Churchill and De Gaulle: Statesmanship in a Democratic Age

June 18-19, 2015

Daniel Mahoney

Discussion leader

Alexander Hamilton Institute
for the Study of Western Civilization
Clinton, New York

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Organizers:
Professors David & Mary Nichols
Department of Political Science
Baylor University
Waco, Texas

Discussion leader:
Professor Daniel Mahoney
Augustine Chair in Distinguished Scholarship
Assumption College
Worcester, Massachusetts

Thursday, June 18

9:30 Breakfast at the Alexander Hamilton Institute

10:45 Welcome and Introduction – Robert Paquette and Mary Nichols

11:00-12:30

Session 1:
The Statesman as Writer and Thinker

Churchill, "The Dream," 1947 (from Oxford Book of Essays)
Churchill, "Consistency in Politics" (from *Thoughts and Adventures,* ed. James W. Muller) (first published in 1932)
De Gaulle, "Foreward," and "On the Man of Character" (1932), from *The Edge of the Sword*
De Gaulle, "Foreward," and "The Declaration of Unlimited Submarine Warfare" (1924), in *The Enemy's House Divided,* trans. and intro.by Robert Eden

12:30-1:30 Lunch, Alexander Hamilton Institute

1:30-3:00

Session 2:
Great Speeches

Churchill, "Bolshevik Menace" (1919) (from *Blood, Toil, Tears, and Sweat*)
Churchill, "Munich Pact Speech" (1938) from *Blood, Toil, Tears, and Sweat*
Churchill, "Finest Hour Speech" (1941) (from *Blood, Toil, Tears, and Sweat*)
Churchill, "Iron Curtain Speech" (1946) (from *Blood, Toil, Tears, and Sweat*)
Churchill, "Zurich Speech on European Unity" (1946) (from *Blood, Toil, Tears, and Sweat*)
De Gaulle, "Bayeux Address" (1946) (from *Major Addresses*)
De Gaulle, press conference on "Europe of Nations" (1962) (from *Major Addresses*)

3:30-5:00

Session 3:
The Gathering Storm: The Statesman on Impending Danger

Churchill, selections from *The Gathering Storm*
De Gaulle, selections from *The Complete War Memoirs of Charles de Gaulle*

6:30 – Picnic at Hatch Lake,
at the Nichols Cottage
sponsored by the Alexander Hamilton Institute

Friday, June 19

9:30 Breakfast at the Alexander Hamilton Institute

11:00-12:30

Session 4:
The Statesman as Critic of Mass Society

Churchill, "Mass Effects in Modern Life" (1932) (from *Thoughts and Adventures*)
De Gaulle, "Call to Honor" (1941) (Oxford Address)

12:30-1:30 Lunch, Alexander Hamilton Institute

1:30-3:00

Session 5:
Three Churchillian Essays

Churchill, "Shall We Commit Suicide?" (1932) (from *Thoughts and Adventures*)
Churchill, "Fifty Years Hence" (1932) (from *Thoughts and Adventures*)
Churchill, "Painting as a Pastime" (1932) (from *Thoughts and Adventures*)

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The Oxford Book of
Essays

Chosen and Edited by John Gross

Oxford New York
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1991

SIR WINSTON CHURCHILL

The Dream

ONE foggy afternoon in November 1947 I was painting in my studio at the cottage down the hill at Chartwell. Someone had sent me a portrait of my father which had been painted for one of the Belfast Conservative Clubs about the time of his visit to Ulster in the Home Rule crisis of 1886. The canvas had been badly torn, and though I am very shy of painting human faces I thought I would try to make a copy of it.

My easel was under a strong daylight lamp, which is necessary for indoor painting in the British winter. On the right of it stood the portrait I was copying, and behind me was a large looking glass, so that one could frequently study the painting in reverse. I must have painted for an hour and a half, and was deeply concentrated on my subject. I was drawing my father's face, gazing at the portrait, and frequently turning round right-handed to check progress in the mirror. Thus I was intensely absorbed, and my mind was freed from all other thoughts except the impressions of that loved and honoured face now on the canvas, now on the picture, now in the mirror.

I was just trying to give the twirl to his moustache when I suddenly felt an odd sensation. I turned round with my palette in my hand, and there, sitting in my red leather upright armchair, was my father. He looked just as I had seen him in his prime, and as I had read about him in his brief year of triumph. He was small and slim, with the big moustache I was just painting, and all his bright, captivating, jaunty air. His eyes twinkled and shone. He was evidently in the best of tempers. He was engaged in filling his amber cigarette-holder with a little pad of cotton-wool before putting in the cigarette. This was in order to stop the nicotine, which used to be thought deleterious. He was so exactly like my memories of him in his most charming moods that I could hardly believe my eyes. I felt no alarm, but I thought I would stand where I was and go no nearer.

'Papa!' I said.

'What are you doing, Winston?'

'I am trying to copy your portrait, the one you had done when you went over to Ulster in 1886.'

'I should never have thought it,' he said.

'I only do it for amusement,' I replied.

'Yes, I am sure you could never earn your living that way.'

There was a pause.

'Tell me,' he asked, 'what year is it?'

'Nineteen forty-seven.'

'Of the Christian era, I presume?'

'Yes, that all goes on. At least, they still count that way.'

'I don't remember anything after ninety-four. I was very confused that year.... So more than fifty years have passed. A lot must have happened.'

