moment de répit qui doit marquer le point de départ d'une action nouvelle je veux vous exposer ce que furent les événements et comment nous leur avons fait face.

Quand notre gouvernement s'est constitué, le problème des Sudètes était déjà posé. La réalisation de l'Anschluss lui avait donné une brusque acuité. Déjà, le gouvernement tchécoslovaque avait annoncé la publication d'un statut des nationalités, et M. Henlein formulait, en huit points, les exigences des Allemands des Sudètes. Le drame était commencé. Dès les premiers jours, nous avons essayé d'empêcher les événements de nous entraîner vers l'irréparable. J'ai défini publiquement alors, à plusieurs reprises, la position de mon gouvernement: 'Nous sommes animés, ai-je dit, par deux sentiments également forts: le désir de ne pas être contraints à une action militaire et la volonté de ne jamais renier notre parole, si, par malheur, cette espérance venait à être déçue.'

A Londres, dès la fin d'avril, M. Bonnet et moi, nous avons exposé au gouvernement anglais nos préoccupations et comment nous envisagions un apaisement en Europe centrale. Nous eûmes la satisfaction de constater que le gouvernement britannique n'était point indifférent à ces problèmes. Ensemble, nous avons fixé les bases d'une collaboration. Dans notre pensée, il ne s'agissait point d'attendre pour agir, que les faits fussent accomplis, et que nous eussions à les réprimer dans le sang, ou à les subir dans la honte. Il s'agissait de devancer les événements et d'essayer de les prévenir. C'est ainsi qu'en commun, nous avons pu agir immédiatement au moment de la crise du 21 mai, dont je tiens à rappeler qu'elle a été surmontée grâce au concours effectif des bonnes volontés pacifiques de toutes les puissances intéressées.

De la fin du mois de mai au début de septembre, il y eut une sorte de trêve internationale. Mais, dans la région des Sudètes, le bouillonnement des passions préparait de nouveaux événements. Alors, dans un esprit d'amitié, nous avons conseillé au gouvernement tchécoslovaque d'accorder

[1] In the Chamber of Deputies. *Le Temps*, October 5, 1938.

aux Allemands des Sudètes d'importantes, de justes et de rapides concessions, dans le cadre de l'État. L'action du gouvernement anglais s'exerçait parallèlement à la nôtre. La mission de lord Runciman à Prague fit naître un grand espoir, en provoquant des contacts directs entre les hommes d'État tchèques et les dirigeants des Allemands des Sudètes. Il faut cependant constater qu'il n'y eut jamais synchronisme entre les propositions du gouvernement tchèque qui se faisaient sans cesse plus larges et les revendications des Allemands des Sudètes qui devenaient de plus en plus importantes.

Au début de septembre, après le discours de clôture du congrès de Nuremberg, et l'annonce faite par M. Henlein de la rupture des négociations entre les délégués des Allemands des Sudètes et le gouvernement de Prague, la situation semble pour la première fois irrémédiablement compromise. La revendication allemande s'affirmait avec violence. Elle prenait pour base le droit des peuples à disposer d'eux-mêmes. Elle s'adressait à la conscience populaire, par les descriptions que faisait la presse allemande de la terreur qui aurait régné dans les districts sudètes.

Les forces de guerre allaient-elles l'emporter sur les forces de paix? A aucun moment, je n'ai songé à m'abandonner, ni à abandonner le pays à je ne sais quelle fatalité aveugle qui aurait soustrait la marche des événements à la volonté des hommes.

Dans la nuit du 13 au 14 septembre, j'entrais en rapports avec M. Neville Chamberlain. Je lui fis part de l'utilité qu'il y avait à substituer aux démarches et aux notes des rencontres directs entre les hommes responsables. Le premier ministre anglais, qui, de son côté, avait eu le même sentiment, se rendit à Berchtesgaden.

Dans son discours à la Chambre des communes, M. Chamberlain a demandé avec émotion à ses collègues si son voyage n'avait pas semblé incompatible avec sa dignité de premier ministre. Je tiens ici à associer le Parlement français à la Chambre britannique, et à dire simplement que par cette initiative courageuse et par toute son action au cours des journées et des nuits qui suivirent, M. Neville Chamberlain a bien mérité de la paix.

Ce qui a suivi l'entrevue de Berchtesgaden, vous le savez. Dans un livre officiel, tous les documents seront recueillis, les démarches consignées, les négociations décrites. Mais ce livre apportera bien peu de matières inédites, car, peut-être pour la première fois dans l'histoire du monde, tout a été entrepris publiquement et discuté à la face des peuples. Et je crois pouvoir dire que si, finalement, la paix a été maintenue et préservée, c'est que nous n'avons pas eu recours aux combinaisons de la diplomatie secrète. Nous avons agi en pleine lumière, sous le contrôle des peuples, et je tiens à affirmer ici que les peuples, tous les peuples, veulent la paix.

Par sa conversation avec M. Hitler, M. Chamberlain avait pu apprécier et délimiter l'ampleur des revendications allemandes. Dès le dimanche 18 septembre, il nous faisait part de ses impressions et de ses certitudes. Nous nous sommes réunis à Londres, nous avons délibéré. Nous nous

sommes penchés sur les cartes. Le gouvernement britannique nous a fait connaître les opinions de lord Runciman. Ai-je besoin de vous dire avec quelle émotion nous avons appris qu'en son âme et conscience, l'observateur anglais concluait à l'impossibilité de faire plus longtemps cohabiter les Tchèques et les Sudètes, alors que tous nos efforts avaient consisté à faire évoluer la Tchécoslovaquie vers un fédéralisme qui eût assuré l'intégrité de son territoire? Mais il nous fallait voir les réalités. Nous nous trouvions devant l'alternative suivante: Ou bien dire 'non' aux revendications des Allemands des Sudètes et par là pousser le gouvernement tchèque à l'intransigeance et le gouvernement allemand à l'agression, provoquer un conflit armé qui aurait eu pour conséquence rapide la destruction de la Tchécoslovaquie. Ou bien essayer de trouver un compromis. Si la première hypothèse s'était vérifiée, qui pourrait soutenir que l'intégrité de la Tchécoslovaquie aurait été maintenue après une terrible guerre de coalition, même victorieuse?

Nous avons choisi la paix. Le plan franco-britannique de Londres est issue de ce choix. Mais en même temps que nous soumettions à la Tchécoslovaquie des propositions douloureuses, nous lui apportions l'engagement pris par la Grande-Bretagne de s'associer avec nous à une garantie internationale, car nous avions pu obtenir du gouvernement anglais qu'il apportât ainsi le concours de sa puissance et de son prestige au maintien d'un ordre pacifique au coeur même de l'Europe.

En quittant Londres, nous avions le sentiment que notre plan soulèverait la protestation indignée de Prague et recevrait l'agrément de Berlin. Le gouvernement tchèque, dans son dévouement héroïque à la cause de la paix, a accepté le plan. Mais à Godesberg, M. Hitler, dans son entrevue avec M. Chamberlain et par son mémorandum, formulait, sous forme de modalités d'application, des exigences nouvelles. Et c'est ainsi que l'évolution de la négociation vers un compromis, qui avait débuté par la décision de M. Chamberlain et la mienne de provoquer les contacts directs avec le gouvernement allemand, s'est trouvée arrêtée dans la nuit du 23 au 24 septembre. Et pendant les jours qui vont suivre l'Europe s'est précipitée vers la rupture.

Quelle est donc la situation ce 24 septembre, au moment où M. Neville Chamberlain, quittant Godesberg, regagne Londres? Nous avions proposé la cession à l'Allemagne des territoires habités par plus de 50% d'Allemands, selon les modalités et jusqu'à un tracé fixé par une commission internationale; nous organisions l'échange des populations; nous apportions à la nouvelle Tchécoslovaquie une garantie internationale. Que demandait l'Allemagne? La cession immédiate de territoires, la création de vastes zones de plébiscite, sans accorder de véritables garanties aux populations elles-mêmes, sans assurer une garantie internationale à la nouvelle Tchécoslovaquie. On pouvait penser qu'il s'agissait pour elle d'une opération qui aurait eu tous les caractères et toutes les conséquences de la conquête, sauf le recours aux armes. Le désaccord entre le plan de Londres et le mémorandum de

Godesberg était donc manifeste. Il portait à la fois sur le fond et sur la forme. Allait-il conduire à la guerre européenne?

Pendant ces jours d'angoisse, deux grands courants se sont manifestés dans notre pays. On les retrouvait l'un et l'autre à l'intérieur de chaque parti, à l'intérieur de chaque tendance, et l'on peut même dire qu'ils se disputaient, au gré des événements, la conscience de chaque Français. Les uns mettaient leur espoir dans la négociation, les autres dans la fermeté intransigeante. Quant à moi, chef du gouvernement, j'ai reconnu dès la première minute, dans l'un et l'autre mouvement, l'infaillible instinct du peuple français. J'ai senti que la vérité était dans la synthèse de ces deux courants et non pas dans leur contradiction. Ce que voulait le peuple de France, c'était que l'irréparable fût évité. L'irréparable, c'était l'agression allemande. Cette agression, aux termes du traité, aurait déclanché l'aide et l'assistance de la France. Nous vous aurions demandé de faire face aux engagements de la France.

Pour ne pas être surpris par un coup de force devant le développement des préparatifs allemands, nous avons décidé, le 24 septembre, un certain nombre de mesures militaires destinées non pas à une sorte de provocation, mais à mettre le pays en état de faire face à tous les événements. Nous avons tout fait pour être efficacement défendus. Nos chefs militaires ont mis nos forces en état de remplir leur suprême devoir envers la patrie. A Londres, où nous nous sommes à nouveau concertés avec le gouvernement britannique, le général Gamelin a apporté les précisions techniques sur l'effort que nous avions accompli et sur celui que les circonstances pouvaient nous appeler à fournir. Anglais et Français, nous étions les uns et les autres fixés sur notre commune volonté pacifique, comme sur notre commune volonté de nous opposer à une agression.

Dès le 26 septembre au soir, dans une information officielle à la presse, on précisait à Londres que si l'Allemagne attaquait la Tchécoslovaquie, la France viendrait à son aide et que 'la Grande-Bretagne et la Russie seraient certainement aux côtés de la France.'[1] Et tandis que, des Etats-Unis d'Amérique, la grande voix généreuse et raisonnable du président Roosevelt lançait un appel pressant pour un règlement pacifique, M. Neville Chamberlain, en complet accord avec nous, adressait une nouvelle communication au chancelier Hitler.

Le 27 septembre, Sir Horace Wilson revenait à Londres porteur de la réponse du Reichsführer. Elle laissait peu de place et peu de temps pour une négociation. A la Chambre des communes, M. Neville Chamberlain a lui-même déclaré que le chancelier avait prévenu le messager britannique qu'il était résolu à agir dès le lendemain 28 septembre, à 2 heures de l'après-midi.

Nous n'avions plus que quelques heures devant nous. Le discours radiodiffusé de M. Chamberlain alertait le monde sur la gravité de la situation. Nous résolûmes de tenter un ultime effort. Dans la nuit du 27 au 28, nous nous adressions à notre ambassadeur à Berlin, pour qu'il demandât

[1] See p. 261.

une audience personnelle au chancelier Hitler, et à notre ambassadeur à Londres, pour qu'il priât lord Halifax de donner des instructions à l'ambassadeur britannique à Rome, afin de prier M. Mussolini d'appuyer l'idée de la réunion d'une conférence. Nous répondions ainsi à l'esprit du second message du président Roosevelt qui a si généreusement contribué à rendre possible une solution pacifique.

A 11 h. 15 le 28 septembre, M. François-Poncet était reçu par le chancelier Hitler et lui apportait au nom du gouvernement français des propositions précises et d'application immédiate et pratique. M. Hitler ne repoussa pas ces suggestions, il se réserva de leur apporter une réponse écrite. De son côté M. Chamberlain proposait un ultime effort pour la réunion en Allemagne des chefs des gouvernements des quatre grandes puissances occidentales. M. Mussolini appuyait cette demande avec force et succès. Il obtenait un résultat décisif, l'ajournement de 24 heures de la mobilisation allemande. M. Hitler lançait aussitôt les convocations pour la réunion de Munich.

J'ai accepté cette invitation. Il ne s'agissait pas de faire de la procédure, ou de formuler des contre-propositions. Il s'agissait de sauver la paix que d'aucuns avaient déjà pu croire définitivement détruite. J'ai dit 'oui' et je ne regrette rien. J'eusse préféré que toutes les puissances intéressées fussent présentes. Mais il fallait faire très vite, le moindre délai pouvait être fatal. Une conversation franche avec M. Hitler et M. Mussolini ne valait-elle pas mieux que toutes les propositions ou toutes les discussions écrites?

Vous connaissez les résultats de l'entrevue de Munich qui fut plus une conversation utile qu'une conférence formelle. Nous avons évité le recours à la force. Nous avons, sans qu'aucun doute soit permis à cet égard, provoqué dans quatre pays le plébiscite de la paix. Par la chaleur spontanée de l'accueil qui fut réservé à Berlin, à Rome, à Londres et à Paris, par les peuples des quatre capitales, aux chefs des quatre gouvernements, par les innombrables témoignages qui leur parviennent aux uns et aux autres, des villes et des campagnes de leur pays, comment douter un seul instant de l'immense soulagement des hommes et de leur attachement à la paix?

Victoire effective de la paix; victoire morale de la paix; voilà le premier point que je tiens à mettre en évidence. Victoire humaine également, puisque l'accord de Munich, grâce à des concessions réciproques et à la bonne volonté de tous, est en progrès certain sur le mémorandum de Godesberg. Il contient des stipulations organisant pour les individus le droit d'option, il élimine toutes les dispositions qui eussent pu figurer dans l'armistice qu'un vainqueur impose à un vaincu.

Nous avons apporté à l'État tchèque des assurances de garanties internationales. La France et la Grande-Bretagne s'engagent sans réserve ni délai à s'associer à une garantie internationale des nouvelles frontières de l'Etat tchécoslovaque contre toute agression non provoquée, l'Allemagne et l'Italie s'engageant d'autre part à donner leurs garanties, dès que la question des minorités polonaises et hongroises en Tchécoslovaquie aura été réglée.

Je suis convaincu que, grâce à des conversations directes, un règlement honorable et juste pourra être prochainement trouvé.

Une commission internationale a été créée en vue d'éviter l'arbitraire de décisions unilatérales. Aux solutions de force, on peut espérer ainsi substituer les pratiques du droit. Si, demain, des contingents anglais et français sont appelés à se rendre dans les districts contestés en vue d'assurer le maintien de l'ordre et la régularité des opérations du plébiscite, ils le feront avec le sentiment qu'ils épargnent à ces régions et au monde entier l'épreuve d'une guerre.

Certes, l'accord de Munich amoindrit le territoire de la Tchécoslovaquie. Mais la République tchécoslovaque peut poursuivre sa vie libre et nous l'y aiderons. Peu d'Etats à travers l'histoire ont ainsi accepté des sacrifices aussi pénibles dans l'intérêt même de la paix. Les Tchèques et les Slovaques sont des peuples braves. Nous savons qu'ils auraient défendu l'intégrité de leur territoire les armes à la main et, le cas échéant, succombé avec l'honneur d'une résistance désespérée. Mais leurs dirigeants, le président Benès, M. Hodza, le général Syrovy, ont eu une haute conception de leur devoir envers leur patrie et envers l'humanité. En portant à la connaissance du peuple tchèque son acceptation de l'accord de Munich, le général Syrovy a montré que son devoir avait été de 'sauver la vie de la nation' pour permettre un redressement. Nous éprouvons tous une profonde admiration pour l'émouvante dignité et l'admirable courage avec lesquels ce noble pays subit une aussi douloureuse épreuve.

Et maintenant, messieurs, pourquoi avons-nous réussi à arrêter la guerre, au moment même où elle semblait prête à se déchaîner? Pourquoi, en regard des sacrifices réels que nous avons consentis, avons-nous pu mettre à notre actif un certain nombre de garanties et d'avantages non moins réels que je viens d'exposer devant vous? Parce que, dans ces difficiles négociations, nous avons toujours manifesté notre volonté de justice et notre loyauté. Parce que nous avons négocié comme des hommes pour lesquels la négociation n'était pas seulement une phase inévitable de ce grand drame international, mais le véritable chemin de la paix. Je dois ajouter tout de suite, avec la même certitude, que, si notre négociation a réussi, nous le devons avant tout au fait que nous l'avons appuyée sur la manifestation de notre force. Que l'on m'entende bien: je ne veux pas dire que notre force a été un moyen d'intimidation ou de pression. On ne peut pas plus penser à intimider l'Allemagne que l'on ne peut penser à intimider la France. Mais faire la preuve de sa force c'est se mettre en mesure de discuter d'égal à égal. On ne peut discuter avec un homme ou avec une nation, que si l'on a d'abord conquis son estime. L'estime de l'Allemagne pour la France, je l'ai sentie dès mon arrivée à Munich. Elle était fondée sur le fait que l'on savait la France prête à lutter pour empêcher tout ce qui aurait porté atteinte à ses intérêts vitaux et aux intérêts de la justice. Ce qui a donc rendu possible le succès de notre ultime négociation, c'est la résolution dont la France avait fait preuve.

Il faut rendre ici au pays l'hommage qui lui est dû. Au premier appel, dans un admirable élan, où la gravité remplaçait les enthousiasmes de jadis, jeunes troupes et anciens combattants de la grande guerre ont rejoint leurs drapeaux et ont reconstitué, en quelques heures, cette barrière infranchissable qui sut toujours protéger les destins de la patrie. Sur nos frontières, mêlées à l'afflux des soldats, les populations qui auraient eu le plus à souffrir de la guerre acceptaient sans murmurer toutes les consignes de sécurité que leur donnait l'autorité militaire. Qu'elles en soient remerciées au nom de la France.

L'estime que notre patrie a imposée pendant ces journées à tous les peuples qui l'entourent, cette estime qui se fonde sur le souvenir des luttes qui nous ont opposés ou réunis, cette estime qu'aucun ancien combattant ne peut refuser à un autre ancien combattant, quelle qu'ait été la couleur de son uniforme pendant la guerre, cette estime qu'impose toujours une nation à la fois virile et pacifique, nous avons le devoir de la ressentir, nous aussi, pour ce grand peuple qui est notre voisin, qui fut notre adversaire, et avec lequel nous souhaitons pouvoir établir une paix durable. Sans doute, les conceptions que nous avons de la vie diffèrent-elles profondément des conceptions qui animent l'Allemagne et l'Italie d'aujourd'hui. Mais d'autres pays, dont les conceptions sont aussi différentes des nôtres, vivent avec nous en bonne intelligence. Quelles que soient les formes de régime qu'ils se sont données, les peuples ont pour la paix un amour identique. Ce qui importe, à l'heure présente, c'est de réunir toutes les bonnes volontés pacifiques qui existent dans le monde. Si je viens de rappeler les sentiments que le peuple de France nourrit pour le peuple d'Allemagne, et qu'à cette tribune même beaucoup de mes prédécesseurs ont eux aussi précisés, cela ne signifie pas que nous envisagions de renoncer à des collaborations existantes. Pour nous, il ne s'agit pas de substituer des amitiés nouvelles à des amitiés anciennes. Dans l'intérêt de la paix, nous voulons ajouter à ces amitiés anciennes et éprouvées l'appui d'amitiés renouvelées ou d'amitiés nouvelles. Je sais que pour cette œuvre nous pouvons compter sur l'amitié de la France et de la Grande-Bretagne, que les récents événements ont encore rendue plus confiante et plus active.

Vous avouerai-je, messieurs, que l'autre jour, en arrivant au Bourget, au milieu de cette joie spontanée du peuple de Paris, qui répondait, dans l'espace, à la joie des peuples de Berlin, de Rome, et de Londres, je n'ai pu m'empêcher de ressentir une sorte d'inquiétude? Je pensais que la paix n'est pas une conquête définitive, mais qu'elle doit être défendue chaque jour. Je suis certes sensible aux manifestations de la joie populaire. Mais comme chef de gouvernement, je ne dois penser qu'à l'avenir du pays. La paix sauvée ne saurait être le signal de l'abandon; elle doit marquer, au contraire, un nouveau sursaut des énergies de la nation. Je le dis avec toute la force de conviction dont je suis capable: si le pays devait s'abandonner, et si le maintien de la paix n'était pour lui qu'une raison d'insouciance, nous irions avec rapidité à des lendemains redoutables. Je ne saurais,

pour ma part, accepter de conduire la France vers ces lendemains. Le bien le plus précieux, celui qui permet toutes les espérances, nous a été conservé. Nous avons la paix. Sachons la garder, et sachons l'établir sur des bases inébranlables.

Il est possible qu'à Munich le monde ait changé de face dans l'espace de quelques heures. Il faut que la France réponde à cette situation nouvelle, en prenant un nouveau sentiment de ses devoirs. . . .

(liii) *Extracts from Speech by Mr. Francis B. Sayre, United States Assistant Secretary of State, October 10, 1938.*[1]

During the past few weeks we have been living through one of the tremendous dramas of history. We have seen great nations halting on the very brink of catastrophe, looking fearsomely down, startled and wide-eyed, into the abyss of war and preparing to take the awful plunge. We have watched national destinies being forged before our eyes—the future of whole peoples, indeed of an entire continent, being shaped by a rapid succession of momentous decisions forced upon national leaders by the swift and relentless drive of international events. Probably never before has there been such a swift-moving drama of elemental struggle between conflicting fundamental concepts of life, of social philosophy, of religion.

Without passing at this time upon the merits of the arrangements which have been made, we must look facts in the face. War has been postponed. It remains to be seen whether it has been escaped. But the climax of the drama has not yet been reached. At the present time the supreme question for us is what is to be our attitude to that which is to follow? If a philosophy and a way of life in conflict with our own is to prevail, it is going to affect our lives profoundly.

Separated from Europe as is America by some 3,000 miles of ocean, our part, we hope, is not with military force to become embroiled in European conflicts. Nevertheless, in this day and generation, it must be realized that America is not and cannot be isolated from the economic effects of world problems and world movements. In the increasing modern interdependence of nations we cannot be detached if we would. The lives of ourselves, our children, and our children's children will be conditioned by what the rest of the world becomes. America has a vital interest in that outcome.

Peace cannot be won by mere passive inaction. What the world needs to-day is active leadership in building for peace. Lasting peace can never rest upon physical force and military armaments. Lasting peace can rest only upon a world order based upon law, upon justice, upon human freedom. Government based upon oppression and injustice will be eternally unstable and cannot endure. Our own country was foundationed upon the concept of human liberty based upon a rule of law. America is a synonym for

[1] At a conference of women's clubs in New York. U.S. State Department, Press Releases, Vol. XIX, No. 472.

individual freedom. To-day in large parts of the world faith and belief in human liberty is being flouted and discarded. If America would build permanently for peace we must preserve and strengthen as never before our great heritage of individual freedom. Freedom of the Press, freedom of conscience, freedom of speech, tolerance of viewpoint—these we must fight to maintain against all odds and in the face of a growing spirit of intolerance and ruthlessness which to-day darkens the world. Again, lasting world peace can be had only if sound economic foundations are built for it. . . .

The tense and sombre events of last month, far from overshadowing the necessity of building firm economic foundations for peace, demonstrate the need for redoubled efforts in that direction. Lovers of peace, lovers of American freedom must unite in support of that programme. It is a programme for promoting domestic prosperity. It is also a programme working powerfully for peace.

(liv) *Extracts from Speech by Count Ciano, Italian Minister for Foreign Affairs, November 30, 1938.*[1]

On December 18 of the year XVI,[2] M. Chvalkovský, then Minister Plenipotentiary of Czechoslovakia at Rome, anxious at the threatening way in which the clouds were gathering in the sky over his country, asked me what would be the attitude of Italy in the case of a possible German-Czech crisis. My reply was precisely as follows:

'The destiny of Czechoslovakia in its present political structure is not, for us, a problem of the first importance. We have no direct dispute with the Czechs, but we are indirectly concerned by their relations with the neighbouring States, to which, on the other hand, we are bound by ties of firm friendship. I should therefore like to give you a piece of advice. Come to an agreement with Berlin, with Budapest, and with Warsaw, and do so rapidly and spontaneously, before you are compelled by the inexorable pressure of events. For you would make a great mistake if, forgetting the experience of the distant and recent past, you shut your eyes to realities and continued to cherish fallacious illusions about the strength of so-called collective security of the League brand, or the practical possibilities of friendship with geographically distant countries.' With this declaration, the fundamental importance of which did not escape M. Chvalkovský, the Italian position with regard to Czechoslovakia was fixed from that time onward. That position was clear and unequivocal, and derived logically from Mussolini's conception of the political life of Europe and of the struggle which Fascism has for long years been conducting against the false, insecure,

[1] At the opening of the Fascist Chamber. *Il Giornale d'Italia*, December 1 and 2. Translation. Extracts from this speech giving the passages relating more particularly to Italian foreign policy appeared in Vol. I of the *Documents* for 1938, pp. 242–50. The passages given here are those which relate to the Czechoslovak crisis, not including those which merely cover the same ground as other documents in the present volume.

[2] 1937.

and dangerous architecture of Versailles, of which precisely Czechoslovakia was the most typical expression.

The peace treaties, repudiating the principles of nationality which had always been proclaimed during the Great War and were announced as a definite pledge at the time of the armistice, created this new paradoxical republic based on a politico-strategical conception which represented the most open violation of those principles, so much so that at the Peace Conference the Czech delegates, in order to mask the act of violation which they intended to commit, declared in a memorandum that they intended to organize the Czechoslovak State in a federal form, which would guarantee the autonomy and rights of the various nationalities. That pledge was not kept. The national minorities were entrusted to the dubious, uncertain régime of the protection of the League, which allowed the systematic reduction of the rights of all the ethnic groups within the country, and, in external affairs, encouraged the creation of a system of alliances and guarantees intended to prevent any peaceful revision of the unjustly drawn frontiers.

There was an increasingly clear intention to make use of Czechoslovakia as the fulcrum for a system of encirclement of Germany and Hungary, thus destroying any possibility of the minorities living together with and co-operating in the Czechoslovak State. They did not demand the dissolution of the State or even, at that time, the actual dismemberment of the Republic. But it was the Prague Government which endangered the basis of the State by ruthlessly facing the minorities with the alternative either of accepting a policy which would have meant their having to take up arms against their brothers across the frontier, or of rebelling openly against the violence of which they were the object. Such was the inevitable link between the internal and the foreign policy of Czechoslovakia, and this link became increasingly clear in view of the failure of the last attempts at co-operation between the German minority and the Czechoslovak State and the accentuation of the anti-German policy of Beneš, culminating, in the spring of 1935, in the conclusion of the Czech-Soviet Pact which made Czechoslovakia the bridge-head of Bolshevism in the Danubian region of Europe. . . .

German public opinion did not remain insensible to the appeals which came from the Sudeten provinces, but no steps had as yet been taken by the German Government when the rumour of a German mobilization was artificially spread. Alarm in Europe grew from hour to hour. There was talk of French mobilization, and British solidarity with France was confirmed in case of a conflict arising out of a German attack on Czechoslovakia. The British Ambassador at Rome, Lord Perth, was received by me twice in the days of May 21 and 22, and informed me of the grave preoccupation with which the Government in London was following the development of events. He confirmed the solidarity of his country with France. We for our part confined ourselves to taking note of these communications, but added that we did not judge the situation so pessimistically. The key of

peace, we said, was still in the hands of Prague; if equity and good sense prevailed, the conflict would be avoided. . . .

On August 20 the Duce, foreseeing that the dispute would inevitably enter upon an acute phase in the near future, ordered me to get in touch with the German Government and ask for certain information, because he intended to take precautionary measures to cover the frontier. . . .

In the atmosphere of exasperation which these vicissitudes and polemics produced, the incidents at Moravska-Ostrava occurred on September 6. Many Sudetens were beaten, and many arrested. Negotiations were suspended. In international circles, a violent reaction from Germany was expected. It did not come. But on September 12 the Führer spoke, and his words were of a definite character. Tergiversation was no longer possible. The final act of the drama was approaching.

[*The 'Letter to Runciman'*]

Italy made her attitude clear by two notes in the *Informazione Diplomatica*; in any case, only those who make a profession of international bad faith could make it a subject of polemic or dispute. Finally, on September 15, an article was published in the *Popolo d'Italia* under the title of 'Letter to Runciman',[1] which was seen at once, both by its contents and by its unmistakable style, to be the one constructive document among all those which had so far appeared. It was the 'Letter to Runciman' which courageously brought the nebulosity of diplomatic negotiations down to the plane of reality, and with the 'Letter to Runciman' the path of concrete solutions was defined, and in the 'Letter to Runciman' a world which was so frightened as to feign forgetfulness was reminded that there was not only a Czech-German question, but a Czech-Magyar question, and also a Czech-Polish question, and that any one of these was large enough by itself to set fire to the powder magazine again. The Runciman mission practically came to an end the day after, and it ended in dissolution. But a problem had been raised over which it was no longer possible to draw a veil of silence. . . .

The sudden, unexpected news of Chamberlain's first visit to Germany called forth a wave of optimism. The honourable and courageous action of the British Prime Minister, who did not wish to leave anything untried before considering so immense a conflict inevitable, was welcomed in all countries, including Italy, with deep and sincere sympathy. But optimism did not last long. At the first Hitler-Chamberlain meeting, no substantial conclusion was reached, while an incomprehensible stiffening in the Prague Government's attitude made the local situation increasingly acute.

[*Attitude of Italy*]

It was at this stage that the Duce laid down definitively the future line of conduct of Italy, and ordered me to notify the German Government of it. If the dispute between Germany and Czechoslovakia were localized, Italy's

[1] See pp. 206–8.

attitude would be reviewed again. But if it were to become general, and if the forces of anti-Fascism were to make it a pretext to form a coalition of an ideological character against Nazi Germany, there would be no alternative and no hesitation; Italy would feel herself threatened and would range her forces beside those of Germany. The Duce announced this decision to the Italian people and to the world in his Trieste speech. The speeches which he made in the various cities which he visited afterwards during his visit to the Venetian province gave the Italians the singular privilege of being constantly kept informed of the development of events by the Head of the State himself.

The second conversation between the Führer and Chamberlain took place at Godesberg on September 22. We were at once informed from the German side that matters were going badly. On the following day the two leaders did not meet, but exchanged messages in writing. This was an indication that the situation was worse; each of them now wished to define clearly his responsibilities before history. Germany defined her own demands, and fixed a date: October 1. . . .

On Sunday, the 25th, at Schio, an interview took place in the Duce's train between our leader and a special messenger of the Führer who had come by air from Munich and met me at Venice and who supplied full information by word of mouth of a not very encouraging character, and once more expressed the gratitude of the German Government and people for the attitude of Italy. On Monday the 26th there was a new gleam of hope, when news was received of the visit which Sir Horace Wilson paid to Germany on Mr. Chamberlain's instructions. This hope soon died away. Indeed, events began to move fast. As Czechoslovakia did not wait until October 1 before notifying her refusal of the German demands, the Führer put forward the final date to Wednesday, September 28 at 2 p.m. From that date and hour, Germany would resume her freedom of action, and intended to act without delay. This information was secret; but we were informed of it immediately through our Ambassador at 7.30 p.m. on the same day, the 26th. The Duce was at that time on the way from Verona to Rome. I met him at the station and informed him of what had happened and what was expected. He received this very serious news with his usual imperturbable calm. He informed me of his decision to carry out a first partial mobilization on the following day, as he still thought, for military and strategical reasons into which it would not be proper for me to enter here, that the conflict which now appeared inevitable on the Czechoslovak frontier might, notwithstanding the declarations of the Governments which were associated with Prague, be localized and circumscribed. . . .

When the mobilization measures described above had been completed, the Duce considered it necessary to establish as precisely as possible the bases of the political understanding with Berlin, and to create organizations for military co-operation. The great democracies of the West had already done so or were in course of doing so. Accordingly, a meeting was arranged

at Munich on September 29 at noon, which was to be attended by Herr von Ribbentrop and myself, accompanied respectively by General von Keitel, German Chief of Staff, and by Generals Pariani and Valle. These preparations were made on the 27th, which day was specially devoted throughout the country to military preparations. Diplomatic effort was at a standstill, as any further attempt appeared useless. Although the advancing of the timel-imit was not yet known, mankind was expecting the first shot to be fired at any moment. The short broadcast statement made by the British Prime Minister was not of a nature to inspire any new hope. Europe was moving inexorably towards the great catastrophe.

[*Signor Mussolini's Messages to Herr Hitler*]

It was at 10 a.m. on September 28, when only four short hours remained before the expiry of the ultimatum, that a new development occurred. Lord Perth asked me for an interview, and I received him at once. He then told me, with deep emotion, that Chamberlain appealed to the Duce to use his good offices with the Führer, at this eleventh hour, to save peace. I then went to the Palazzo Venezia and transmitted the message to the Duce, and he at once personally got in touch with the Ambassador, Attolico, and gave him these instructions:

'Go at once to the Führer and, having first explained that I shall be with him in any event, tell him that I advise him to postpone the start of operations for twenty-four hours. In the meantime I will study and propose what should be done to find a solution for the problem.'

That telephone conversation, Comrades, spared humanity a tragic trial. Our Ambassador at once got in touch with Hitler, who was at the moment in conversation with the French Ambassador, and obtained his consent to the Duce's proposal. I have no hesitation in stating that if such a request had come from any other person, the Chancellor of the Reich would have met it with the most uncompromising refusal.

In the meantime Lord Perth returned to the Palazzo Chigi. This time he brought a concrete proposal for a Four-Power Conference to find an immediate solution for the question. The Duce, who was by now acquainted with Hitler's reception of his proposal that the start of operations should be postponed for twenty-four hours, sent, again through the Ambassador, a second personal message to the Führer in the following terms:

'1. Thank the Führer for having accepted my request that mobilization should be postponed for twenty-four hours.

2. Together with a personal message sent me by Chamberlain, which advised me to approach Hitler as I have already done, I am acquainted with the text of the letter which Chamberlain sent to Hitler to-day, the 28th.

3. This letter, which will perhaps be made public, and of which in any case I send you the text, contains the following proposal, which I consider acceptable: Return of Chamberlain to Berlin to settle the problem in not more than seven days, with the presence of the Czechs and, if

Hitler so desires, also the French and Italians. Italy is of course ready to participate.

I am convinced that in this way Hitler will obtain a success which I do not hesitate to call magnificent both from the concrete point of view and from that of world prestige.'

At 3 p.m. Attolico telephoned that the Führer accepted the proposal on one fundamental condition; the presence of the Duce in person at the conference, as the sole guarantee of success. He left it to the Duce to choose whether the conference should take place at Frankfurt or at Munich. The Duce accepted. He chose Munich. The conference was fixed for 11 a.m. on the following day. The Duce set out at 6 p.m. Never was a journey followed by the world with more anxious emotion or with more unanimous wishes, although the Duce's intervention had now given all hearts the ultimate certainty of success. He met the Führer at Kufstein. In the Chancellor's train, the two chiefs had a long conversation on political and military questions, in which one point was fixed: the necessity of reaching an immediate conclusion, and not letting the conference lose itself in the treacherous maze of procedure and theoretical discussion. At Munich they were joined by Mr. Chamberlain and M. Daladier. The conference began. The rest is well known. But it may be worth while to mention that it was the Duce who brought the discussion on to practical ground by submitting a proposal which the German Government accepted in principle and which was, save for the indispensable modifications of form, adopted as the final decision, and that it was again the Duce who brought into the discussions the question of the Polish and Magyar minorities as well as suggesting the immediate formation of the executive committee which subsequently proved so useful in the application of the Agreement. The question which had for years been the subject of study and controversy, with which jurists and statesmen had busied themselves in vain, and which had for many months endangered the peace of Europe, was settled, and the Duce, after a stay in Munich of only twelve hours, was able to return to Italy the same evening, amid the acclamations of the German people. . . .