'It has indeed, Papa.'

'Tell me about it.'

'I really don't know where to begin,' I said.

'Does the Monarchy go on?' he asked.

'Yes, stronger than in the days of Queen Victoria.'

'Who is King?'

'King George the Sixth.'

'What! Two more Georges?'

'But, Papa, you remember the death of the Duke of Clarence.'

'Quite true; that settled the name. They must have been clever to keep the Throne.'

'They took the advice of the Ministers who had majorities in the House of Commons.'

'That all goes on still? I suppose they still use the Closure and the Guillotine?'

'Yes, indeed.'

'Does the Carlton Club go on?'

'Yes, they are going to rebuild it.'

'I thought it would have lasted longer; the structure seemed quite solid. What about the Turf Club?'

'It's OK.'

'How do you mean, OK?'

'It's an American expression, Papa. Nowadays they use initials for all sorts of things, like they used to say RSPCA and HMG.'

'What does it mean?'

'It means all right.'

'What about racing? Does that go on?'

'You mean horse-racing?'

'Of course,' he said, 'What other should there be?'

'It all goes on.'

'What, the Oaks, the Derby, the Leger?'

'They have never missed a year.'

'And the Primrose League?'

'They have never had more members.'

He seemed to be pleased at this.

'I always believed in Dizzy, that old Jew. He saw into the future. He had to bring the British working man into the centre of the picture.' And here he glanced at my canvas.

'Perhaps I am trespassing on your art?' he said, with that curious, quizzical smile of his, which at once disarmed and disconcerted.

Palette in hand, I made a slight bow.

'And the Church of England?'

'You made a very fine speech about it in eighty-four.' I quoted, '"And, standing out like a lighthouse over a stormy ocean, it marks the entrance to a port wherein the millions and masses of those who at times are wearied with the woes of the world and tired of the trials of existence may seek for, and may find, that peace which passeth all understanding".'

'What a memory you have got! But you always had one. I remember Dr Welldon telling me how you recited the twelve hundred lines of Macaulay without a single mistake.'

After a pause. 'You are still a Protestant?' he said.

'Episcopalian.'

'Do the bishops still sit in the House of Lords?'

'They do indeed, and make a lot of speeches.'

'Are they better than they used to be?'

'I never heard the ones they made in the old days.'

'What party is in power now? Liberals or Tories?'

'Neither, Papa. We have a Socialist Government, with a very large majority. They have been in office for two years, and will probably stay for two more. You know we have changed the Septennial Act to five years.'

'Socialist!' he exclaimed. 'But I thought you said we still have a Monarchy.'

'The Socialists are quite in favour of the Monarchy, and make generous provisions for it.'

'You mean in regard to Royal grants, the Civil List, and so forth? How can they get those through the Commons?'

'Of course they have a few rebels, but the old Republicanism of Dilke and Labby is dead as mutton. The Labour men and the trade unions look upon the Monarchy not only as a national but a nationalised institution. They even go to the parties at Buckingham Palace. Those who have very extreme principles wear sweaters.'

'How very sensible. I am glad all that dressing up has been done away with.'

'I am sorry, Papa,' I said, 'I like the glitter of the past.'

'What does the form matter if the facts remain? After all, Lord Salisbury was once so absent-minded as to go to a levée in uniform with carpet slippers. What happened to old Lord Salisbury?'

'Lord Salisbury leads the Conservative party in the House of Lords.'

'What!' he said. 'He must be a Methuselah!'

'No. It is his grandson.'

'Ah, and Arthur Balfour? Did he ever become Prime Minister?'

'Oh, yes. He was Prime Minister, and came an awful electoral cropper. Afterwards he was Foreign Secretary and held other high posts. He was well in the eighties when he died.'

'Did he make a great mark?'

'Well, Ramsay MacDonald, the Prime Minister of the first Socialist Government, which was in office at his death, said he "saw a great deal of life from afar".'

'How true! But who was Ramsay MacDonald?'

'He was the leader of the first and second Labour-Socialist Governments, in a minority.'

'The first Socialist Government? There has been more than one?'

'Yes, several. But this is the first that had a majority.'

'What have they done?'

'Not much. They have nationalised the mines and railways and a few other services, paying full compensation. You know, Papa, though stupid, they are quite respectable, and increasingly bour-

geois. They are not nearly so fierce as the old Radicals, though of course they are wedded to economic fallacies.'

'What is the franchise?'

'Universal,' I replied. 'Even the women have votes.'

'Good gracious!' he exclaimed.

'They are a strong prop to the Tories.'

'Arthur was always in favour of female suffrage.'

'It did not turn out as badly as I thought,' I said.

'You don't allow them in the House of Commons?' he inquired.

'Oh, yes. Some of them have even been Ministers. There are not many of them. They have found their level.'

'So Female Suffrage has not made much difference?'

'Well, it has made politicians more mealy-mouthed than in your day. And public meetings are much less fun. You can't say the things you used to.'

'What happened to Ireland? Did they get Home Rule?'

'The South got it, but Ulster stayed with us.'

'Are the South a republic?'

'No one knows what they are. They are neither in nor out of the Empire. But they are much more friendly to us than they used to be. They have built up a cultured Roman Catholic system in the South. There has been no anarchy or confusion. They are getting more happy and prosperous. The bitter past is fading.'