[*Arbitration between Czechoslovakia and Hungary*]

The changes which have taken place since then in Europe must be considered in the light of Munich. The Czech-Polish dispute was settled directly between Warsaw and Prague, but the disagreement between Czechoslovakia and Hungary still remained outstanding. The negotiations conducted by the plenipotentiaries of the two countries several times broke down. The question appeared to be really too thorny to be dealt with by diplomatic conversations. Tension between Hungary and Czechoslovakia became extremely acute, and had assumed a disquieting character when the Axis was once more able to render a lofty service to the cause of peace. Only Italy and Germany, owing to the prestige with which their names were surrounded in Eastern Europe, by the extent of the interests which both

countries have in those regions, and by their identical determination to secure a just peace, could have undertaken the difficult task of giving an award which would put an end to the dispute. This was done at Vienna by the two Axis countries in a spirit of full solidarity and complete understanding. In the subsequent Ruthenian dispute too there was absolute identity between their points of view. . . . Italy and Germany maintained, and secured the agreement of the parties concerned for their view, that it was not desirable to reopen the question of a frontier which had been fixed and solemnly accepted hardly twenty days previously.

The award was the result of careful consideration, and was based on strictly impartial criteria. A great injustice was repaired. . . . And we Italians, who have heard the voice of the Duce, the first to be raised in defence of mutilated Hungary, saw with intense emotion the ancient Magyar standard return to the city which was wrested from its motherland by an unjust treaty, and we thought of the time when the Hungarian nation chivalrously stood by us while, as we have not forgotten, a coalition of Governments tried to strangle armed Italy with the noose of the League. . . .

4. The Post-Munich Period

The events which followed the Munich Agreement down to the end of 1938 are somewhat complex. They include the measures taken in pursuance of the Munich decisions, the changes made in the structure of the Czechoslovak State in consequence and the establishment of autonomy for Slovakia and Ruthenia, and the further cessions of territory made by Czechoslovakia to meet the claims of Poland and Hungary. All these three aspects produced repercussions on one another.

The Czechoslovak Government accepted the decisions of the Munich meeting on September 30. In the *communiqué* by which this was announced,[1] it was stated that the Government 'registers its protest before the world against this decision, which was taken unilaterally and without its participation'. In a broadcast[2] on the same day, General Syrový said that the conditions were unparalleled in history for their ruthlessness in view of the fact that they were imposed under pressure and without fighting. 'But,' he added, 'we were deserted, and we stood alone.' General Krejčí, the Commander-in-Chief, then read out an order of the day to the army.[3]

On October 5, President Beneš announced his resignation in a letter to General Syrový[4] saying that in the changed circumstances he might 'prove a hindrance to the new developments to which our State must now adapt itself'. In a farewell broadcast[5] he explained his resignation more fully, in terms of dignity and restraint, and appealed to his countrymen to lay aside all differences and work together for the common good. 'The top of the tree of our homeland,' he said, 'is cut off, but the roots of the nation are still firm in the soil. Let us go down to the roots . . . as we have so often done in our history before. Then the top of the tree will in time put forth new branches.' On October 22 he left Czechoslovakia and came to England.

The election of a new President was postponed until the transformation of the State into a federal State of the Czechs, Slovaks, and Ruthenes should have been completed. The Government was reconstructed; General Syrový remained at its head, but M. Krofta was replaced as Foreign Minister by M. Chvalkovský, who

[1] See p. 326. [2] See pp. 326–28. [3] See pp. 328–29. [4] See pp. 329–30. [5] See pp. 330–33.

had been Czechoslovak Minister in Berlin and subsequently in Rome. General Syrový explained the policy of the Government in a broadcast of October 5.[1]

The occupation by German forces of the territory to be ceded, which included the elaborate frontier defence system of the country, began immediately in accordance with the Munich Agreement. Accounts of conditions in these districts, and of the position of the refugees who fled from them, have been given by Dr. Ripka, Mr. Gedye, and Mr. Henderson.[2] Herr Hitler made a number of speeches in the ceded districts; extracts from those made at Karlsbad on October 4[3] and at Znaim on October 26[4] will be found in the present volume. Herr Hitler also referred to the subject in his speeches of October 5 in Berlin[5] and of October 9 in Saarbrücken.[6]

The International Commission which, under the Munich Agreement, was to lay down in detail the conditions governing the evacuation, decide in which districts plebiscites were to be held, and finally fix the frontiers, met in Berlin; it consisted of the representatives of the four great Powers and a representative of Czechoslovakia. The Czechoslovak Government's view concerning the extent to which their representative's observations were taken into account is shown by the broadcast given on October 7;[7] in any case it was obvious that Czechoslovakia was not in a position to refuse to accept any decisions agreed upon by the four Powers. One of the points in dispute was whether the decision concerning which districts were to be regarded as having a German majority should be taken on the basis of the Czechoslovak census of 1930 or on that of the census of 1910, taken when the districts in question formed part of the Austro-Hungarian Empire. The Commission decided in favour of the 1910 census.[8] On October 13 it decided that plebiscites in the zones to be ceded could be dispensed with.[9] This rendered it unnecessary for the volunteers provided by the British Legion[10] to go to Czechoslovakia to keep order in the plebiscite areas, and the force which had been assembled was disbanded.[11]

The final determination of the new frontier was made by the International Commission on November 21.[12] It closely resembled the frontier demanded by Herr Hitler in the Godesberg memorandum.

Autonomy of Slovakia and Ruthenia.—The events of 1938 brought into prominence the question of the autonomy of Slovakia and Ruthenia. These were the two parts of Czechoslovakia which had, before the peace settlement of 1919, formed part of Hungary; both contained Magyar minorities. The Slovaks[13] were racially and linguistically closely akin to the Czechs, but the history of the two peoples had diverged owing to the fact that one had been under Austrian and the other under Hungarian rule. The Ruthenes[14] formed part of the Ukrainian

[1] See pp. 333–35.

[2] See Ripka, *op. cit.*, pp. 252–53 and 266–72, Gedye, *op. cit.*, pp. 489–95, and Henderson, *op. cit.*, pp. 238–43.

[3] See p. 329. [4] See p. 19. [5] See pp. 335–36. [6] See pp. 337–39. [7] See pp. 336–37.

[8] See Mr. Chamberlain's speech of November 1, pp. 359–63, and the broadcast mentioned above. The question of the census to be taken as a basis is a thorny one which involves a number of political and historical considerations, and on which different views are held by different experts. See the article on the economic effects of the partition in Czechoslovakia in the *Bulletin of International News*, October 22, 1938, pp. 938–9.

[9] See pp. 339–40. [10] See pp. 340–41, also p. 272. [11] See pp. 340–41. [12] See p. 341.

[13] See *A History of the Peace Conference of Paris*, edited by H. W. V. Temperley; published under the auspices of the Royal Institute of International Affairs, Frowde and Hodder & Stoughton, London, 1921, Vol. IV, pp. 270–72; also C. A. Macartney, *Hungary and her Successors*, issued under the auspices of the Royal Institute of International Affairs, Oxford University Press, 1937, pp. 73–199.

[14] See *A History of the Peace Conference of Paris*, Vol. IV, pp. 272–3; also *Hungary and her Successors*, pp. 200–50; see in particular the footnote on p. 200 for an explanation of the use of the name 'Ruthenia' rather than 'Sub-Carpathian Russia', 'Sub-Carpathian Ruthenia', or 'Carpatho-Ruthenia'. As will be mentioned later, the name was changed in November 1938 to 'Carpatho-Ukraine'.

people,[1] who had never constituted an independent State, but had been under the rule of Russia, Austria, and Hungary before the peace settlement of 1919, and after it under that of Russia, Poland, Czechoslovakia, and Rumania.

As has already been mentioned,[2] a demand for autonomy for Slovakia was put forward by the Slovak autonomist party in the early part of 1938, and Father Hlinka, the leader of the party (who died during the summer and was succeeded by Dr. Tiso) published a draft for a Slovak Autonomy Bill in June. The Czechoslovak Government's draft Nationalities Statute had provided for provincial diets for Bohemia, Moravia-Silesia, Slovakia, and Ruthenia.

On September 19 the Slovak National Party put forward demands[3] for the autonomy of Slovakia within the Czechoslovak State on the basis of the Pittsburgh Agreement.[4] On October 6 a conference of representatives of Slovak parties held at Žilina adopted a joint declaration[5] declaring their intention of working for the adoption of the Autonomy Bill drafted by Father Hlinka, and asking that a Slovak autonomous Government should be appointed at once. The Czechoslovak Government adopted the latter proposal immediately, and Dr. Tiso was appointed Minister for Slovakia.[6] Four other Ministers were also appointed to complete the Slovak Government. After further negotiations the Constitutional Act concerning Slovak Autonomy[7] was introduced in the Chamber on November 17 and published on November 22. This measure, with the similar Act concerning Ruthenia mentioned below, marked the transformation of Czechoslovakia into a federal State, and in it the form 'Czecho-Slovakia' was adopted as the title of the Republic.

The Ruthenians had been promised autonomy by the Treaty of St. Germain and by the Czechoslovak Constitution.[8] The Czechoslovak authorities explained their delay in fulfilling this pledge by the difficulty of granting autonomy to a peasant population which was not yet sufficiently culturally advanced or politically mature for self-government. A Ruthenian autonomous Government was appointed on October 11 under the presidency of M. Bródy, a representative of the 'Great Russian' group;[9] the 'Ukrainian' group was also represented, among others by M. Revay. On October 26 M. Bródy was dismissed, and later arrested on the charge of being in the pay of Hungary; he was succeeded by Mgr. Vološin, of the Ukrainian group. An Autonomy Act for Ruthenia was passed at the same time as that for Slovakia. At the end of the year the name of the province was officially changed to 'Carpatho-Ukraine'.

Polish and Hungarian Claims.—In the meantime, Poland and Hungary—supported by Italy, as is indicated by the speeches made by Signor Mussolini during the crisis[10]—had advanced territorial claims against Czechoslovakia. The Polish minority in the country was a small one.[11] At the time of the peace settlement after the war of 1914–18, the Duchy of Teschen—formerly part of the Austrian Empire—was claimed both by Czechoslovakia and by Poland. It was finally partitioned between them by a decision of the Council of Ambassadors of July 28, 1920.[12] The position of the national minorities left on either side of the frontier was regulated by the Treaty of Warsaw of April 23, 1925.[13] Apart from

[1] For the Ukrainian problem in general, see the article entitled 'The Ukrainian Problem' in the *Bulletin of International News*, January 14, 1939.

[2] See p. 109. [3] See pp. 341–42.

[4] For an account of this agreement, see Macartney, *op. cit.*, pp. 97 and 117.

[5] See p. 342. [6] See p. 342. See pp. 342–43.

[8] A similar promise was made to the Ruthenians included in Poland.

[9] For details concerning the 'Great Russian' and 'Ukrainian' groups in Ruthenia, see the article on the Ukrainian problem quoted above.

[10] See pp. 239–43. [11] For figures, see p. 106, footnote 3.

[12] See *History of the Peace Conference of Paris*, already quoted, pp. 348–63.

[13] See *Survey* for 1925, Vol. II, p. 248, and C. A. Macartney, *National States and National Minorities*, issued under the auspices of the Royal Institute of International Affairs, Oxford University Press, 1934, pp. 269–71.

ethnological considerations, the district was of great importance owing to its coal-mines and its railway connexions; in particular, the main railway between Bohemia and Slovakia ran through the part allotted to Czechoslovakia.

At the time of the May crisis there had been reports of Polish troop concentrations near the frontier, which were denied.[1] M. Krofta made a statement about the Polish minority on May 20,[2] and a demand for autonomy for this minority was made in Parliament about the same time.[3] When, in the course of the September crisis, it became clear that territorial cessions from Czechoslovakia to Germany were probable, Poland also advanced a claim. On September 21 the Polish Minister at Prague presented a Note demanding that the question of the territories inhabited by the Polish minority should be settled in the same manner as that of the territories inhabited by Germans, and denouncing the Treaty of April 23, 1925.[4] According to the British Press,[5] Lord Halifax saw the Polish Ambassador on September 23 and warned Poland of the 'dangers and impropriety of her threat to seize the Teschen district'. Immediately after the Munich Agreement, on September 30, Poland sent Czechoslovakia a Note, in the form of an ultimatum with a twenty-four-hour time-limit, demanding the cession of part of the Teschen district. The Czechoslovak Government acceded to this demand,[6] and the Polish occupation was carried out immediately.[7] The district occupied by Poland contained a larger number of Czechs than of Poles, as well as a certain number of Germans.[8]

On September 20 the Hungarian Prime Minister and Foreign Minister visited Herr Hitler at Berchtesgaden in order to raise the question of the Hungarian minorities in Slovakia and Ruthenia. On September 22 the Hungarian Government notified the Czechoslovak Government that it expected the question of the Magyar minority to be settled in the same manner as that of the German minority, and a *communiqué* of September 26[9] stated that Hungary would regard any differentiation in this respect as an unfriendly attitude. Dr. Imrédy, the Hungarian Prime Minister, broadcasting on October 1,[10] expressed his gratitude to Herr Hitler and Signor Mussolini for their support, and said that 'no obstacle would deter' Hungary from upholding her standpoint. On the following day a Note[11] was presented to the Czechoslovak Government demanding the immediate opening of negotiations 'in the spirit of the Munich decisions'. Negotiations, conducted on the Czechoslovak side by the representatives of the new autonomous Governments of Slovakia and Ruthenia, were begun at Komárno (Komárom) on October 9; pending their outcome the Czechoslovaks agreed to certain token territorial concessions.[12]

The position was complicated by the fact that in spite of the protestations of the statesmen concerned that their attitude was based on purely ethnographical considerations, political and strategic factors were also involved. Hungary and Poland desired to obtain a common frontier;[13] this would be achieved if Hungary could obtain the whole of Ruthenia. This province had, in the pre-Munich period, been of strategic importance to Czechoslovakia as constituting her only means of access to her ally Rumania, and thence to Soviet Russia. The scheme for a Polish-Hungarian common frontier was supported by Italy, but opposed by Germany. The Hungarian claim included Bratislava, the chief town of Slovakia, and Užhorod, the chief town of Ruthenia, as well as the towns of Nitra and Kosiče. These claims were based on the 1910 census, which weighted the figures

[1] See p. 343. [2] See p. 343. [3] See p. 109.
[4] The text of the Note was not published, but it was summarized in *The Times* of September 22.
[5] See the *Daily Telegraph and Morning Post*, September 24.
[6] See pp. 343–44. [7] See p. 344.
[8] See R. W. Seton-Watson, *Munich and the Dictators*, Methuen, London, 1939, p. 120.
[9] See p. 344. [10] See pp. 345–46 [11] See p. 346. [12] See pp. 346–47.
[13] Colonel Beck made a statement on Poland's interest in Ruthenia on October 18 (see pp. 347–48).

very considerably on the Hungarian side.[1] The gap between these demands and the Czechoslovak counter-proposals was so wide that the Hungarians broke off the negotiations on October 13.[2] In the meantime, Hungary, and to a lesser extent Poland, was carrying on an intensive propaganda campaign in the disputed districts, and numbers of Hungarian irregulars crossed the frontier, with the result that fighting on a not inconsiderable scale occurred.[3]

After a series of complicated diplomatic manœuvres including the visit of Slovak Ministers to Munich and Warsaw, and of Colonel Beck to Rumania,[4] direct negotiations were resumed through diplomatic channels;[5] the new Czechoslovak offers, according to M. de Kánya,[6] came nearer to meeting the Hungarian view, but were still not sufficient; he therefore proposed plebiscites for the areas still in dispute. This proposal was supported by M. Bródy, who, as was mentioned above, was shortly afterwards arrested on the charge of being in the pay of Hungary. The new Ruthenian Government under Mgr. Vološin rejected the idea of a plebiscite as the political allegiance of Ruthenia had already been definitely settled.[7] The Czechoslovak Government, in a Note of October 26,[8] stated that the negotiations could deal only with the Hungarian and Polish minorities, as these alone were mentioned in the Munich decisions, and proposed that the dispute should be submitted to the arbitration of Germany and Italy. Hungary had already made a similar proposal, with the addition of Poland as arbitrator for eastern Slovakia and Ruthenia;[9] the Czechoslovaks demanded that if Poland took part in the arbitration, Rumania should also be invited. It was finally decided that Germany and Italy alone should be the arbitrators; the fact that the other two Powers signatories of the Munich Agreement were omitted bore witness, as Count Csaky pointed out during his subsequent visit to Rome,[10] to the preponderant position which Germany and Italy now enjoyed in South-Eastern Europe. In this connexion Mr. Wedgwood Benn, in the debate in the House of Commons on November 1,[11] raised the question of the British and French offer of participation in an international guarantee to Czechoslovakia.[12] Mr. Chamberlain said that this guarantee did not apply to the frontiers of Czechoslovakia as they then existed, but was a guarantee against unprovoked aggression.