'Ah,' he said, 'how vexed the Tories were with me when I observed that there was no English statesman who had not had his hour of Home Rule.' Then, after a pause, 'What about the Home Rule meaning "Rome Rule"?'

'It certainly does, but they like it. And the Catholic Church has now become a great champion of individual liberty.'

'You must be living in a very happy age. A Golden Age, it seems.'

His eye wandered round the studio, which is entirely panelled with scores of my pictures. I followed his travelling eye as it rested now on this one and on that. After a while: 'Do you live in this cottage?'

'No,' I said, 'I have a house up on the hill, but you cannot see it for the fog.'

'How do you get a living?' he asked. 'Not, surely, by these?' indicating the pictures.

'No, indeed, Papa. I write books and articles for the Press.'

'Ah, a reporter. There is nothing discreditable in that. I myself wrote articles for the *Daily Graphic* when I went to South Africa. And well I was paid for them. A hundred pounds an article!'

Before I could reply: 'What has happened to Blenheim? Blandford (his brother) always said it could only become a museum for Oxford.'

'The Duke and Duchess of Marlborough are still living there.'

He paused again for a while, and then: 'I always said "Trust the people". Tory democracy alone could link the past with the future.'

'They are only living in a wing of the Palace,' I said. 'The rest is occupied by MI5.'

'What does that mean?'

'A Government department formed in the war.'

'War?' he said, sitting up with a startled air. 'War, do you say? Has there been a war?'

'We have had nothing else but wars since democracy took charge.'

'You mean real wars, not just frontier expeditions? Wars where tens of thousands of men lose their lives?'

'Yes, indeed, Papa,' I said. 'That's what has happened all the time. Wars and rumours of war ever since you died.'

'Tell me about them.'

'Well, first there was the Boer War.'

'Ah, I would have stopped that. I never agreed with "Avenge Majuba". Never avenge anything, especially if you have the power to do so. I always mistrusted Joe.'

'You mean Mr Chamberlain?'

'Yes. There is only one Joe, or only one I ever heard of. A Radical turned Jingo is an ugly and dangerous thing. But what happened in the Boer War?'

'We conquered the Transvaal and the Orange Free State.'

'England should never have done that. To strike down two independent republics must have lowered our whole position in the world. It must have stirred up all sorts of things. I am sure the Boers made a good fight. When I was there I saw lots of them. Men of the wild, with rifles, on horseback. It must have taken a lot of soldiers. How many? Forty thousand?'

'No, over a quarter of a million.'

'Good God! What a shocking drain on the Exchequer!'

'It was,' I said. 'The Income Tax went up to one and three-pence.' He was visibly disturbed. So I said that they got it down to eightpence afterwards.

'Who was the General who beat the Boers?' he asked.

'Lord Roberts,' I answered.

'I always believed in him. I appointed him Commander-in-Chief in India when I was Secretary of State. That was the year I annexed Burma. The place was in utter anarchy. They were just butchering one another. We had to step in, and very soon there was an ordered, civilised Government under the vigilant control of the House of Commons.' There was a sort of glare in his eyes as he said 'House of Commons'.

'I have always been a strong supporter of the House of Commons, Papa. I am still very much in favour of it.'

'You had better be, Winston, because the will of the people must prevail. Give me a fair arrangement of the constituencies, a wide franchise, and free elections—say what you like, and one part of Britain will correct and balance the other.'

'Yes, you brought me up to that.'

'I never brought you up to anything. I was not going to talk politics with a boy like you ever. Bottom of the school! Never passed any examinations, except into the Cavalry! Wrote me stilted letters. I could not see how you would make your living on the little I could leave you and Jack, and that only after your mother. I once thought of the Bar for you but you were not clever enough. Then I thought you might go to South Africa. But of course you were very young, and I loved you dearly. Old people are always very impatient with young ones. Fathers always expect their sons to have their virtues without their faults. You were very fond of playing soldiers, so I settled for the Army. I hope you had a successful military career.'

'I was a Major in the Yeomanry.'

He did not seem impressed.

'However, here you are. You must be over 70. You have a roof over your head. You seem to have plenty of time on your hands to mess about with paints. You have evidently been able to keep yourself going. Married?'

'Forty years.'

'Children?'

'Four.'

'Grandchildren?'

'Four.'

'I am so glad. But tell me more about these other wars.'

'They were the wars of nations, caused by demagogues and tyrants.'

'Did we win?'

'Yes, we won all our wars. All our enemies were beaten down. We even made them surrender unconditionally.'

'No one should be made to do that. Great people forget sufferings, but not humiliations.'

'Well, that was the way it happened, Papa.'

'How did we stand after it all? Are we still at the summit of the world, as we were under Queen Victoria?'

'No, the world grew much bigger all around us.'

'Which is the leading world-power?'

'The United States.'

'I don't mind that. You are half American yourself. Your mother was the most beautiful woman ever born. The Jeromes were a deep-rooted American family.'

'I have always,' I said, 'worked for friendship with the United States, and indeed throughout the English-speaking world.'

'English-speaking world,' he repeated, weighing the phrase. 'You mean, with Canada, Australia and New Zealand, and all that?'

'Yes, all that.'

'Are they still loyal?'

'They are our brothers.'

'And India, is that all right? And Burma?'

'Alas! They have gone down the drain.'