The Italo-German arbitration resulted in the Vienna award of November 2;[13] Hungary did not obtain the common frontier with Poland, or the town of Bratislava; but she secured Užhorod (with the result that the seat of the Ruthenian Government had to be transferred to the small town of Chust), and Kosiče—in all some 5,000 square miles of territory with a population of 1,064,000, including considerable non-Magyar minorities. A full account of the negotiations from the Hungarian point of view was given by M. de Kánya in his speech of November 12.[14] The effect of the award was described, from the Slovak point of view, by Dr. Tiso on November 2,[15] and from that of Ruthenia by M. Revay on November 19.[16]

Political Changes in Czechoslovakia.—After the settlement of the question of Slovak and Ruthenian autonomy, it became possible to carry out the presidential election, and Dr. Hácha, formerly Chief Justice of the Supreme Administrative Court, was elected President of Czecho-Slovakia on November 30. A new Government was formed under M. Beran. He outlined its foreign policy on December 13;[17] it would be based 'on the facts and on the economic and social circumstances'; its first care must be the settlement of relations with Germany. M. Beran went

[1] See C. A. Macartney, *Hungary and her Successors*, already quoted, pp. 78 and 203.
[2] See p. 347.
[3] See Alexander Henderson, *Eyewitness in Czecho-Slovakia*, already quoted, pp. 246–55.
[4] See Ripka, *op. cit.*, pp. 499–500. [5] See pp. 348–49. [6] See p. 356.
[7] See pp. 349. [8] See pp. 348–49. [9] See *Manchester Guardian*, October 28, 1938.
[10] See *Documents* for 1938, Vol. I, p. 252. [11] See p. 362. [12] See pp. 214, 290, 295, 299–302.
[13] See p. 351. [14] See pp. 353–58. [15] See pp. 352–53. [16] See p. 358. [17] See pp. 363–65.

on to refer to the other countries with which Czecho-Slovakia hoped to maintain friendly relations. The Western Powers came last on the list, and no mention was made of the U.S.S.R. 'Conditions in Europe and the world in general,' he added, 'however; are not such that we can hope for a period of calm in the near future.'

(i) *Communiqué issued by the Czechoslovak Government, September 30, 1938.*[1]

The Government of the Republic held a meeting at midday to-day at the Castle of Prague under the chairmanship of the President of the Republic. At this meeting it undertook a thorough examination of the international political and military situation as it has developed since the decision reached by the four Great Powers at the Munich Conference on September 29. The decision of this Conference was communicated to the Czechoslovak Government this morning.

The Government discussed all the details of this decision and all the circumstances which it had to take into account in coming to its own decision.

After thoroughly weighing and examining from all points of view all the urgent recommendations which were communicated to the Government by the British and French Governments, and with a full sense of its responsibility before history, the Czechoslovak Government, with the complete agreement of the responsible representatives of the political parties, has resolved to accept the decisions adopted by the four Great Powers at Munich.

It has done this in the knowledge that the nation will be preserved, and that no other decision is possible to-day.

In adopting this resolution, the Government of the Czechoslovak Republic at the same time registers its protest before the world against this decision, which was taken unilaterally and without its participation.

(ii) *Broadcast by General Syrový, Head of the Czechoslovak Government, September 30, 1938.*[2]

Citizens and soldiers! You are all well aware that I am one of those who, during the World War, built up the national Czechoslovak Army with spontaneous unity and self-discipline far from our home. You know that my comrades in arms unhesitatingly gave their lives for the life of the nation. To-day, as then, the future of the nation and its life are at stake. As a soldier and as Head of the Government, it was and is my duty to think first of all of your lives, and of the millions of workers who are our fellow-citizens, men, mothers, and children. I am passing through the gravest hour of my life, for I am doing the hardest thing which it has ever fallen to my lot to do, and which it would be easier to die than to do. And just because I have fought, and because I know what are the conditions under which wars are

[1] *Prager Presse*, October 1, 1938. Translation.
[2] *Ibid.*

won, I must tell you frankly, as my conscience as the responsible head of the army commands me to do, that the power which has now set itself against us compels us to recognize its superior force and to act accordingly.

My highest aim, like that of every one of you, is to preserve the life of the nation. We have received this duty from the hands of our fathers, who lived a harder life than ours, because they were not free. And we must fulfil this mission not only with the love in our hearts, but also with lucid reason. In this fateful hour our task is to weigh everything, to see everything, and to recognize clearly what road leads to this highest aim of ours. As a soldier, I declare to you, with a full sense of my responsibility: it is the road of peace. It is the road of peace because we shall enter on our new life with undiminished national strength and with the consciousness that we are a more nationally compact and therefore a stronger State.

Before I said these words, I weighed every consideration. In these days I have thought over the whole past history of our struggles, and from it I have formed the belief that the way which we are leading you is the only right and good one, because it alone leads to the work out of which the future strength of our nation will grow.

The four European Great Powers met in Munich and decided to call upon us to accept new frontiers which take from us the German districts of our State. We had the choice between a desperate and hopeless defence, which would have meant the sacrifice not only of an entire generation of our adult men, but also of women and children, and the acceptance of conditions which, in view of the fact that they were imposed under pressure and without fighting, are unparalleled in history for ruthlessness. We wanted to make a contribution to peace, and we would have made it willingly, but not in the way in which we were constrained to do it.

But we were deserted, and we stood alone.

All the States of Europe, including our neighbours to the North and South, are under arms. We are in a certain sense a fortress beleaguered by forces which are far more powerful than ours.

Deeply moved by our situation, all our leaders, together with the Army and the President of the Republic, have considered all the possibilities which remained to us. They came to the conclusion that if we had to choose between a reduction of our territory and the death of the nation, it was our sacred duty to preserve the life of our people, so that we might emerge from this time of terror unweakened and so that we might not have to abandon our confidence that our nation will recover itself, as it has so often done in the past.

In this fateful hour we must all thank our Army, whose preparedness has saved us from a collapse of the whole nation and its independent existence. To yield to the views of the four Great Powers and to superior military force is not dishonourable.

We shall fulfil the conditions which have been forcibly imposed upon us. We call upon our nation and our people to overcome their bitterness, their

disappointment, and their grief, and to help us to assure our future within our new frontiers. We are all in the same boat, and everyone can help to steer it, even though it may be damaged, into the haven of peace. Above all, there must be unity and concord amongst us, so that there may be no rift in our ranks. Many of those around us are waiting in the hope of exploiting your excitement for their own ends. Be on your guard against agents in foreign service, who wish to create discord amongst us. Many of them have already been secured and placed under arrest. Do not let yourselves be confused or led astray.

It now lies with us to rebuild our national community within our new frontiers. Help us, all of you, to be balanced in our thinking and prudent in our actions. Have confidence that those who now have the guidance of your fate will fulfil their difficult task with all their strength and with complete self-abnegation.

Our State will not be one of the smallest in the world. There are others which are much smaller, and yet they are sound and resistant. We shall have enough territory left to give us the possibility of further cultural and economic progress. It is true that we shall live within narrower boundaries, but we shall be entirely among ourselves. Many hindrances to the good and peaceful administration of our State will be removed. Agreement with our neighbours, too, will be easier. Our Army will continue to have its task, and will protect the nation and the State and will continue to be on guard as formerly.

Let us all now see to it that our State shall rise again in health within its new frontiers, and that its citizens may be assured a new life of peace and fruitful work. With your help, we shall succeed in this task. We trust you —have confidence in us!

(iii) *Order of the Day issued to the Czechoslovak Army by General Krejčí, September 30, 1938.*[1]

Soldiers! The Government of the Czechoslovak Republic has been obliged, under the pressure of world events, to agree to the cession of certain territories of our State to our neighbour the Reich. The Army too associates itself with the deep mourning of the nation at the mutilation of the inheritance of our forbears. If we soldiers have up to now been the protection and the pride of the nation, we must continue to be so in the sad days through which we are now living. Western Europe, including our allies, categorically demands this sacrifice of us so that a world war may be averted.

By the oath which we have taken, we have promised the President of the Republic and its Government absolute obedience in all circumstances. Fate has now called upon us to perform our duty in the most painful circumstances. We are soldiers, and must always be ready to suppress our feelings and to be guided solely and exclusively by cool reason. Cool reason had to

[1] *Prager Presse*, October 1, 1938. Translation.

be the guide, too, of our Commander-in-Chief, the President of the Republic, the Prime Minister, and all the representatives of our State, who, in view of their heavy responsibility, could not allow unnecessary losses, so as not to weaken our State still more. At the head of our State are persons who are among the most prominent of its founders and creators. They have always had our complete confidence, and will have it in the future, for we are convinced that they have done everything which lay within human power.

A true soldier must also be able to endure ill-success. Great and genuine heroism can also manifest itself in this way. Our Army has not been beaten, and has kept its good name wholly untarnished. It must keep it so in the future too. The Republic will still need us, and will require our whole powers. Let us therefore keep cool heads, and close our ranks. We shall keep our oath to the last letter. A manly word is harder than rock. By its preparedness, the Army has even to-day saved the nation from a worse danger. We are firmly convinced that our nation will emerge happily out of the present difficult period. We soldiers will do everything in our power to promote this end. And so our Government and our nation will at all times find us ready for any sacrifice.

(iv) *Extracts from Speech by Herr Hitler, October 4, 1938.*[1]

It was a hard decision which brought me to this place. Behind this decision stood the will, if necessary, to call force to my aid in order to make you free. We wish to be only the happier and the more thankful that this last and gravest appeal was not necessary to procure for us our rights. . . .

I did not know how or by what way I should one day come here. But that I would stand here one day, that I knew! If I now stand before you here, it is not only you who have to thank me, but I would also thank you for your loyalty, your affection, and your readiness for sacrifice.

(v) *Letter of Resignation from President Beneš to General Syrový, October 5, 1938.*[2]

Mr. Prime Minister: The three disturbed years of my presidency reached their culmination in the events of the last few days, events which were inexpressibly sad for us and of great significance for our State. They lacerated the soul, heart, nerves, and reason of us all, but they have not broken our faith or our loyalty to the ideals of our people, nation, and State—ideals which have ever been and will continue to be upheld by the Czechoslovak nation.

These historic events have indeed altered the conditions of the future life and development of our State almost fundamentally. I was so closely

[1] At Karlsbad. Baynes, *op. cit.*, Vol. II, pp. 1529–30.
[2] *Prager Presse*, October 6, 1938. Translation.

bound up with it all that I cannot help wondering what I should do as President of the Republic under these new conditions.

I was elected under very different conditions, and in quite other circumstances, and I cannot overlook this to-day. Circumstances have changed so much that I, as a political figure, might prove a hindrance to the new developments to which our State must now adapt itself, particularly from the international standpoint and considering the need for calm all around us and for the establishment of good relations and co-operation with our neighbours.

We have just succeeded in setting up a Government which will maintain peace and order under the changed conditions, a Government which will strive for economic and social reconstruction, and devote itself above all to internal affairs and general recovery. I believe that its work will be successful.

As regards myself, however, I consider it necessary to accept the consequences of the new situation and to retire from office. This does not mean that I am faithless to my task in a time of trouble or am leaving the bridge of the ship in a heavy storm. I simply desire to facilitate the healthy development of the State and nation in home and foreign affairs. I therefore place my resignation in the hands of the Constitutional authorities and beg you, as Prime Minister, to make the necessary dispositions prescribed by the Constitution. I thank you and your colleagues for all your co-operation and wish that you and all concerned may have real success in your future activities. I firmly believe that better times will shortly come, peaceful times of fruitful work and success for the new State and the whole of our Czechoslovak people.

(vi) *Farewell Broadcast by President Beneš, October 5, 1938.*[1]

I have just sent the Prime Minister a letter resigning my office as President. And now I address myself to you, to take my leave, as President, of you, of our political colleagues, of our splendid soldiers, of the legionaries, and of all those with whom, as President, I have been in touch and with whom I have worked.

I have taken my decision freely and from personal conviction, after consultation with political circles, the Constitutional authorities, and a number of other elements. It was my intention to do this immediately after the Munich decisions. I postponed my action in order to make sure first that there was a more firmly established and permanent Government. And I believe that, in the present circumstances, this step is the right one.

I do not propose to analyse the whole political situation which led me to this decision. I will merely briefly emphasize that the whole system of European balance of power which was created after the war has for some years past become steadily weaker, and in the last three years has essentially

[1] *Prager Presse*, October 6, 1938. Translation.

changed. It has altered to the disadvantage of ourselves and our friends. The Czechoslovak Republic has, in agreement with its friends, sincerely endeavoured for many years to support this system and to modify it gradually by evolutionary means, as this was in its interests. In the last three years, events have moved with unexpected rapidity. We made every possible effort at the time when this development took the form, in our country, of conflict between the nationalities. We made an honest attempt to come to an understanding with the other nationalities, we went to the utmost limit of possible concessions. But foreign influences, and the general European development, caused these affairs to take the form of a serious international dispute, in which we were called upon to defend our frontiers by military action. We did all this with almost unexampled energy, devotion, and self-sacrifice, which earned the respect of all, both friends and opponents. It was clear that the situation might lead to a European and world catastrophe. You know that in these circumstances, the four Great Powers held a meeting and agreed among themselves on the sacrifices which they demanded of us in the interest of world peace, and that we were obliged to accept them.

I will neither analyse these events in detail nor criticize them to-day. And do not expect of me a single word of recrimination against anyone. All that will one day be judged, and rightly estimated, by history. I will only say what we all feel with pain: the sacrifices which were demanded of us with so much urgency are disproportionate, and are not just. The nation will never forget that, even though it endures them with a dignity, calm, and self-confidence which arouse general admiration. This is evidence of the strength of the nation and the moral greatness of its sons and daughters.

I have during this period defended the interests of our State and people, and our former positions in Europe, in accordance with my duty and with complete devotion. They are in error who have not appreciated our hundreds and hundreds of efforts and attempts for the maintenance of peace, the establishment of peaceful co-operation, and the creation of good-neighbourly relations, and our genuine goodwill in trying to arrive at a real understanding with all those around us. But the forces which were opposed to all this proved stronger. I believe that in these circumstances it is good that the new development and the new European co-operation should not be disturbed from our side by there being any appearance that its principal representative might, by his personal attitude, stand in the way of that development. I was elected to my present office in quite other times, and I had to consider whether I could remain in that office under the present changed conditions. As a convinced democrat I believe that I am acting rightly in retiring. It is true that we continue to be democrats, and that we shall continue to co-operate with our former friends, but it is nevertheless necessary to leave the way clear so that our State and people may develop in calm and without disturbance in their new *milieu* and adapt themselves to the new circumstances. That means not parting from old friends, and

trying to win new friends all around. Be calm, objective, and sincere towards all, as I myself have always wished.

Our State has a special national structure. The circumstances are now being greatly changed. A number of causes of dispute with our neighbours have ceased to exist. We shall have a national State, a State of the Czechs and Slovaks, as is in a certain sense indicated by the development of the nationality principle. This will be a great source of strength for our State and for the whole Czechoslovak people. It will give it a great new creative power, and a strong moral basis such as it did not previously possess. Our national culture will be deepened and strengthened. We are still strong and sufficiently numerous. Let us therefore look forward to our national future with hope. The Czechs and Slovaks, owing to their origin, their whole training through many generations, are anything rather than a people who give way to catastrophes. We are a typically sober-minded nation, and just as our good fortune did not make us proud, so we shall not lose our heads in our misfortune. The heroism of work and self-denial which is now our lot is in no way smaller or less worthy than heroism on the field of battle.

The top of the tree of our homeland is cut off, but the roots of the nation are still firm in the soil. Let us go down to the roots, let us concentrate the ancient strength of our stock in them, as we have so often done in our history before. Then the top of the tree will in time put forth new branches. Let us remember that what still remains to us, after all our sacrifices, as the kernel of our homeland, as the inheritance which we must preserve for future generations, is still a possession of eternal worth, and that even now we are still a State, by no means one of the smallest, and a people with a culture which is equal to that of larger nations, and even surpasses that of many nations. All this makes it our duty to hold this our own, original heritage, with a calm and a firm hand.

Dear fellow-citizens and friends, I conclude by making to you all a profound and sincere appeal, which comes from my heart. The homeland of the Czechs and Slovaks is in real danger, and it would be in still greater danger if at this moment we did not all stand together in harmony, in unity, and in the full moral strength of men who are mutually devoted to one another. Above all it is necessary to come to agreement with the Slovaks. They too are in danger. To-day it is not a question of this or that concession. We must mutually give way to one another wherever it is necessary.

I also appeal to all other sections of the population—to the farmers, the workers, the middle classes, the intelligentsia: Maintain calm and harmony, unity and devotion, and mutual love towards one another, for, as Masaryk used to say, all of you who stand on the soil of your homeland belong to the home, the State, and the nation. Lay aside for the time being all your dissensions and the petty interests of the day, and devote all your energies to one aim: to common work for your State and homeland.

I give special thanks to our splendid army. I have devoted all my

attention to it as President, I am with it, and I shall never forget it. I believe in its further successful development and in its future.

I conclude with an expression of my genuine conviction and my profound belief in the enduring strength and firmness of our people; in its energy, persistence, and endurance, and above all in its faith in the ideals of humanity, freedom, law, and justice, for which it has so often fought and suffered, and in the name of which it has always been victorious. I too have fought for them. And I shall remain true to them. I am not leaving the ship in time of storm. But I believe at this moment such a sacrifice is a political necessity, though it does not mean that I forget my duty to continue to work as a citizen and a patriot.

I wish that all of you, and the Republic and the nation, may soon see better days, and that they may grow and bloom again as a glorious branch of the human race and as one of the noblest and finest of European peoples. May you all remain sound, united, and brave.

(vii) *Extracts from Declaration by General Syrový, October 5, 1938.*[1]

Citizens: The discipline which you have shown in the past days of heroic self-denial and readiness for sacrifice is a proof that all of you, without distinction, realize that it is now our task to reconstruct the State. The new Government accordingly appeals to you, citizens, and to you, soldiers, in these difficult times, with full confidence that you will give your devoted and faithful support to the Government's efforts to organize the life of the nation within its new territorial boundaries. The Government appeals to you all, irrespective of party or position, for this collaboration. To-day everyone must work with equal enthusiasm to build up a new, sound, and industrious Czechoslovakia.

The Government will loyally carry out the decision of the four Great Powers at Munich in the belief and the endeavour to protect and safeguard the vital interests of the new State. The principles according to which the Government will guide its foreign policy may be briefly expressed as follows: a friendly relationship to all, and especially towards our neighbours; a relationship which springs from the realization that if we wish to live securely and contentedly we must co-operate with our neighbours.

The boundaries of our State are being altered. We shall live on a smaller territory, but it will be able to maintain us all if we manage to organize our life well from the political, economic, and social point of view, and if we maintain peace and order. For this reason the Government will aim at a suitable new organization of the public administration. We shall endeavour to adapt it to the new conditions and to the extraordinary tasks which face us. We shall organize it in such a way that it rests on all the creative forces of the country, including Slovakia and Ruthenia. . . . In accordance with this principle we shall effect a suitable and far-reaching decentralization,

[1] Broadcast from Czechoslovak stations. *Prager Presse*, October 6, 1938. Translation.

based on co-operation between the central State administration and the autonomous provincial authorities. We regard it as the task of the central State administration to give the initiative and to guide and harmonize the decentralized components. We realize that these tasks can be fulfilled by means of a modernization both of the spirit and of the methods of the public administration, and also its rejuvenation. . . .

Our country is capable of providing employment and food for all its sons and daughters; have no anxiety on that score. Perhaps we shall have to live on a rather more modest scale. The Republic possesses all the requisites for economic life, provided that you all remember that the wealth of the nation and the State is derived from creative work. Peasants, workers, traders, and manufacturers are the fundamental forces of the nation; only if they are sound and strong can commerce flourish.

The guiding principle of the Government's economic policy will be the watchword: Work and bread for all. It will use all the means at its disposal to provide economic life with a firm basis in an ordered and secure currency. The Government will devote all its efforts to this end. It will direct agricultural production in such a way as to correspond to actual needs and the interests of the whole State, its commercial policy, and the necessity of maintaining a balance with industry. We shall create the necessary new branches of industry in a rational and suitable way, and shall endeavour to give them a modern and reasonable organization. We shall develop our communications. In our economic policy we shall base ourselves on facts, we shall continue to consolidate our position in our old markets, we shall seek new markets, and we shall try to establish new connexions which will be useful for our State.

The Government will carry out this work of renovation in a spirit of sincere and uncompromising social justice. It regards this as the safeguard of the State against all upheavals, for in a country where everyone is at work, stronger, healthier, and more contented generations can live and grow up with their families. . . .

I have told you simply and clearly what the Government regards as its duty. I declare to you with equal sincerity that we shall do everything in our power to fulfil the justified demands of Slovakia and Ruthenia. All of us in the Government realize that the new life of the Republic can be based only and solely on brotherhood to the death between Czechs, Slovaks, and Ruthenians. I myself, and all those who stand behind me, understand this brotherhood as equality.

To-day we enter upon a new life. We shall work with all our strength for the well-being of our nation and its national culture. We must make no mistakes. We are laying the foundations of the Czechoslovakia of the future, the country of the Czechs, Slovaks, and Ruthenians, who are bound together by the ties of mutual confidence and complete equality of rights. In this confidence and in mutual fraternal sincerity we shall all march forward together, on a path of tenacious and victorious struggle for the

new fate of the new Czechoslovakia. To-day it is our fatherland that leads us, for we all desire its well-being.

(viii) *Extracts from Speech by Herr Hitler, October 5, 1938.*[1]

. . . What I have achieved in these six years was possible only because I had standing behind me the *whole* German people. The problems which faced us no single man could solve unaided: only when he could speak and, if necessary, also act in the name of the whole German people could he master these questions. We have realized this perhaps most vividly in the months, weeks, and days which lie behind us. On 28 May I set before myself a great purpose. It was at that time a difficult decision. I believed that it could become accomplished fact and I could believe that because I knew: behind me stands the whole German people and it is ready to answer every demand upon it. And this unity is based upon the conception of the German *Volksgemeinschaft*—the community of the people. . . . During the last few months and weeks I have had in my foreign policy a great helper, and previously, in my last speech in this hall,[2] I expressed my thanks to the man who took his stand in support of Germany as a true, great friend, Benito Mussolini. He has thrown into the scale of a just solution the entire force not only of his own genius (*Ingeniums*) but of the power which stands behind him. I must also thank the two other great statesmen who at the last minute recognized the historic hour, declared themselves ready to give their support to the solution of one of Europe's most burning problems and who thereby made it possible for me, too, to offer the hand towards an understanding. But above all my thanks fly to the German people which in these long months has never deserted me. . . . I am proud of my German people! I hope that in a few days the problem of the Sudeten Germans will be finally solved. By 10 October we shall have occupied all the areas which belong to us. Thus one of Europe's most serious crises will be ended, and all of us, not only in Germany but those far beyond our frontiers, will then in this year for the first time really rejoice at the Christmas festival. It should for us all be a true Festival of Peace.

Above us all stands the motto (*Gebot*): 'no one in the world will help us if we do not help ourselves.' This programme of self-help is a proud and manly programme. It is a different programme from that of my predecessors who continually ran round through the world, going a-begging now in Versailles, then in Geneva, now in Lausanne or at some Conference or other elsewhere. It is a prouder thing that to-day we Germans are determined to solve our own problems and to help ourselves. . . .

But now the hour of redemption has come. I have just had my first sight of these areas and what moved me so profoundly was two impressions. First: I have often known the jubilation and the enthusiasm of joy, but here

[1] In Berlin, at the opening of the Winter Help Campaign. Baynes, *op. cit.*, Vol. II, pp. 1530–2.
[2] The Sportpalast. See p. 256.

for the first time I have seen hundreds of thousands shedding tears of joy. And secondly I saw appalling distress. When in England a Duff Cooper or a Mr. Eden say that injustice has been done to the Czechs, then these men should just for once see what in reality has happened there. How can one so pervert the truth! I have seen here whole villages undernourished, whole towns reduced to ruin. My fellow-countrymen, you have a great debt of honour to pay! . . . I expect of you that the Winter Help Contribution of 1938–9 shall correspond with the historic greatness of this year.

In the history of our people the year 1938 will be a great, incomparable, proud year. . . . Later historians will show that the German nation found its way back again to the position of an honourable great nation—that our history has once more become a worthy history. . . . We know that all human activity needs for its final success the blessing of Providence, but we also know that this Providence gives its approval only to those who show that they are worthy of it.

(ix) *Extracts from Official Czechoslovak Broadcast, October 7, 1938.*[1]

. . . Our public is already aware of the consequences which follow from the agreement of the great Powers at Munich on September 29 according to which the occupation of predominantly German territories of the Czechoslovak Republic by German troops was decided on. The first three stages of the occupation were carried out by October 5. The occupation of the Moravian-Silesian zone began to-day and is to be completed to-morrow. The fixing of the remaining zones of occupation was carried out yesterday by the representatives of the four great Powers, France, Italy, Great Britain, and Germany, who sit on the Berlin International Commission. Their decision was taken in accordance with Article 4 of the Four-Power Agreement of Munich, which states that the occupation of all the districts with a German majority is to be carried out by October 10. The Munich Agreement laid down the majority principle in general terms only, and said nothing about the question whether the present, or an earlier, or the pre-war position should be taken as the basis for the decision. The representatives of the great Powers interpreted the Munich provisions in the sense that the position in 1918 was to be decisive for the determination of the zones of occupation, and that accordingly the figures of the 1910 census were to be the basis for the national delimitation. . . .[2]

The line which has been fixed is not the final frontier line; this will only be determined later by the International Delimitation Commission. Under the Munich Agreement the Commission will be entitled to recommend to the four Powers minor modifications of the line of occupation. . . .

This approximate line of occupation was presented to the Czechoslovak representatives on the Berlin Commission as a decision already agreed upon by all four representatives of the great Powers. Notwithstanding all our

[1] *Prager Presse*, October 7, 1938. Translation. [2] Details of the line of occupation followed.

objections and protests, no changes were made in it. The demand for the handing over of this Czechoslovak territory to the troops of the German army up to the line fixed was made by the representatives of the four great Powers in the form of an ultimatum with a short time-limit. All that could be secured was an assurance that the railway administrations of Czechoslovakia and of the German Reich should come to an agreement concerning the maintenance of traffic over the parts of the railway system which are cut by the lines of occupation. . . .

(x) *Extracts from Speech by Herr Hitler, October 9, 1938.*[1]

. . . At the beginning of this, the twentieth year after our collapse, I formed the resolution to lead back into the Reich the ten million Germans who still stood outside our frontiers. I was fully aware that this return could be enforced only through our own strength. The rest of the world had neither seen nor wished to see that in opposition to the so-called right of self-determination of peoples ten million Germans were separated from the German Reich and were oppressed because of their loyalty to Germany.[2] And this outside world had neither understood nor wished to understand that these folk had only a single great longing: Back to the Reich! These international citizens of the world, who have indeed pity for every criminal who is called to account in Germany, were deaf to the suffering of ten million Germans. And still to-day this world is filled with the spirit of Versailles. Let no man tell us that they have freed themselves. No! it is Germany which has freed herself from that spirit!

A hard decision had to be made: even with us there were weaklings who perhaps had failed to understand that. But it is a matter of course that at all times it was for real statesmen an obligation of honour to accept such a responsibility. There were a number of necessary conditions if this solution were to be effected:

1. The internal unity of the nation. I was convinced when I formed my decision that I was the leader of a manly people. I know what perhaps [? many] in the rest of the world and individuals also in Germany do not seem to know: that the people of 1938 is not the people of 1918. Nobody can overlook the mighty educational work which our *Weltanschauung* has achieved. To-day a community of the people has arisen of a force and a strength such as Germany has never yet known. That was the first condition for the success of such a struggle as this.

2. The second was national armament to which I have fanatically devoted my energies for nearly six years.[3] I am of the opinion that it is cheaper to arm oneself before the event than unarmed to fall a victim to events and then pay tribute.

[1] At Saarbrücken. Baynes, *op. cit.*, Vol. II, pp. 1533–7.

[2] German: *wegen ihres Deutschtums.* (Note by Professor Baynes.)

[3] German: *für die ich mich nun seit bald sechs Jahren fanatisch eingesetzt habe.* Note the words *seit sechs Jahren.* (Note by Professor Baynes.)

3. The third condition was the safeguarding of the Reich. You yourselves in this place are witnesses of a vast work which is being brought to completion in your immediate neighbourhood. I do not need to say anything on that point in detail. I have only to express one conviction: that no power in the world will ever succeed in breaking through this wall.

4. We have also won friends abroad. That axis which in other lands people at times thought that they could ridicule has not only, in the last two and a half years, proved its permanence but has shown that it holds even in the worst hours.

We are fortunate that this work of the year 1938—the reincorporation of ten million Germans and of some 110,000 square kilometres into the Reich —could be achieved without bloodshed. When I mention the co-operation of the rest of the world in this peaceful solution, I must once more speak first of all of the one true friend whom we possess to-day—Benito Mussolini. We all know what we owe to this man. I would also call to mind the two other statesmen who exerted themselves to find a way to peace and who with us have concluded that agreement which for many millions of Germans has secured their rights and for the world has safeguarded peace. But it is precisely the experiences of the last eight months which can and must only strengthen us in our decision to be cautious and to neglect nothing which must be done for the protection of the Reich.

[*Attack on British Statesmen*]

The statesmen who are opposed to us wish for peace—that we must believe of them. But they govern in countries whose domestic organization makes it possible that at any moment they may lose their position to make place for others who are not very anxious for peace. And those others are in fact there. It only needs that in England instead of Chamberlain Mr. Duff Cooper or Mr. Eden or Mr. Churchill should come to power, and then we know quite well that it would be the aim of these men immediately to begin a new World War. They make no secret of the fact: they admit it openly. We know further that now, as in the past, there lurks in the background the menacing figure of that Jewish-international foe who has found a basis and a form for himself in a State turned Bolshevist. And we know further the power of a certain international Press which lives only on lies and slanders. That obliges us to be watchful and to remember the protection of the Reich. At any time ready for peace, but at every hour also ready to defend ourselves!

I have therefore decided, as I announced in my speech at Nuremberg, to continue the construction of our fortifications in the West with increased energy. I shall now also bring within the line of these fortifications the two large areas which up to the present lay in front of our fortifications—the district of Aachen and the district of Saarbrücken. I am happy, further, to state that during the next few days I shall be able to revoke those measures which we had to introduce during the months and weeks of crisis. Then,

I am glad to say, all the hundreds of thousands of our men will be able to return once more to their homes and our reservists can be discharged. I thank them for the way in which they carried out their service and did their duty. . . .

[*Complaints of British Interference*]

As a powerful State we are at any time ready for a policy of understanding with our neighbours. We have no demands to make of them. We want nothing but peace. There is only one thing that we want and that applies particularly to our relations with England. It would be a good thing if in Great Britain people would gradually drop certain airs[1] which they have inherited from the Versailles epoch. We cannot tolerate any longer the tutelage of governesses! Inquiries of British politicians concerning the fate of Germans within the frontiers of the Reich—or of others belonging to the Reich—are not in place. We for our part do not trouble ourselves about similar things in England. The outside world might often have reason enough to concern itself with its own national affairs or, for instance, with affairs in Palestine. We at any rate leave that to those who feel themselves ordained by the good God to solve these problems, and we can only observe with astonishment how pat they are with their solutions. We would like to give to all these gentlemen the advice that they should busy themselves with their own affairs and leave us in peace! That, too, is part of the safeguarding of world-peace. We have great tasks before us. Vast cultural and economic problems must be solved. No people has greater need of peace than we, but no people knows better than we what it means to be weak, to be delivered over to the favour or disfavour of others.

My fellow-countrymen, in this year a great national work of unification has been completed: the re-establishment of a proud, strong, and free German Reich. You yourselves here have had to share in so much suffering that you will understand my anxiety for the future of this Reich—will understand why I call upon the whole German people always to be on their guard and ready for whatever may come. It is like a miracle that in so few years we should be able to experience a new German resurrection. It might have been so different. We want always to remember that; it should reinforce our resolution to serve this people. Every man of us and every woman must subordinate all personal interests the moment that the greater interest of our people and Reich demands the sacrifice. . . .

(x) *Communiqué issued after the Meeting of the International Commission set up under the Munich Agreement, October 13, 1938.*[2]

The International Commission for the settlement of the Sudeten German question met this afternoon. It confirmed that the final delimitation of the Sudeten German territory to be ceded to Germany can be made on the

[1] German: *Allüren.* (Note by Professor Baynes.)
[2] *Prager Presse*, October 14, 1938. Translation.

basis of the line fixed by the Commission on October 5, with whatever alterations the Commission may recommend in accordance with the text of Article 6 of the Munich Agreement. In these circumstances the Commission decided unanimously that plebiscites may be dispensed with. The Commission took note of the agreement reached between the German and Czechoslovak Governments to the effect that work on the rectification and final delimitation of the frontier on the basis of the above-mentioned line should be put in hand at once.

The Commission further took note of the setting up of the German-Czechoslovak Commission, provided for in Article 7 of the Munich Agreement, which is to regulate the exercise of the right of option.

Finally, the International Commission took note of the report of the Economic Sub-Committee, and noted with satisfaction the considerable progress made up to now in the solution of pending questions.

(xii) *The British Legion's Offer of Services.*[1]

(a) *Extracts from Communiqué issued by the Foreign Office, October 3, 1938.*[2]

The British Legion recently offered to place its entire organization at the disposal of his Majesty's Government for any service that might be required in connexion with the settlement to be arrived at in Czechoslovakia. His Majesty's Government, in accepting that offer, have decided to ask the Legion to make itself responsible for providing a force of 1,000 volunteer police, for special duties in the plebiscite areas.

This is in accordance with the policy of the Legion, which is to work for the peaceful solution of international difficulties. The British Legion is an organization which is specially suitable to carry out those duties, because of the close and friendly contact it has established in recent years with the ex-Service men of all European countries.

The men selected will appreciate that a heavy responsibility rests on each and every one of them, and a peaceful settlement to some extent will depend upon the manner in which they perform their duties.

Volunteers will be specially selected ex-Service men, officers and other ranks, and must be physically fit for police duties. The probable duration of service is six to eight weeks. Any previous experience in such duties would be of value, as also a knowledge of the German language. . . .

The British Legion appreciates the importance of making the selection for this service in such a way as to ensure that it will not cause the removal of men engaged on essential work of national importance, or men whose services are indispensable for the carrying on of the business in which they are employed and whose services cannot be replaced.

His Majesty's Government specially appeals to employers of labour to ensure that employment shall be available to the men on their return, and

[1] See also p. 272.

[2] *The Times*, October 4, 1938.

employers are asked to release men on this understanding. The Ministry of Labour and the British Legion have been in touch with the National Confederation of Employers' Organizations on the subject, and the Confederation are communicating with their members to enlist their full co-operation and support for the arrangements.

(b) *Extract from Letter from the Rt. Hon. Viscount Halifax, Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, to the British Legion Volunteer Police Force on their disbandment, published October 17, 1938.*[1]

Sir; As you will be aware, the International Commission in Berlin decided on October 13 that it would be unnecessary to have recourse to plebiscites in order to settle the new frontier between Germany and Czechoslovakia. In these circumstances the services which you so generously offered will not be called upon.

Before you return home I wish to thank you one and all in the name of His Majesty's Government for your action in coming forward voluntarily and so promptly for this duty in Czechoslovlakia. . . .

(xiii) *Protocol determining the Frontier between Germany and Czechoslovakia, November 21, 1938.*[2]

The International Commission has to-day taken note of the Protocol of the 20th November regarding the determination of the German-Czechoslovak frontier by the German and Czechoslovak delegations and also of the maps attached to that protocol. It lays down that the frontier traced on these maps is the final frontier in accordance with Article 6 of the Munich Agreement.

KARL RITTER.
B. ATTOLICO.
GEORGE OGILVIE-FORBES.
DE MONTBAS.
MASTNY.

Berlin, November 21, 1938.

(xiv) *Autonomy of Slovakia and Ruthenia.*

(a) *Extracts from Communiqué issued after the Meeting of the Club of Deputies and Senators belonging to the Slovak National Party, September 19, 1938.*[3]

. . . We have not, and have not had, either a written or a verbal agreement concerning collaboration with non-Slovak political parties. We believe in the strength of our people and the victory of its rights. . . .