He gave a groan. So far he had not attempted to light the cigarette he had fixed in the amber holder. He now took his matchbox from his watch-chain, which was the same as I was wearing. For the first time I felt a sense of awe. I rubbed my brush in the paint on the palette to make sure that everything was real. All the same I shivered. To relieve his consternation I said:

'But perhaps they will come back and join the English-speaking world. Also, we are trying to make a world organisation in which we and America will be quite important.'

But he remained sunk in gloom, and huddled back in the chair. Presently: 'About these wars, the ones after the Boer War, I mean. What happened to the great States of Europe? Is Russia still the danger?'

'We are all very worried about her.'

'We always were in my day, and in Dizzy's before me. Is there still a Tsar?'

'Yes, but he is not a Romanoff. It's another family. He is much more powerful, and much more despotic.'

'What of Germany? What of France?'

'They are both shattered. Their only hope is to rise together.'

'I remember,' he said, 'taking you through the Place de la Concorde when you were only nine years old, and you asked me about the Strasbourg monument. You wanted to know why this one was covered in flowers and crape. I told you about the lost provinces of France. What flag flies in Strasbourg now?'

'The Tricolor flies there.'

'Ah, so they won. They had their revanche. That must have been a great triumph for them.'

'It cost them their life blood,' I said.

'But wars like these must have cost a million lives. They must have been as bloody as the American Civil War.'

'Papa,' I said, 'in each of them about thirty million men were killed in battle. In the last one seven million were murdered in cold blood, mainly by the Germans. They made human slaughter-pens like the Chicago stockyards. Europe is a ruin. Many of her cities have been blown to pieces by bombs. Ten capitals in Eastern Europe are in Russian hands. They are Communists now, you know—Karl Marx and all that. It may well be that an even worse war is drawing near. A war of the East against the West. A war of liberal civilisation against the Mongol hordes. Far gone are the days of Queen Victoria and a settled world order. But, having gone through so much, we do not despair.'

He seemed stupefied, and fumbled with his matchbox for what seemed a minute or more. Then he said:

'Winston, you have told me a terrible tale. I would never have believed that such things could happen. I am glad I did not live to see them. As I listened to you unfolding these fearful facts you seemed to know a great deal about them. I never expected that you would develop so far and so fully. Of course you are too old

now to think about such things, but when I hear you talk I really wonder you didn't go into politics. You might have done a lot to help. You might even have made a name for yourself.'

He gave me a benignant smile. He then took the match to light his cigarette and struck it. There was a tiny flash. He vanished. The chair was empty. The illusion had passed. I rubbed my brush again in my paint, and turned to finish the moustache. But so vivid had my fancy been that I felt too tired to go on. Also my cigar had gone out, and the ash had fallen among all the paints.

1947

Winston Churchill,
from Thoughts and Adventures

Consistency in Politics

No one has written more boldly on this subject than Emerson[1]: 'Why should you keep your head over your shoulder? Why drag about this corpse of your memory, lest you contradict somewhat you have stated in this or that public place? Suppose you should contradict yourself; what then? . . .

'A foolish consistency is the hobgoblin of little minds, adored by little statesmen and philosophers and divines. . . .

'Speak what you think now in hard words and to-morrow speak what to-morrow thinks in hard words again, though it contradict everything you said to-day.'[2]

These are considerable assertions, and they may well stimulate thought upon this well-worn topic. A distinction should be drawn at the outset between two kinds of political inconsistency. First, a Statesman in contact with the moving current of events and anxious to keep the ship on an even keel and steer a steady course may lean all his weight now on one side and now on the other. His arguments in each case when contrasted can be shown to be not only very different

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1. Ralph Waldo Emerson (1803–1882), American essayist, philosopher, and poet, and the leader of the Transcendental movement, which sought to develop new ideas in literature, philosophy, and religion. Emerson stressed the need for each individual to avoid conformity and false consistency and to follow his own instincts.
2. These three quotations occur in close proximity in Emerson's essay "Self-Reliance," developed between 1830 and 1837 and published in *Essays*, 1st Series, 1841.

in character, but contradictory in spirit and opposite in direction: yet his object will throughout have remained the same. His resolves, his wishes, his outlook may have been unchanged; his methods may be verbally irreconcilable. We cannot call this inconsistency. In fact it may be claimed to be the truest consistency. The only way a man can remain consistent amid changing circumstances is to change with them while preserving the same dominating purpose. Lord Halifax on being derided as a trimmer made the celebrated reply: 'I trim as the {40} temperate zone trims between the climate in which men are roasted and the climate in which they are frozen.'[3]

No greater example in this field can be found than Burke.[4] His *Thoughts on the Present Discontents*,[5] his writings and speeches on the conciliation of America, form the main and lasting armoury of Liberal opinion throughout the English-speaking world. His *Letters on a Regicide Peace*,[6] and *Reflections on the French Revolution*,[7] will continue to furnish Conservatives for all time with the most formidable array of opposing weapons. On the one hand he is revealed as a foremost apostle of Liberty, on the other as the redoubtable champion of Authority. But a charge of political inconsistency applied to this great life appears a mean and petty thing. History easily discerns the reasons and forces which actuated him, and the immense changes in the problems he was facing which evoked from the same

3. Sir George Savile (1633–1695), First Marquess of Halifax, 1682, a fine orator and writer whose advocacy of compromise in politics, of steering a middle course between two extremes, caused him to be known as "The Trimmer." The quotation comes from his greatest work, *The Character of a Trimmer* (1684–85).