[1] A copy was given to each member of the force. *The Times*, October 17, 1938.
[2] Translation published in British Government Command Paper, Cmd. 5908.
[3] *Prager Presse*, September 20, 1938. Translation.

[The following demands were put forward:]

1. Complete respect for the individual character of the Slovak people and the Slovak language.

2. Immediate and final settlement of the Slovak question on the basis of the Pittsburgh Agreement and the latest Parliamentary proposal of the Slovak National Party, with a legislative Provincial Assembly for Slovakia.

. . . As a Christian people we deprecate all attempts at a violent and bloody solution of the problem of nationalities in the State. We express our deep conviction that in the end a satisfactory relation between the Czechs and the Slovaks will be obtained, and with it a strengthening of the Czechoslovak State both at home and abroad. We desire a free and contented people, an autonomous and happy Slovakia, and a consolidated Czechoslovak Republic. God help us!

(*b*) *Extract from Joint Declaration adopted by the Representatives of the Slovak Parties, October 6, 1938.*[1]

1. The signatories of this declaration adopt the proposal of the Slovak People's Party for the promulgation of a Constitutional Act on the Autonomy of Slovakia, as introduced in the Chamber of Deputies in 1938 and published in *Slovák*, No. 129, of June 5, 1938. We undertake to make every effort to ensure that this draft shall be adopted, in accordance with the Constitution, not later than October 28, 1938. The constitutional adoption of this draft will definitely settle the situation of Slovakia from the standpoint of public law.

2. The Government and executive authority in Slovakia should at once be placed in the hands of the Slovak Government. We accordingly propose that for the time being, Deputy Jozef Tiso, Vice-President of the Slovak People's Party, as future President, should be asked, in agreement with the undersigned political parties, to constitute the first Slovak Government, consisting of the President and four ministerial members, and propose it for appointment. . . .

(*c*) *Extract from Czechoslovak Official Broadcast, October 6, 1938.*[2]

. . . To-day the Government of the Republic, on the basis of Article 60 of the Constitution, appointed the acting President of the Slovak People's Party, Dr. Jozef Tiso, as Minister with full powers for Slovakia, and asked for his proposals for the appointment of a few more Slovak Ministers. . . .

(*d*) *Introductory Clause of the Constitutional Act concerning the Autonomy of Slovakia, November 22, 1938.*[3]

In view of the fact that the Czecho-Slovak Republic came into existence by agreement of the sovereign will of two peoples of equal status, and that

[1] At a Conference of the Slovak political parties held at Žilina. *Prager Presse*, October 7, 1938. Translation.

[2] *Prager Presse*, October 7, 1938. Translation. [3] *Prager Presse*, November 25, 1938. Translation.

full autonomy was secured to the Slovak people by the Pittsburgh Agreement as well as in other agreements and proclamations both in the country and elsewhere, and with the object of giving a common direction to the Slovak and the Czech people in the spirit of the Agreement of Žilina, the Czecho-slovak National Assembly has adopted the Constitutional Act concerning the Autonomy of Slovakia.

(xv) *Polish Claims.*

(a) Extract from Statement by M. Krofta, Czechoslovak Minister for Foreign Affairs, May 20, 1938.[1]

. . . Quant à la minorité polonaise de Tchécoslovaquie qui compte, d'après le recensement de 1930, 81,000 âmes, elle est la moins nombreuse des minorités de notre Etat. Mais le régime tchécoslovaque ne fait pas dépendre le traitement des minorités de leur plus ou moins grande force numérique.

Tout comme les minorités allemandes et magyares, considérablement plus nombreuses, la minorité polonaise jouit des mêmes droits que garantit aux nationalités la Constitution tchécoslovaque. Elle a toutes facultés pour se développer librement dans les domaines politique, culturel et économique et elle participera aussi, dans la même mesure que les autres minorités, aux avantages que comportera le statut des nationalités actuellement en préparation.

Nous espérons que dans l'avenir des rapports entre la Pologne et la Tchécoslovaquie, la conviction s'imposera de nouveau que, comme dans le passé historique, les intérêts communs des deux Etats recommandent de revenir à une entente sincère et à une étroite collaboration. . . .

(b) Statement issued by the Polish Embassy in London, May 21, 1938.[2]

The Polish Embassy desires to deny reports regarding the alleged movements and concentrations of troops along the border adjoining Czecho-slovakia, as well as rumours concerning Marshal Smigly-Rydz's stay in the vicinity of the frontier in connexion with the supposed concentration. The Embassy is authorized to state that the news is false in every respect and devoid of any foundation.

(c) Communiqué of the Czechoslovak Government, October 1, 1938.[3]

The Government of the Republic held a sitting to-day at the castle in Prague over which the President of the Republic presided, and at which the Polish Government Note of September 30, containing the demand in the form of an ultimatum for the cession of a part of the Teschen district,

[1] In an interview given to the Special Correspondent of *Le Soir* (Brussels) in Prague. *Journal des Nations*, May 27, 1938.

[2] *Sunday Times*, May 22, 1938.

[3] *Prager Presse*, October 2, 1938. Translation.

was carefully considered. In consideration of the grave international situation, and under stress of the circumstances arising out of the Munich decision, the Government could not do other than decide to accept the Polish propositions. This grave decision was taken by the Government with the full consent of the responsible representatives of the political parties. It did so, knowing that any other decision would have led to new and serious complications.

(*d*) *Extracts from Broadcast by Colonel Beck, Polish Minister for Foreign Affairs, October 1, 1938.*[1]

. . . Un important fait marque la journée du ler octobre: une vieille terre polonaise revient à la mère patrie.

Il convient de rappeler ici les bases de la politique étrangère polonaise: avant-hier, une Société des nations pouvait rêver de gouverner le monde; hier, c'était une conférence internationale; aujourd'hui le problème du retour de toute une région polonaise s'impose à la Pologne. . . . Dès le moment où ce problème fut posé avec réalisme, tous les coeurs battirent à l'unison, consolidant les forces de la nation.

Nous ne voulons nuire à personne. L'opinion polonaise, qui se base sur le sentiment du droit et de la justice, ne reconnaît, quand il le faut, aucun compromis.

Je suis convaincu que nous comprenons tous que le retour des terres polonaises à la mère patrie n'est pas un triomphe superficiel. C'est la réalisation du devoir qui incombait aux citoyens de la République polonaise.

(xvi) *Hungarian Claims.*

(*a*) *Hungarian Official Communiqué concerning the Hungarian Démarche of September 26, 1938.*[2]

Our Ambassador at Prague, on the instructions of the Hungarian Government, to-day communicated the views of the Hungarian Government on the Czechoslovak question to the Foreign Minister, M. Krofta, in the following terms:

'The Hungarian Government would regard any differentiation in the practical application of the right of self-determination of nationalities and of the principle of equality of rights, if made to the disadvantage of the Hungarian nationality, as an unfriendly attitude.'

The Hungarian Government further expressed the view that the best method of ensuring a peaceful development would be if the Hungarian problem were settled simultaneously with the German problem.

[1] *Le Temps*, October 3, 1938. [2] *Pester Lloyd*, September 29, 1938. Translation.

(*b*) *Extracts from Broadcast by Dr. Imrédy, Hungarian Prime Minister, October 1, 1938.*[1]

My Hungarian brothers: Gigantic forces have wrestled together on the stage of history. The whole world has watched with bated breath the headlong course of events. And just when it seemed that nothing could now avert the fatal clash between those forces, a miracle was worked, within thirty-six hours, by the firm determination, wisdom, and sincere vision of a few men. They found a way out of the apparently insoluble situation; a way out which truly deserves the designation 'peaceful', for it does not bear in it the deadly germ of corruption and transiency, but serves the only possible basis for lasting peace—that of justice.

And if the whole world rejoiced at being relieved of this nightmare, so also does this nation rejoice. It was not in vain that the god of history set us down here on the highway from east to west, where the nation has so often shed its heart's blood so that others, more favoured by destiny, might enjoy the blessings of peace; for we now see the dawn of a brighter, better world shining from the pages of the Munich peace document.

What interests us Hungarians primarily is the fate of Hungary, and if we look at the way in which that fate has been moulded during the last few days and also look forward into the future, we find ourselves confronted with two questions . . . Has the Munich decision produced any result from the Hungarian point of view, and are we Hungarians satisfied with that decision?

Has the Munich decision produced any result? It has, indeed, . . . and a great one. This great result is that four European great Powers have stated under their seal and signature that, in the new settlement of the fate of the nationalities living in Czechoslovakia, Hungary's just claims arise and must be satisfied, and the injustice caused twenty years ago . . . in the formation of this State rectified. We should not underestimate this result, which only a few months ago we hardly dared to envisage, and we rightly welcome it as a first step. . . . It is certain that a foreign policy which has given this country two powerful friends and has been instrumental in bringing those two friends together has not been fruitless. It was the unanimous support of these two powerful and friendly nations, on whom we can also confidently rely in the future, which secured for us this important result. Every Hungarian owes sincere thanks to the leaders of these two nations, those two men of steel, whose determined action, stupendous will-power, and dynamic energy have forcibly introduced a new and vital current into the quagmire of European politics.

There remains the second question: Are we Hungarians satisfied? I can say plainly: we are not satisfied. No Hungarian can be satisfied until that full justice, in whose name the fate of the nationalities living in Czechoslovakia must be settled, and towards which the first step has been taken at Munich, has been fully done in relation to Hungary also.

[1] *Pester Lloyd*, October 2, 1938. Translation.

The Hungarian attitude towards the settlement of the Czechoslovak question was from the first based unswervingly on clear, simple, and unassailable principles, namely, that the settlement of the fate of the nationalities living in Czechoslovakia must be based on the right of self-determination and equality of treatment. We cannot consent to any differentiation that would be to our disadvantage. This is the principle by which we have been guided hitherto, and we shall continue to be so guided until the question is solved. Let everyone take note that no obstacle will deter us from upholding this standpoint. Hungary's policy has given numerous proofs of its desire to attain its end by peaceful means. But peaceful intentions are not synonymous with impotent resignation. The road leading to our goal may be likened to a narrow mountain ridge with yawning abysses to right and to left of it. On the one side is the abyss of irresponsible adventure; on the other, that of cowardly renunciation. I know that we have so far been able to proceed along this narrow path without hesitation or giddiness, and my faith in the nation's star tells me that we shall continue along that path. We reached that house of refuge, the Munich negotiations, by a difficult road, and now we are again treading that arduous and toilsome path. I know that a nation is behind us. The responsibility of keeping on the right path is enormous, and I know that, if we are to reach the goal, we must now follow a single path. . . .

(c) *Hungarian Official Communiqué concerning the Hungarian Note of October 2, 1938.*[1]

The Hungarian Government has presented a Note to the Czechoslovak Government through the Hungarian Ambassador at Prague demanding the immediate opening of negotiations with Hungary by the Prague Government, in the spirit of the Munich decisions, for the purpose of applying the right of self-determination of the nationalities on lines identical with those followed in solving the Sudeten German question.

The Czechoslovak Foreign Minister, Dr. Krofta, has so far only made comments of a personal nature on the Note, but these suggest that the Czechoslovak Government for its part is also aware of the necessity for prompt action.

(d) *Joint Official Communiqué by the Hungarian and Czechoslovak Governments on the Opening of Negotiations at Komárno, October 9, 1938.*[2]

The Hungarian and Czechoslovak delegations began their negotiations on October 8 at 7.0 p.m. After an interchange of greetings, opinions were exchanged on certain preliminary questions, in the course of which the representatives of the Czechoslovak Government gave their consent—in token of their confidence in the successful outcome of the negotiations—to the following transfers: the railway station at Sátoraljaujhely (Slovenske

[1] *Pester Lloyd*, October 3, 1938. Translation. [2] *Pester Lloyd*, October 11, 1938. Translation.

Nove Mesto), until now in Czechoslovak hands, to be handed over to the Hungarian authorities within 24 hours from midnight, October 9, and the town of Ipolyság (Sahy) likewise to be handed over within 36 hours from the same hour. In connexion with the surrender of the station at Sátoraljaujhely the Hungarian delegation agreed to the Czechoslovak delegation's proposal that the station should remain open for through traffic, with the exception of heavy armament transport.

The two delegations then began their negotiations on the question of substance, and during these the leader of the Hungarian delegation presented the Hungarian demands. The Czechoslovak delegation asked for a sufficient time in which to consider these, and negotiations will presumably be resumed early in the afternoon of October 10.

Both delegations hope that the commencement of negotiations will have a calming effect upon public opinion and particularly on the population of the districts concerned, who will await with composure the development of the discussions.

(e) *Declaration by M. de Kánya, Hungarian Minister for Foreign Affairs, breaking off the Komárno negotiations, October 13, 1938.*[1]

As we have already repeatedly declared, we came here with the best and most sincere intentions and in the confident hope that in the negotiations at Komárom it would prove possible to arrive within a very short time at an agreement which would establish the relation between our States on a secure basis. Unfortunately this hope of ours has not been fulfilled. We do not wish to refer once more to certain unfavourable phenomena, as we have repeatedly done so in the course of the negotiations, but we must particularly emphasize that the counter-proposals which were handed to us this morning concerning our new frontiers differ so greatly from our views that the gap between the standpoints of the two delegations regarding the new settlement is so wide that we are convinced there can be no hope of bridging it by these negotiations. For this reason the Royal Hungarian Government has decided, for its part, to regard the present negotiations as broken off, and to ask the four Powers signatory to the Munich Agreement for the earliest possible settlement of our territorial claims against Czechoslovakia.

(f) *Statement by Colonel Beck, Polish Minister for Foreign Affairs, October 18, 1938.*[2]

The Polish Government's interest in the question of Ruthenia is explained by the geographical situation and the historical experiences of Poland. Poland's attitude towards the Czech and the Slovak nation is characterized

[1] The Hungarian delegation left Komárno immediately after making this declaration. *Pester Lloyd*, October 14, 1938. Translation.

[2] To the Warsaw representative of the Stefani Agency, before leaving for Rumania. *Pester Lloyd*, October 19, 1938. Translation.

by positive sympathy, provided that we consider the rights and the independent existence as a State of the Czech and of the Slovak nation separately from one another, within the particular boundaries of each nation. Poland's attitude towards Hungary is traditionally friendly and this remains unchanged. The Polish Government is convinced that so long as Hungary's justified demands are not fulfilled, no orderly settlement is possible. It was a misfortune for the Czech State (*Tscheschei*) that it allowed itself to be used as a political instrument by other States. In the present situation there are some who would like to have it believed that there are tendencies to reorganize the Danubian area on an exclusive political basis. Some even speak of erecting a protective wall against this or that nation. Poland's efforts are not directed against any other nation. Poland desires a sound and lasting organization of the Danube area, and a peaceful and final settlement which will put an end to this crisis once and for all.

(*g*) *Extracts from Statement by Dr. Imrédy, Hungarian Prime Minister, October 24, 1938.*[1]

. . . The Hungarian Government informed the Czechoslovak delegation at Komárom (Komárno) . . . that Hungary would not be in a position to undertake a guarantee if she had no certainty that the remaining territory of Czechoslovakia and the form of the State corresponded to the desire of the nationalities remaining within its borders. . . .

We do not abandon the hope that it will prove possible to settle the question by peaceful means on the basis of the principles which were laid down at Munich, and which the Hungarians have from the beginning kept before their eyes. If, however, the situation should take such a turn that our genuinely peaceful proposals could not for any reason be accepted, then the Hungarian Government maintains unchanged its resolve to secure its rights with all the means which are at the disposal of the nation. . . .

(*h*) *Note of the Czechoslovak Government, October 26, 1938.*[2]

The Czechoslovak Government has submitted the Hungarian Government's proposals, which Your Excellency kindly communicated to me together with your letter No. 39 of October 24 of this year, to a careful and intensive scrutiny.

The Czechoslovak Government permits itself to emphasize once more that the present negotiations can only deal with the question of the Hungarian minorities. Since points 1 and 2 of the Protocol to the Munich Agreement of September 29, 1938, mention only the Hungarian and Polish minorities, other ethnical questions must remain outside the scope of the present negotiations. As to the question of the Hungarian minority, the Czechoslovak Government is still inspired by the sincere desire to bring about a

[1] At a Press conference. *Pester Lloyd*, October 25, 1938. Translation.
[2] *Pester Lloyd*, October 27, 1938. Translation.

just, speedy, and complete solution. To this end it submitted proposals on October 22 which concerned the whole of the self-contained Hungarian national territory. These proposals were submitted as providing a general basis for the renewed negotiations, while the possibility of subsequent modifications was reserved.

As these proposals did not prove acceptable to the Hungarian Government, the Czechoslovak Government is willing to have the question of the Hungarian minority left to the arbitration of Germany and Italy as signatories to the Munich Agreement. The question of calling in other arbitrators should be left to the discretion of these two Powers. Should they accept the Hungarian Government's proposal with respect to Poland, the Czechoslovak Government would propose that Rumania should likewise take part in the arbitration.

The manner and time-limits of the evacuation by Czechoslovak troops and authorities of the territories to be transferred, and of their occupation by Hungarian troops and authorities, should be fixed by the arbitral award. The Czechoslovak Government proposes that a committee composed of Czechoslovak and Hungarian military experts should meet at once to prepare for and expedite the carrying out of the necessary measures.

(*i*) *Extracts from Speech by Mgr. Vološín, Minister for the Administration of Ruthenia, October 26, 1938.*[1]

. . . We stand for the integrity of the ethnographic frontiers of Ruthenia in the sense unanimously decided upon by the Ukrainian National Council at its last meeting. The Ukrainian National Council at that time adopted the following resolution: 'We stand for an ethnographic settlement of the frontiers between Hungary and Ruthenia. We decisively reject any form of plebiscite, as the political allegiance of Ruthenia has already been definitely settled. We are in favour of the federal form of the State of the Czechs, Slovaks, and Ukrainians (Ruthenians).' . . .

I call upon the entire population of Ruthenia, without distinction, to maintain calm and order. . . .