4. Edmund Burke (1729–1797), Anglo-Irish politician and author who made his career in London. He was sympathetic to the rights of the American colonists and of the Irish and the Indians, but hostile to the excesses of the French Revolution.

5. Churchill shortens the title of this work, *Thoughts on the Causes of the Present Discontents* (1770), in which Burke argues against unrestrained royal power and in favor of the rise of political parties in maintaining a principled opposition.

6. Letters by Burke, published in 1796–97, in which he passionately argues against any negotiations with the new French regime.

7. Churchill paraphrases the title of this work, *Reflections on the Revolution in France*, published soon after the event in 1790, in which Burke rejects the revolutionaries' overzealous destruction, in the name of inhuman abstractions, of much that was good in society. His classic statement of pragmatic conservatism provoked much reaction, in particular Thomas Paine's essay *The Rights of Man*.

profound mind and sincere spirit these entirely contrary manifestations. His soul revolted against tyranny, whether it appeared in the aspect of a domineering Monarch and a corrupt Court and Parliamentary system, or whether, mouthing the watch-words of a non-existent liberty, it towered up against him in the dictation of a brutal mob and wicked sect. No one can read the Burke of Liberty and the Burke of Authority without feeling that here was the same man pursuing the same ends, seeking the same ideals of society and Government, and defending them from assaults, now from one extreme, now from the other. The same danger approached the same man from different directions and in different forms, and the same man turned to face it with incomparable weapons, drawn from the same armoury, used in a different quarter, but for the same purpose.

It is inevitable that frequent changes should take place in the region of action. A policy is pursued up to a certain point; it becomes evident at last that it can be carried no further. New facts arise which clearly render it obsolete; new difficulties, which make it impracticable. A new and possibly the opposite solution presents itself with {41} overwhelming force. To abandon the old policy is often necessarily to adopt the new. It sometimes happens that the same men, the same Government, the same Party have to execute this *volte face*. It may be their duty to do so because it is the sole manner of discharging their responsibilities, or because they are the only combination strong enough to do what is needed in the new circumstances. In such a case the inconsistency is not merely verbal, but actual, and ought to be boldly avowed. In place of arguments for coercion there must be arguments for conciliation; and these must come from the same lips as the former. But all this may be capable of reasonable and honourable explanation. Statesmen may say bluntly, 'We have failed to coerce; we have now to conciliate,' or alternatively, 'We have failed to conciliate; we have now to coerce.'

Ireland with its mysterious and sinister influence has been responsible for many changes of this kind in British politics. We see Mr. Gladstone[8] in 1886 after five years of coercion, after the fiercest

8. William Ewart Gladstone (1809–1898), who served four times as Liberal prime minister, 1868–74, 1880–85, 1886, and 1892–94.

denunciation of Irish Nationalists 'marching through rapine to the disintegration of the Empire,' turn in a month to those policies of reconciliation to which the rest of his life was devoted. Mr. Gladstone in his majestic and saintly manner gave many comforting and convincing reasons for his change, and there is no doubt that his whole nature was uplifted and inspired by his new departure. But behind all the eloquence and high-sounding declamation there was a very practical reason for his change, which in private at any rate he did not conceal.

During the interval between the fall of his Government in 1885 and his resumption of power in 1886, a Conservative Government held office with the support of the Irish vote, and the people—wrongly no doubt but sincerely—thought the Conservatives were themselves meditating a solution of the Irish problem on Home Rule lines. Confronted with this supposed fact he felt it impossible for the Liberal {42} Party to march further along the path of coercion and a denial of Irish claims. But Mr. Gladstone was wrong in his judgment of the impending Conservative action. The Conservative Party would never at that stage have been capable of a Home Rule policy. They might have coquetted with the Irish vote as a manœuvre in their fierce political battle with the Liberals; but any decided advance towards Home Rule would have split them from end to end, dethroned their leaders in such a course, and destroyed the power of the Party as a governing instrument. Mr. Gladstone gave to his opponents through this miscalculation what was virtually a twenty years' reign of power. Nevertheless the judgment of history will probably declare that Mr. Gladstone was right both in his resistance to Home Rule up to a certain point and in his espousal of it thereafter. Certainly the change which he made upon this question in 1886, for which he was so much condemned, was in every way a lesser change than that which was made by the whole Conservative Party on this same question thirty-five years later in 1921.

Apart from action in the march of events, there is an inconsistency arising from a change of mood or heart. *'Le cœur a ses raisons que la raison ne connaît pas.'*[9] Few men avoid such changes in their lives, and few public men have been able to conceal them. Usually youth is for freedom and reform, maturity for judicious compromise, and old age for stability and repose. The normal progression is from Left to Right, and often from extreme Left to extreme Right. Mr. Gladstone's progress was by a striking exception in the opposite direction. In the immense period covered by his life he moved steadily and irresistibly from being 'the rising hope of stern unbending Tories' to become the greatest Liberal statesman of the nineteenth century. Enormous was the change of mood which this august transition represented. From the young Member of Parliament whose speech against the abolition of slavery attracted the attention of the House of Commons in 1833, from the {43} famous Minister who supported the Confederate States against the North in the sixties, to the fiery orator who pleaded the cause of Bulgarian independence in the eighties, and the veteran Premier, the last scraps of whose matchless strength were freely offered in the nineties to the cause of Irish self-government—it was a transit almost astronomical in its scale.