(*j*) *Note of the Hungarian Government, October 27, 1938.*[2]

The Royal Hungarian Government regrets that the Government of the Czechoslovak Republic maintains complete silence on the question of the plebiscites proposed by the Hungarian Government. The Hungarian Government is the more surprised by this attitude on the part of the Government of the Czechoslovak Republic because its proposal was in complete accordance with the spirit of the Munich Agreement by which the Government of the Czechoslovak Republic has consented to be guided in its previous negotiations.

[1] At Užhorod, on his appointment after the dismissal of M. Bródy. *Pester Lloyd*, October 27, 1938. Translation.

[2] *Pester Lloyd*, October 28, 1938. Translation.

The Government of the Republic maintained, in the above-mentioned Note, that 'the present[1] negotiations can only deal with the question of the Hungarian minorities,' since 'points 1 and 2 of the Protocol to the Munich Agreement of September 29, 1938, mention only the Hungarian and Polish minorities.' Admitting that these provisions make textual mention of Germans, Poles, and Hungarians only, it is nevertheless indisputable that the said provisions laid down the right to self-determination of peoples as the basis for the reconstruction of the Czechoslovak Republic. It follows, therefore, that the right to determine their own destiny by means of a plebiscite cannot be denied to minorities which wish to avail themselves of that right. The Hungarian Government feels itself obliged to maintain its standpoint, while regretting the opposed standpoint adopted by the Government of the Republic.

The Czechoslovak Government, in the above-mentioned Note, expresses its willingness to recognize Germany and Italy as arbitrators, and this, in the view of the Hungarian Government, implies the obligation to conform to the award of the said Powers from the outset.

The competence of the arbitrators extends, naturally, only to the disputed territories and not to those territories regarding which an agreement between the two Governments already exists, and the occupation of which by Hungarian troops was proposed in the Note of October 24.

The Hungarian Government considers that the question of the constitution of the court of arbitration and its activities should be left to the great Powers concerned.

As regards the proposal that 'the manner and the time-limits of the evacuation by Czechoslovak troops and authorities of the territories to be transferred, and of their occupation by Hungarian troops and authorities, should be fixed by the arbitral award,' this can in the opinion of the Hungarian Government be applied only to the disputed areas.

For this reason the Hungarian Government is willing to agree to the proposal that direct discussion between Hungarian and Czechoslovak experts should begin at once with a view to preparing for and expediting the carrying out of all the measures necessary for the purpose. To this end the Hungarian military attaché in Prague is entering into direct communication with the appropriate Czechoslovak military authorities.

The Royal Hungarian Government is pleased to note that the Czechoslovak Government is inspired by the sincere desire to bring about a just, speedy, and complete solution. The Hungarian Government begs to remind the Government of the Czechoslovak Republic that it has, from the outset of the negotiations, attached the greatest importance to the speediest possible solution of the territorial questions at issue between the two States and refuses all responsibility for the consequences which may ensue from any delay in the negotiations.

[1] The Czechoslovak Note printed above (p. 348) used the word 'present' (*gegenwärtige*); the Hungarian Note says 'up to the present' (*bisherige*).

(*k*) *Award in the Dispute between Hungary and Czechoslovakia, given at Vienna, November 2, 1938.*[1]

On the basis of the request addressed to the German and the Royal Italian Governments by the Royal Hungarian and Czechoslovak Governments to arbitrate in the dispute between them concerning the districts to be ceded to Hungary, and on the basis of the notes which were accordingly exchanged between the Governments concerned on October 30, 1938, the German Reich Minister for Foreign Affairs, Herr Joachim von Ribbentrop, and the Minister for Foreign Affairs of His Majesty the King of Italy and Emperor of Ethiopia, Count Galeazzo Ciano, met in Vienna to-day and, after further discussion with the Royal Hungarian Minister for Foreign Affairs, M. Koloman de Kánya, and the Czechoslovak Minister for Foreign Affairs, Dr. Franz Chvalkovský, formulated the following award:

1. The districts to be ceded by Czechoslovakia to Hungary are shown on the attached map. The demarcation of the frontier on the spot will be entrusted to a Hungarian-Czechoslovak Commission.

2. The evacuation of the districts to be ceded by Czechoslovakia and their occupation by Hungary shall begin on November 5, 1938, and must be completed by November 10. The various stages of the evacuation and occupation, and other detailed arrangements regarding it, shall be settled by a Hungarian-Czechoslovak Commission without delay.

3. The Czechoslovak Government shall see to it that the districts to be evacuated are left in good order.

4. Questions of detail arising out of the cession of territory, including questions of nationality and option, shall be settled by a Hungarian-Czechoslovak Commission.

5. A Hungarian-Czechoslovak Commission shall also deal with detailed provisions concerning the protection of persons of Magyar racial origin remaining on Czechoslovak territory, and persons of non-Magyar racial origin remaining in the ceded districts. This Commission shall, in particular, see that the Magyar national group in Pressburg [2] has the same status as the other national groups there.

6. In so far as the cession of the districts to Hungary causes economic or transport disadvantages or difficulties for the remaining territory of Czechoslovakia, the Royal Hungarian Government shall do its utmost to remove these disadvantages or difficulties in agreement with the Czechoslovak Government.

7. If any difficulties or doubts arise in the carrying out of this award, the Royal Hungarian and Czechoslovak Governments shall settle them by direct negotiations. If they are unable to agree on any question, the question shall be submitted to the German and Royal Italian Governments for final decision.

Vienna, November 2, 1938.

(*Signed*) JOACHIM VON RIBBENTROP. GALEAZZO CIANO.

[1] *Frankfurter Zeitung* and *Il Giornale d'Italia*, November 4, 1938. Translation. [2] Bratislava.

(*l*) *Extracts from Broadcast by Dr. Tiso, President of the Slovak Government, November 2, 1938.*[1]

To all inhabitants of Slovakia!

Citizens, the fate of the Slovak people came into Slovak hands at the moment when the policy pursued for the last twenty years had brought the State to a severe crisis, primarily in the international sphere. The Slovak Government was only able to save what could still be saved for the Slovak nation. This is shown by the words of the Reich Minister for Foreign Affairs, Herr von Ribbentrop, who said to me to-day in Vienna, among other things: 'Munich saved you Slovaks from a catastrophe, from complete dismemberment and breaking up. Without the Munich Agreement, all the interested parties would have fallen on you and dismembered you. What you have to-day, you owe to the Munich Agreement.'

We had to make every effort in the international sphere to secure for the Slovak people a territorial basis of such a kind that we could develop satisfactorily in every respect. We justifiably hoped that we should succeed in obtaining a settlement which would be just from the ethnic point of view, and that the Slovak-Hungarian frontier would be fixed in the spirit of the Munich Agreement. Well, that has not altogether happened. The chief responsibility for this falls on those politicians who for the last twenty years have decided our fate without our participation or consent. Thus we have become the victims of injustice. For this reason our people, through no fault of its own, has been treated as an object, and has come into a situation when it was disposed of as happens to a defeated enemy, without its participation and therefore against it, and often in contradiction to the ethnic principle. The great Powers have decided. There is nothing else to do but to bow our heads and to work; but no one can prevent us from proclaiming to the whole world that a great injustice has been done to the Slovak people. Under the dictated peace of Trianon, hardly 6 per cent of the Hungarian people had to live in Slovakia, whereas under the new settlement of the Slovak frontiers nearly 20 per cent of the Slovak people will have to live in Hungary.

Slovak men and women: To-day the arbitral commission in Vienna, which was responsible for fixing the frontiers of Slovakia, has settled our frontiers with Hungary and has at the same time given us a complete guarantee for our new Slovak-Hungarian frontier. Through this decision we have received the security which we have long and impatiently awaited. . . . We address ourselves to you, Slovak men and women, with an assurance that even in the diminished territory of Slovakia each of you will find the possibility of a livelihood. . . . There is thus no reason for despair. Freed from foreign elements, we shall be able to live entirely in our own way in our home. The Slovak Government will do everything to ensure that now that we know exactly the extent of our territory, we may settle precisely the conditions

[1] Broadcast from all Slovak stations. *Prager Presse*, November 4, 1938. Translation.

of the new organization of our State, in which we—if God wills—will not only be able to live contentedly ourselves, but will be able to be a moral support for those brothers and sisters who have been separated from us by the Italo-German arbitral award. . . . We may be separated by frontiers, but the spirit of the nation will remain the same, and this common spirit will be the guarantee that the Slovak people will not perish.

(*m*) *Extracts from Speech by M. de Kánya, Hungarian Foreign Minister, November 12, 1938.*[1]

It is my duty and privilege, in connexion with the Bill dealing with the union with the Kingdom of Hungary of the Upper Hungarian districts which are now returning to the Holy Crown, to give the House an account of the diplomatic struggle which we have had to conduct in the last few weeks, with the final result that we are now able to lay before you the Bill in question.

. . . As the House is aware, the struggle which has just been concluded originated from the attempt to alter the structure of the Czechoslovak State, with the co-operation of the Great Powers, on the basis of the ethnic principle. The starting-point of this endeavour was the Sudeten German movement, which gradually reached such proportions that finally the whole of Europe had to take notice of it, especially when the German Government, in defence of the interests of the life and property of several million Sudeten Germans, who had been exposed to grave dangers, raised its voice in increasingly earnest and decided tones. . . . May 21 was of decisive importance for the fate of Czechoslovakia, since it was on that date that the Prague Government, on the pretext of serious German military measures which were in fact non-existent, felt it necessary to mobilize the army. This step naturally caused such a reaction in Berlin that it may be said without exaggeration to have sealed the fate of Czechoslovakia.

. . . As is known, the British Government initiated an attempt at conciliation. Lord Runciman was sent to Czechoslovakia as a private individual to study the Sudeten German problem. The former British President of the Board of Trade made a serious, conscientious study of the question on the spot, and . . . the British Government, on the basis of these studies and other information, came to the conclusion that the Sudeten Germans were separated from the Czechs by such great differences that their co-existence in the same State was hardly conceivable. This view gained ground in England and perhaps in other countries too. The Sudeten German developments ceased to be an internal problem of one State and became a conflict of ever-increasing bitterness between the German Reich and Czechoslovakia.

Mr. Chamberlain, the British Prime Minister, had had conversations with the Führer and Chancellor of the German Reich with the object of safeguarding

[1] In the Chamber of Deputies. *Pester Lloyd*, November 12, 1938. Translation.

peace, first at Obersalzberg and then at Godesberg. His negotiations convinced him that the Führer and Reich Chancellor considered that the intolerable situation of the Sudeten Germans after the events in Czechoslovakia could be solved only on the basis of the ethnic principle, and the complete realization of self-determination. In any case, the Reich Chancellor proclaimed this conviction of his with complete frankness and openness to the whole world in his Nuremberg and Berlin speeches. None of us have yet forgotten the feverish moments we lived through between the Godesberg meeting and the Munich Conference. We still remember the sense of relief which went through all the peoples of the world when the news came that the four Great Powers, Germany, Italy, Great Britain, and France, were to meet in Munich in order to settle that German-Czech dispute and thus to save peace.

It had from the first been the endeavour of the Hungarian Government to ensure that the world did not speak of the German-Czech conflict alone, and that Lord Runciman did not concern himself only with that question, but that the Hungarian question in Czechoslovakia should also be settled. The results of its efforts was that the following declaration was included in the Annex to the Munich Agreement:

> The Heads of the Governments of the four Powers declare that the problem of the Polish and Hungarian minorities in Czechoslovakia, if not settled within three months by agreement between the respective Governments, shall form the subject of another meeting of the Heads of the Governments of the four Powers here present.

The Munich Conference saved the peace of the world and enabled Hungary to recover territory on an ethnographical basis when Czechoslovakia was reorganized. The ethnic principle was decisive because the whole of what was done at Munich was based on that idea.

Immediately after the conclusion of the Munich Conference, we initiated direct negotiations with the Prague Government. In doing this we kept the following principles before us:

(*a*) We did not wish to have recourse to forcible means to obtain satisfaction for our demands so long as all possibilities of peaceful agreement were not exhausted. Since, however, the realization of this intention did not lie in our hands, we had to prepare for all eventualities.

(*b*) In the fixing of the new frontiers we maintained the principle of equality of treatment, i.e. that Prague should apply the same principles in dealing with us as in dealing with the Germans and Poles.

(*c*) We always endeavoured to ensure that the dispute should be settled as rapidly as possible, so as to remove the source of friction which was exacerbating relations between the two countries to an increasing degree. It would have been impossible to continue any longer in the extreme state of tension which would inevitably have developed in the course of the negotiations if these had been spread over three months, the possibility of

which was, as we have seen, left open by the Munich declaration. In the interests of historical truth I am bound to add that the Czechoslovak Government made serious attempts to avail itself of this possibility.

(*d*) The object which the Hungarian Government had before it in its conceptions was the creation of a new system which would secure lasting peace between the nations living in this part of Europe. In the Government's view, the essence of this system would be that in the spirit of the Munich Agreement, all the nationalities living in Czechoslovakia were to be guaranteed the practical realization of the right of self-determination.

These principles were borne in mind in the drafting of the Note of the Hungarian Government of October 2, with which the negotiations with Prague were inaugurated. After some resistance and hesitation, the Czechoslovak Government on October 9 sent its delegates to Komárom, and direct negotiations were begun. I may say that even after this not very promising beginning, I was not prepared to find that the first Czechoslovak proposal would amount to offering us autonomy for the Hungarians living in Slovakia within the framework of the Czechoslovak State. An attempt was made to find support for this offer in the Munich Agreement, which, the Czechoslovak delegation maintained, did not exclude this solution. In view of the energetic attitude adopted by the Hungarian delegation, they offered us the island of Csallóköz, again on the basis of the Munich Agreement. In the following days the offers of territory were increased, but only very slightly; they did not go beyond the character of frontier rectifications. They would not hear of the return of towns of any considerable importance.

It was soon clear to the Hungarian delegation that the Czech and Slovak parties to the negotiations were not guided in their attempt to settle the dispute by the racial principle, but by strategic, economic, and commercial considerations. We also noted that the Czechoslovak delegation was not inclined to bear in mind the principle which we maintained, namely that in the satisfaction of our claims we demanded equality of treatment with the Germans and Poles. Before the last meeting of the Komárom negotiations a suspicion had taken root in the minds of the Hungarian representatives that the dilatory tactics of the Czechoslovak delegation were intended to give time for the regrouping of the Czechoslovak army. Towards the end of the negotiations this was indeed scarcely concealed; thus the threatening broadcast given by the military experts of the Czechoslovak delegation over the Bratislava wireless was addressed to the faithful citizens and soldiers. There was no alternative for the Hungarian delegation but to break off these fruitless negotiations and to take the military measures which the now dangerous situation required.

The only result of the Komárom negotiations was that the increasingly numerous Hungarian political prisoners were set free, and that we proceeded to a military occupation of Ipolyság and the station of Sátoraljaujhely. It is true that by this means it was made impossible for Prague to make any further attempt to suggest some other method of settling the question of

the Hungarian minority in Slovakia instead of offering serious territorial concessions.

The end of the Komárom negotiations was followed by a dangerous pause. The Hungarian Government used every means to bring about an early resumption of negotiations, and in this tense atmosphere it was clearly perceptible that Hungary's powerful friends were making increased efforts to get rid of the deadlock so as to avoid an explosion. At this period the Hungarian army and the disciplined, calm, but extremely resolute attitude of the whole nation did the country an unforgettable service.

After ten days' hard work, the Prague Government officially submitted its new proposal on October 22. This proposal was one which it was possible to take more seriously. . . . Hungary's claim, based on the ethnic principle, was for 14,150 square kilometres with a population of 1,090,000 on the basis of the 1910 census. We were offered:

by the first Czechoslovak proposal, 1,840 sq. km. with a population of 105,000;

by the second proposal, 5,400 sq. km. with a population of 350,000;

by the third Czechoslovak proposal of October 22, 11,300 sq. km. with a population of 740,000.

This last proposal was thus a good deal nearer to meeting the Hungarian view, although it still did not admit the possibility of handing over the most important towns such as Poszony,[1] Nyitra, Kassa, Ungvár, and Munkács. As, moreover, the Czechoslovak proposal did not exclude the possibility of subsequent modifications, the Hungarian Government accepted it as a basis of negotiation; but having learned wisdom from the experience of Komárom, it wished to continue the negotiations through diplomatic channels. In its Note of reply dated October 24 the Hungarian Government, while noting with satisfaction that agreement had been reached on a considerable portion of its territorial claims, proposed a plebiscite for the areas still in dispute, which it divided into eight districts.

The Hungarian Government further emphasized that it would not be in a position to guarantee the new Czechoslovak frontiers unless the nationalities living in the country, including the Ruthenians, were allowed to decide their own future by a plebiscite under international supervision. The second part of the Hungarian Government's proposal was that if the Czechoslovak Government could not accept the proposal for a plebiscite, which was a consequence of the principle of the right of self-determination, the decision concerning the disputed areas should be submitted to arbitration.

The Hungarian Government, in its Note of October 27, expressed regret that the Czechoslovak Government was not prepared to realize the right of self-determination of peoples, which in the Hungarian Government's view followed from the spirit of the Munich Agreement, though the Munich Powers wished to alter the structure of the Czechoslovak Republic in this spirit.

[1] Bratislava.

On October 29 the Czechoslovak Government informed the Hungarian Government that it had requested Berlin and Rome to carry out the arbitration. As the Hungarian Government had already done the same at an earlier stage, no further action on its part was necessary in this respect.

I may here observe that we had in the meantime succeeded in reaching an agreement with Prague according to which the military experts were to meet at Poszony in order to arrange for the evacuation of the districts to be handed back to Hungary, or the extension of occupation, as rapidly as possible.

After these preliminary events, the Vienna Conference met on November 2. . . . The award restored to us about 12,000 sq. km. with a population of 863,000 according to the 1910 census, and 1,030,000 according to the 1930 census.

I shall now endeavour, in the light of these events, to show how far we succeeded in realizing those principles which we had set before us as a guide at the beginning of these very difficult negotiations. As I have already said, the Hungarian Government regarded the settling of the Hungarian-Czech dispute as rapidly as possible as its first duty. We were able to secure the reduction of the maximum period of three months laid down by the Annex to the Munich Agreement for the conclusion of the negotiations, to about six weeks.

We adhered firmly to the principle that we would not tolerate any differential treatment to the disadvantage of the Hungarians in comparison with the procedure applied for the settlement of the German and Polish minority questions. We also protested every time an attempt was made to take account of any other considerations besides the ethnic principle in the settlement of the dispute. We were able to secure the use of the Hungarian statistics of 1910 as the basis for the settlement. We never abandoned our view that enduring peace in this part of Europe cannot be secured except by the complete application of the right of self-determination of peoples. We settled the question by peaceful means. In the matter of bloodshed too, we were not prepared to accept any discrimination, but did everything to ensure that in this respect also the principle of equal treatment with the Germans and Poles was applied. Why should we, without cogent reason, shed our blood for an ancient territory for which quite enough Hungarian blood has already flowed in the course of the ages? We were, of course, determined to use every means to obtain satisfaction for our claims, and there is no reason to suppose that an armed conflict would have had serious consequences for us. The fact that we succeeded in achieving our object without bloodshed is perhaps due to the very fact that no one could feel any doubt about our resolution.

During the last few weeks we have often been told that our demands were exaggerated and that there was therefore little hope that they would be fulfilled. And rumours were put into circulation according to which Czechoslovakia was going to fob Hungary off with a small strip of territory and

decisively reject all further territorial demands. All these rumours proved to be untrue. The Hungarian Government formulated its demands after serious and thorough studies, and so we should not have been the ones to shrink from making these claims good by way of a plebiscite. We did not doubt for one moment that such a plebiscite could only turn out in our favour. And as this method could not be applied owing to the resistance of the other side, we remitted the decision with the greatest calm and confidence to the German-Italian arbitral court, which in fact granted almost 90 per cent of our demands. This fact confirms the seriousness of our claims, especially as the arbitrators naturally attached the greatest importance to making their decision impartially and solely on the grounds of practical justice. Many hold, and I share their view, that we had to make painful sacrifices in order to achieve this result. But we made them in the hope that the Vienna award means the dawn of better days in this part of Europe and will make it possible in the future for the nations which have been established here for centuries to live together in peace and even find means of co-operating more closely with one another. We on our side are ready to do this. We do not want to rule over other peoples, but to join with them in serving human progress and European peace. . . .

(*n*) *Extracts from Broadcast by M. Revay, Ruthenian Minister for the Interior, November 19, 1938.*[1]

In the last few days events have occurred which were of historic importance for the Ruthenian branch of the Ukrainian people. It was a question of 'to be or not to be'. Fate has dealt kindly with us. I can state frankly and freely that the Ruthenian people has not fallen in the struggle for its rights and its freedom, but, on the contrary, has secured sovereignty in its own country. On October 11 our people began to write a new page in its history. On that date the Government passed into its own hands. . . . October 26 was a historic date in this stormy period; our people became in fact master in its own country, and a Government was set up which began the work of our salvation with unshakable faith and iron resolution.

Then came November 3. The arbitral award in Vienna fixed the new frontiers. We lost the centre of our political, economic, cultural, and ecclesiastical life. . . . Our people did not give way in this severe trial. . . . On November 19 the Prague Parliament adopted the Constitutional Act concerning the autonomy of Ruthenia. . . . I believe that in the new, free, federal Republic, in the fraternal federation of the free nations of the Czechs, Slovaks, and Ukrainians, we shall soon see a better future.

[1] Broadcast from Prague in the Ukrainian language. *Prager Presse*, November 20, 1938. Translation.

(xvii) *Extracts from Speech by the Rt. Hon. Neville Chamberlain, November 1, 1938.*[1]

. . . I do not regard the Munich Agreement as a defeat either for the democracies or for the cause of law and order. On the contrary, the Munich Agreement was an attempt to carry out by discussion between two Powers representing democracies and two Powers representing totalitarian States an agreed solution of a problem for which the only other solution appeared to be the use of force. Instead of using force the Agreement has been carried out in an orderly manner. It is quite true that there have been many things which none of us would approve of, which all of us would wish to have done differently—that is quite true—but hon. Members should consider that, as my noble Friend the Foreign Secretary said on another occasion, we had to choose between hard alternatives, and when you find fault, as you may justly find fault, with the solution which has in fact been carried out, do not forget what the alternative was and what the effect of the alternative would have been upon Czechoslovakia.

MR. ATTLEE: The right hon. Gentleman says that the solution has been carried out. The whole of my point was that the solution was not carried out.

THE PRIME MINISTER: That may have been the whole of the right hon. Gentleman's point, but I hope I shall be able to say something which will refute that point of view. After all, the Munich Agreement, which was come to in the course of a comparatively short time, measured by hours, could not be expected to deal in itself with every detail of the operation which was contemplated. All that we could do at Munich was to lay down certain general outlines, leaving to an International Commission the task of filling in details. The right hon. Gentleman criticizes the International Commission in the carrying out of that task. I say again that though we may not like the solution I would ask the right hon. Gentleman not to forget what the alternative was, and if he was not prepared to accept the alternative use of force. . . . We must recognize that we had to accept the alternative, disagreeable though it may be in many respects.

The right hon. Gentleman spoke among other things about the boundaries which are to be laid down between the new State of Czechoslovakia and Germany. By the fourth Article of the Munich Agreement there was imposed on the International Commission the duty of determining the extent of the territories outside the four zones which were to be occupied by German troops by 7th October—territories outside those which, being preponderantly German in 1918, should be occupied by Germany by 10th October. The time was short, and the International Commission decided that in order to ascertain the limits of that territory they must get as near as they could to the position in 1918. That was in accordance with the methods under the plebiscite in the Saar district. The right hon. Gentleman

[1] In the House of Commons. *Hansard*, November 1, 1938, cols. 74–82.

says that they went back much further than 1918, that they went back to 1910, and that no justification has ever been given for going back to a period so long ago as that. I do not know that there has been any opportunity on any previous occasion of giving that justification, but, of course, the answer is very simple. There was no census in 1918, and as there were no reliable figures for that date the International Commission were obliged to go back to the last date for which there were reliable figures, and that was 1910. That was the reason why the census of 1910 was taken as a basis.

SIR ARCHIBALD SINCLAIR: Why were they obliged to go back to that time and not to take later figures?

MR. HERBERT MORRISON: Has there been no census since 1910?

MR. CHAMBERLAIN: The reason was because the position in 1918 was to be taken as the basis, the argument being—I am not saying this is my view, I am only explaining the position—that the position had been deliberately changed since 1918 by the introduction of Czechs into areas which in 1918 were predominantly German, and therefore if a census had been taken later than 1918 it would not have met that particular objection. Once the Czechoslovakian Government had accepted that decision of the International Commission, which they did on 13th October, it became apparent that there was no longer any need for plebiscites. The Czechs agreed that the lines which had been determined in accordance with that basis should be the provisional frontier, but that it should be subject to examination and modification not only in accordance with strictly ethnographical lines but also taking into account the economic considerations, and it will be observed that in consequence of that agreement the line may be modified not only in those areas in which, under the original Agreement, there would have been a plebiscite, but the whole line from one end to the other may be reconsidered. As it had been decided not to have any plebiscite there was, of course, no occasion for any international force to occupy the plebiscite areas, and therefore His Majesty's Government were not able to avail themselves of the very public-spirited offer which had been made by the British Legion for this purpose. I should like, on behalf of the Government, to express our very warm appreciation of the offer and our confidence that had the need materialized members of the British Legion would have distinguished themselves as much in peace as they formerly did in war.

Another point to which the right hon. Gentleman addressed himself referred to the rights of optants. He said the clause referring to optants was entirely illusory. I do not know by what right he said that. I do not know whether he is aware of the present position. Under Article 7 of the Munich Agreement it is provided that a German-Czech Commission was to settle the details of this right of option. They were to determine ways of facilitating the transfer of those individuals who wished to exercise the right, and also any question of principle which arose out of the transfer. This is a subject of considerable magnitude, because we are informed that there are

something like 580,000 Czechs now in German territory and something like 250,000 Germans in Czech territory. That is a matter which is left to this German-Czech Commission, and they have not yet, I understand, formulated any conclusions, but when they do they will bring them to the notice of the International Commission.

Then I come to the question of the refugees. Here, at any rate, I do not think I need quarrel with the right hon. Gentleman. All of us, I think, are at one in approaching this problem of the refugees with a very sincere sympathy, not only on account of the ordinary humanitarian principles which are common to everybody but because it has always been a tradition of British policy to offer asylum, as far as possible, to persons who, on account of racial or political or religious reasons, were not able any longer to live in their own country. At the beginning of October it was represented to the Government that there were in Czechoslovakia a certain number of individuals who were in danger if they remained where they were, and accordingly we authorized the temporary admission to this country of those individuals up to the number of 350, on the undertaking, given to us, that means would be found to maintain these individuals, if necessary, during their stay here.

MISS RATHBONE: Why only 350?

THE PRIME MINISTER: Permission to enter was given only to the actual individual in danger and not to his family, but the Government are willing to admit the families of those individuals also if similar undertakings about their maintenance are provided. I agree with the right hon. Gentleman in the welcome which he paid to the initiative of the Lord Mayor of London in issuing an appeal for the relief of refugees. As he said, a considerable sum of money has been raised, and the Government are giving all the assistance they can to the Lord Mayor and to his representatives in Prague; and we have given similar assistance to other British subjects who have interested themselves in the evacuation or the relief of refugees. The House will remember that we have placed at the disposal of the Czechoslovakian Government a sum of £10,000,000 for their urgent needs. We told them, when we announced this decision to them, that we had particularly in mind the demands which they would have to meet in respect of the maintenance and settlement of refugees from the transferred areas, and we expressed the view that if it were thought necessary for some of those refugees to emigrate, their transfer elsewhere should be assisted by the Czechoslovakian Government by funds derived from this £10,000,000. . . .

I think that the right hon. Gentleman rightly pointed out that we are here in the presence of a comparatively new problem which goes much beyond that of the Czechoslovak refugees. We are face to face with the difficulty that more and more persons are to-day finding themselves Stateless. They are being driven out of the countries in which they had settled, and other countries have not shown any great willingness to take them in. The inter-governmental committee, over which my right hon. Friend the

Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster presides, has the duty of dealing with this question and has made it clear that involuntary emigrants of German origin, whose emigration has arisen out of the transfer of Sudetenland, will be put in the same position as other involuntary emigrants from Germany with whom the committee is already concerned. As to whether it may be possible in the future to initiate a project of the dimensions which the right hon. Gentleman foreshadowed, that is evidently a matter with which I could not deal here. It is not one for this country alone. This is not a country which has the area or the opportunity for settling a large number of emigrants. The question concerns the world as a whole. I am sure that we shall all join in hoping that a solution may be found which will mitigate the sufferings of these unfortunate people. . . .

I am not yet in a position to add anything, on the subject of guarantees, to what has already been said by my right hon. Friend the Minister for the Co-ordination of Defence. The position remains exactly the same and it cannot be cleared up until the whole question of minorities in Czechoslovakia has been settled. The House will remember that it was stated that Germany and Italy would be ready to enter into a guarantee on the question of Czechoslovakia when the question of minorities had been settled. Our original offer was to enter into an international guarantee, but what the terms of that guarantee will be and who will be the partakers in that guarantee is not a question on which I can give the House any further information to-day. Of course, before anything were settled, the terms of such a guarantee and the names of those who are taking part in it would be brought before this House.

MR. WEDGWOOD BENN: In dealing with the frontiers the right hon. Gentleman has not dealt with the Hungarian frontier. Many people are asking why we are to guarantee a frontier *vis-à-vis* Hungary in the determination of which we and the French are excluded.

THE PRIME MINISTER: In speaking of a guaranteed frontier the right hon. Gentleman is mistaken. We never guaranteed the frontiers as they existed. What we did was to guarantee against unprovoked aggression—quite a different thing. That did not mean that we gave our seal to the existence of frontiers as they were then or at any other time. Our guarantee was against unprovoked aggression and not the crystallization of frontiers. The right hon. Gentleman alternates between violent indignation and insuppressible amusement, but I do not think that my answer could give rise to either of those expressions. . . .

So far as Czechoslovakia is concerned, the industries in the ceded regions were industries mainly exporting in character, and they suffered a good deal in competition from Germany. It is quite true that she has ceded also valuable supplies of raw materials, such as coal, lignite and timber, but so long as she is able to import those raw materials there is no reason, so far as I can see, why her industrial position should be worsened. Exchanges of goods over the frontier between Germany and Czechoslovakia are likely

to be mutually beneficial. I do not imagine that there will be difficulty put in the way of importing raw materials. . . .

With regard to the other minorities, the right hon. Gentleman appeared to indicate that it was very wrong that any further encroachment should be made upon the territory of Czechoslovakia. Surely that is not a position that we can take up. What we are doing now, as was pointed out by my noble Friend the Foreign Secretary, is witnessing the readjustment of frontiers laid down in the Treaty of Versailles. I do not know whether the people who were responsible for those frontiers thought they would remain permanently as they were laid down. I doubt very much whether they did. They probably expected that from time to time the frontiers would have to be adjusted. It is impossible to conceive that those people would be such supermen as to be able to see what would be the right frontiers for all time. The question is not whether those frontiers should be readjusted from time to time but whether they should be readjusted by negotiation and discussion, or be readjusted by war. Readjustment is going on and, in the case of the Hungarian frontier, arbitration by Germany and Italy has been accepted by Czechoslovakia and Hungary for the final determination of the frontier between them. I think I have said enough about Czechoslovakia. . . .

(xviii) *Extracts from Speech by M. Beran, Prime Minister of Czecho-Slovakia, December 13, 1938.*[1]

The changes which you observe in this House are in themselves sufficient to express in a very eloquent way the magnitude and extent of the changes which our State has undergone through the Conference of the four Great Powers at Munich and the further international negotiations which were held on the basis of the decisions of that Conference. We have made a sacrifice for peace such as has been demanded of no other people in history. The territory on which we had organized our State and economic life has been diminished. In the name of self-determination, nearly a third of the citizens of the Republic have been incorporated in other States. . . . We recognize the fact that our compatriots are subject to another State sovereignty, but we do not and will not regard their cultural and moral ties with us as an obstacle to the loyalty which they will, as a matter of course, bear to the States whose citizens they have become. . . .

To-day it is certain that neither in programme nor in method can we simply continue the policy which we followed until September of this year. Our international relations are to-day determined by the new geographical situation of the State and the new relations of power in Europe. Our internal order has also changed. Relations between the Bohemian provinces and Slovakia and Ruthenia are settled on a new basis. The national ideals

[1] At a joint session of both houses of the National Assembly, on his assumption of office. *Prager Presse*, December 14, 1938. Translation.

of the Slovaks and Ruthenes which these peoples have striven for in the past are fulfilled in full measure. . . .

The people have combined in unitary organizations, in Slovakia, in Bohemia and Moravia, and in Ruthenia too. The former political parties actually ceased to exist before they were formally dissolved. Nowhere is there a return to the past, either in programmes, in methods, or in tactics. Any attempt at such a return would be bitterly rejected by the nation. We realize that no fresh political splitting up of our peoples can be allowed, and that no political movement can be permitted which is not rooted in our soil. The national parties will not usurp power in their own State, but will be its devoted servants. . . .

[*Foreign Policy*]

Our foreign policy is new in its aims, its means, and its content. Under the stress of the events of this year, not only were our frontiers affected, but numerous factors in the foreign policy of the great Powers, which had formerly been thought unalterable, were shattered. We are not and do not intend to be blind and deaf to these changes. We shall not pursue shadows, but shall base our foreign policy on the facts and on the economic and social circumstances. We shall adapt ourselves to what is unconditionally necessary without renouncing our inalienable rights and the safeguarding of our State and national interests. Freed from the duty of looking backwards, the Government will pursue a clear aim: to preserve the State and to keep the peace for its peoples. We shall respect all States and nations, but we shall in the first place regard our own interests, in the clear consciousness of our actual international position.

Our first care will be the settlement of our friendly relations with Germany, our greatest neighbour. A number of questions connected with this relationship which are very important for us still await settlement. We confidently believe that direct contact between the statesmen of the two countries will facilitate and expedite such a settlement. The President of the Republic, the Foreign Minister, and I myself have already stated clearly and sincerely how we conceive our relations with the German State and people and how we desire to regulate and consolidate them. We are resolved always to speak in a frank and manly way. We do not conceal that to begin with we have to overcome what naturally still remains of the psychological effects of our severe territorial and national losses. This is a task for both sides. We believe that the German people and its Leader will well understand the psychological condition of our people after the storm-wave which has swept over our heads.

We also desire to establish good neighbourly relations with Poland and Hungary. The course of the negotiations with these States in the last few days justifies us in the belief that the same desire animates Warsaw and Budapest.

We are grateful to Rumania and Yugoslavia for their friendship and

loyalty in our time of greatest trouble. In this atmosphere of mutual confidence we shall certainly strengthen and extend our existing relations and connexions with these traditional friends.

We are gratified that our relations with Italy have assumed a form which accords with the desire of our people and our mutual traditions. Rome has as good an understanding for our present situation as in the days of the crisis, and we receive her utterances with attention.

In reconstructing our country radically and in our own way, and in accordance with our needs, we are not and shall not be adherents of isolation, or restriction to our own geographical area. We shall therefore maintain and develop our relations with all other States and great Powers, especially France, Great Britain, and the United States. . . . During the crisis we showed comprehension of the difficulties of others. We hope that to-day our situation will be judged with understanding and impartiality. Conditions in Europe and the world in general, however, are not such that we can hope for a period of calm in the near future. . . .

PRINTED IN GREAT BRITAIN
JARROLD AND SONS LTD., THE EMPIRE PRESS, NORWICH