It were a thankless theme to examine how far ambition to lead played its unconscious but unceasing part in such an evolution. Ideas acquire a momentum of their own. The stimulus of a vast concentration of public support is almost irresistible in its potency. The resentments engendered by the warfare of opponents, the practical responsibilities of a Party Leader—all take a hand. And in the main great numbers are at least an explanation for great changes. 'I have always marched,' said Napoleon,[10] 'with the opinion of four or five millions of men.' To which, without risking the reproach of cynicism, we may add two other sayings: 'In a democratic country possessing representative institutions it is occasionally necessary to defer to the opinions of other people'; and, 'I am their leader; I must

9. "The heart has its reasons with which reason is unfamiliar": Blaise Pascal (1623–1662), French mathematician, physicist, and theologian, in *Des Moyens de Croire* (Ways of Believing), section IV, no. 277, from *Pensées* (Thoughts), published posthumously in 1670.

10. Napoleon Bonaparte (1769–1821), the remarkable general who became Napoleon I, emperor of the French, in 1804.

follow them.'[11] The integrity of Mr. Gladstone's career is redeemed by the fact that these two last considerations played a far smaller part in his life than in those of many lesser public men whose consistency has never been impugned.

It is evident that a political leader responsible for the direction of affairs must, even if unchanging in heart or objective, give his counsel now on the one side and now on the other of many public issues. Take for instance the strength and expense of the armed forces of a country in any particular period. This depends upon no absolute or natural law. It relates simply to the circumstances of the time and to the view that a man may hold of the probability of dangers, actual or potential, which threaten his country. Would there, for instance, be any inconsistency in a British Minister urging the most extreme and rapid naval {44} preparations in the years preceding the outbreak of the Great War with Germany, and advocating a modest establishment and strict retrenchment in the years following the destruction of the German naval power? He might think that the danger had passed and had carried away with it the need for intense preparation. He might believe that a long period of peace would follow the exhaustion of the World War, and that financial and economic recovery were more necessary to the country than continuous armed strength. He might think that the Air was taking the place of the Sea in military matters. And he might be right and truly consistent both in the former and in the latter advocacy. But it would be easy to show a wide discrepancy between the sets of arguments in the two periods. Questions of this kind do not depend upon the intrinsic logic of the reasoning used on the one hand or the other, but on taking a just view of the governing facts of different periods. Such changes must, however, be considered in each particular case with regard to the personal situation of the individual. If it can be shown that he swims with the current in both cases, his titles to a true consistency must be more studiously examined than if he swims against it.

A more searching scrutiny should also be applied to changes of view in relation not to events but to systems of thought and doctrine. In modern British politics no greater contrast can be found than in comparing the Free Trade speeches of the late Mr. Joseph Chamberlain[12] as President of the Board of Trade in the early eighties, with the Protectionist speeches which he delivered during the Tariff campaign at the beginning of the twentieth century. Here we are dealing not with the turbulent flow of events, but with precise methods of thought. Those who read Mr. Chamberlain's Free Trade speeches will find that almost every economic argument which he used in 1904 was foreseen and countered by him in 1884. Yet the sincerity of his later views was generally accepted by friends and {45} opponents alike. And after all, once he had come to think differently on economic subjects, was it not better that he should unhesitatingly give his country the benefit of his altered convictions? Still, it must be observed that the basis of reasoning had changed very little in the twenty years' interval, that the problem was mainly an abstract one in its character, and that it was substantially the same problem. There need be no impeachment of honesty of purpose or of a zealous and unceasing care for the public interest. But there is clearly in this case a contradiction of argument in regard to the same theory which amounts to self-stultification.

We may illustrate this distinction further. Mr. Chamberlain argued in 1884 that a tax on imports was paid by the home consumer, and in 1904 that it was paid, very largely at any rate, by the foreigner. We cannot help feeling that the reasoning processes underlying these two conclusions are fundamentally incompatible, and it is hard to understand how a man who once saw the one process so clearly should subsequently have visualized and accepted the opposite process with equal vehemence and precision. It would have been better, tactically at any rate, for Mr. Chamberlain to have relinquished the abstract argument altogether and to have relied exclusively in his advocacy upon the facts—the world facts—which

11. Remark by Alexandre Auguste Ledru-Rollin (1807–1874), the radical French politician who became known as leader of the workingmen of France.

12. Joseph Chamberlain (1836–1914), originally a follower of Gladstone and a Liberal member of Parliament who became a leading Conservative over his opposition to Liberal policies that favored home rule for Ireland. His later support for imperial preference was one of the main Conservative policies that persuaded Churchill, who robustly favored free trade, to cross the floor and join the Liberals in 1904. Joseph Chamberlain was the father of Neville Chamberlain (1869–1940), Conservative prime minister, 1937–40.

were really his reasons, the importance of consolidating the British Empire by means of a Zollverein,[13] and the necessity of rallying support for that policy among the British industrial interests and the Conservative working classes; for these considerations, in his view, over-ruled—whether or not they contradicted—the validity of his purely economic conviction.

A Statesman should always try to do what he believes is best in the long view for his country, and he should not be dissuaded from so acting by having to divorce himself from a great body of doctrine to which he formerly sincerely adhered. Those, however, who are forced to these gloomy {46} choices must regard their situation in this respect as unlucky. The great Sir Robert Peel[14] must certainly be looked on as falling within the sweep of this shadow. Of him Lord John Russell[15] sourly observed:

'He has twice changed his opinion on the greatest political question of his day. Once when the Protestant Church was to be defended and the Protestant Constitution rescued from the attacks of the Roman Catholics, which it was said would ruin it, the Right Honourable Gentleman undertook to lead the defence. Again, the Corn Laws were powerfully attacked in this House and out of it. He took the lead of his Party to resist a change and to defend Protection. I think, on both occasions, he has come to a wise conclusion, and to a decision most beneficial to his country; first, when he repealed the Roman Catholic disabilities, and, secondly, when he abolished Protection. But that those who followed him—men that had committed themselves to these questions, on the faith of his political wisdom, on the faith of his sagacity, led by the great eloquence and ability he displayed in debate—that when they found he had changed his opinions and proposed measures different from those on the faith of which they had followed him—that they should exhibit warmth and

13. Customs union.

14. Sir Robert Peel (1788–1850), Conservative prime minister, 1834–35 and 1841–46. As home secretary in 1829, he created the Metropolitan Police in London—hence the policeman's nickname "bobby."

15. Lord John Russell (1792–1878), who held this courtesy title for much of his life as a younger son of the Sixth Duke of Bedford before himself receiving a peerage in 1861 as First Earl Russell. He served as Liberal prime minister, 1846–52 and 1865–66.

resentment was not only natural, but I should have been surprised if they had not displayed it.'

This was a hard, yet not unjust, commentary upon the career of one of the most eminent and one of the noblest of our public men; for here not merely a change of view is in question, but the workaday good faith of a leader towards those who had depended upon his guidance and had not shared in his conversion.

A change of Party is usually considered a much more serious breach of consistency than a change of view. In fact as long as a man works with a Party he will rarely find himself accused of inconsistency, no matter how widely his opinions at one time on any subject can be shown to have altered. Yet Parties are subject to changes and inconsistencies not less glaring than those of individuals. How should it be otherwise in the fierce swirl of Parlia{47}mentary conflict and Electoral fortune? Change with a Party, however inconsistent, is at least defended by the power of numbers. To remain constant when a Party changes is to excite invidious challenge. Moreover, a separation from Party affects all manner of personal relations and sunders old comradeship. Still, a sincere conviction, in harmony with the needs of the time and upon a great issue, will be found to override all other factors; and it is right and in the public interest that it should. Politics is a generous profession. The motives and characters of public men, though constantly criticized, are in the end broadly and fairly judged. But, anyhow, where is Consistency to-day? The greatest Conservative majority any modern Parliament has seen is led by the creator of the Socialist party, and dutifully cheers the very Statesman who a few years ago was one of the leaders of a General Strike which he only last year tried to make again legal. A life-long Free Trader at the Board of Trade has framed and passed amid the loudest plaudits a whole-hearted Protectionist Tariff. The Government which only yesterday took office to keep the £ sterling from falling, is now supported for its exertions to keep it from rising. These astonishing tergiversations could be multiplied: but they suffice. Let us quote the charitable lines of Crabbe, in the hopes of a similar measure of indulgence:

'Minutely trace man's life; year after year,
Through all his days let all his deeds appear,
And then, though some may in that life be strange,
Yet there appears no vast nor sudden change;
The links that bind those various deeds are seen,
And no mysterious void is left between.'[16]

16. From the poem by the Reverend George Crabbe (1754–1832), "The Parting Hour," II

Charles de Gaulle (New York: Criterion Books, 1968)

THE EDGE OF THE SWORD

FOREWORD

Rightly to be great
Is not to stir without great argument.

Hamlet

We live in an age of uncertainty. So many rules have been broken, prophecies proved false, and doctrines shown to be baseless; so many trials, losses and disappointments have been inflicted upon us, so many shocks and surprises, that the established order has been strained and shaken. The armed forces, fresh from their task of changing the face of the world, have been the first to suffer, and are left now bewailing their vanished glory.

Such a mood of dejection in military circles after periods of maximum effort is nothing new. There is, in the contrast between an army's sham activities in peacetime and its potential powers, an element of the deceptive of which those immediately concerned cannot but be painfully aware: "So much energy unused . . ." said Psichari, ". . . so much

latent purpose, so much sterility!"—and this sense of frustration is especially noticeable among soldiers immediately after the fighting has stopped. The slackening of tension has been too sudden. It is as though a tightly wound spring had suddenly run down, and this state of affairs is not seldom accompanied by mutterings of disillusionment the echoes of which we hear in the writings of Vauvenargues and Vigny.

Everything in the climate of opinion generated by the outbreak of peace combines to disturb the mind of the professional soldier. The masses, after having been exposed for so long to the horrors of violence, violently react against them. A sort of *mystique* spreads rapidly which not only calls down curses upon war in general, but leads men to believe that it is an outmoded activity, for no better reason than that they want it to be so, and this fervor breeds its own form of exorcism. The world is noisy with the condemnation of battle, murder, and sudden death. To inspire a sense of guilt the visual arts are widely employed to make men familiar with the ravages of war. A veil is drawn over the achievements and the heroism of those who did the fighting. No longer is that sense of glory evoked in which, throughout the centuries, nations have found a consolation for their sufferings, but only the memory of blood and tears and death. History is distorted so that the battles of the past shall be forgotten, and the profession of arms attacked root and branch.

Excessive though this tendency may be it is only too easy to understand, for it is the outward manifestation of the instinct of self-preservation in an exhausted Europe vividly aware of the dangers of future conflicts. The spectacle of a sick man shaking his fist at death can leave no one unmoved. Besides, how can that international order for which the masses, temporarily endowed with wisdom, are so eager, be

brought into being without an upsurge of collective emotion? Crowds, it must be remembered, can be stirred only by an appeal to what is most elemental in them, by images of violence and invocations to brutality.

But, hope though we may, what reason have we for thinking that passion and self-interest, the root cause of armed conflict in men and in nations, will cease to operate; that anyone will willingly surrender what he has or not try to get what he wants; in short, that human nature will ever become something other than it is? Is it really likely that the present balance of power will remain unchanged so long as the small want to become great, the strong to dominate the weak, the old to live on? How are frontiers to be stabilized, how is power to be controlled if evolution continues along the same lines as hitherto? Even supposing that nations should agree, for a time, to conduct their mutual relations in accordance with a sovereign code, how effective could such a code be even if enforced? "Laws unsupported by force soon fall into contempt," said Cardinal de Retz. International agreements will be of little value unless there are troops to prevent their infringement. In whatever direction the world may move, it will never be able to do without the final arbitrament of arms.

Is it possible to conceive of life without force? Only if children cease to be born, only if minds are sterilized, feelings frozen, men's needs anesthetized, only if the world is reduced to immobility, can it be banished. Otherwise, in some form or another, it will remain indispensable, for, without it, thought would have no driving power, action no strength. It is the prerequisite of movement and the midwife of progress. Whether as the bulwark of authority, the defender of thrones, the motive power of revolution, we owe to it, turn and turn about, both order and liberty. Force has

watched over civilizations in the cradle; force has ruled empires, and dug the grave of decadence; force gives laws to the peoples and controls their destinies.

It is true to say that the fighting spirit, the art of war, the virtues of the soldier are an integral part of man's inheritance. They have been part and parcel of history in all its phases, the medium through which it has expressed itself. How can we understand Greece without Salamis, Rome without the legions, Christianity without the sword, Islam without the scimitar, our own Revolution without Valmy, the League of Nations without the victory of France? The self-sacrifice of individuals for the sake of the community, suffering made glorious—those two things which are the basic elements of the profession of arms—respond to both our moral and aesthetic concepts. The noblest teachings of philosophy and religion have found no higher ideals.

Should, then, those who control the accumulated strength of France fall into discouragement, the result would be not only peril for the country but a complete rupture of civilization. Into what mad or irresponsible hands might force not fall if its control were relinquished by a wise and highly trained directorate? The time has come for a military élite once more to become conscious of the pre-eminent rôle it has to play, and to concentrate anew upon its one and only duty, which is to prepare itself for war. It must lift its head again and fix its eyes upon the heights. Only if the philosophy proper to the soldier is restored will an edge be given to the sword. In that philosophy he will find nobility of outlook, pride in his vocation, and a chance to influence the world outside himself. In it, till the day of glory dawns, he will find the sole reward worth considering.

"On the Man of Character"
from The Edge of the Sword
by Charles de Gaullle

II

When faced with the challenge of events, the man of character has recourse to himself. His instinctive response is to leave his mark on action, to take responsibility for it, to make it *his own business*. Far from seeking shelter behind his professional superiors, taking refuge in textbooks, or making the regulations bear the responsibility for any decision he may make, he sets his shoulders, takes a firm stand, and looks the problem straight in the face. It is not that he wishes to turn a blind eye to orders, or to sweep aside advice, but only that he is passionately anxious to exert his own will, to make up his own mind. It is not that he is unaware of the risks involved, or careless of consequences, but that he takes their measure honestly, and frankly accepts them. Better still, he embraces action with the pride of a master; for if he takes a hand in it, it will become his, and he is ready to enjoy success on condition that it is really *his own*, and that he derives no profit from it. He is equally prepared to bear the weight of failure, though not without a bitter sense of satisfaction. In short, a fighter who finds within himself all the zest and support he needs, a gambler more intent on success than profits, a man who pays his debts with his own money lends nobility to action. Without him there is but the dreary task of the slave; thanks to him, it becomes the divine sport of the hero.

This does not mean that he carries out his purpose unaided. Others share in it who are not without the merit of self-sacrifice and obedience, and give of their best when carrying out his orders. Some there are who even contribute to his planning—technicians or advisers. But it is character that supplies the essential element, the creative touch, the divine spark; in other words, the basic fact of initiative. Just as talent gives to a work of art a special stamp of understanding and expression, character imparts its own dynamic quality to the elements of action, and gives it personality which, when all is said, makes it live and move, just as the talent of the artist breathes life into matter.

The power to vivify an undertaking implies an energy sufficient to shoulder the burden of its consequences. The man of character finds an especial attractiveness in difficulty, since it is only by coming to grips with difficulty that he can realize his potentialities. Whether or no he proves himself the stronger is a matter between it and him. He is a jealous lover and will share with no one the prizes or the pains that may be his as a result of trying to overcome obstacles. Whatever the cost to himself, he looks for no higher reward than the harsh pleasure of knowing himself to be the man responsible.

This passion for self-reliance is obviously accompanied by some roughness in method. The man of character incorporates in his own person the severity inherent in his effort. This is felt by his subordinates, and at times they groan under it. In any event, a leader of this quality is inevitably aloof, for there can be no authority without prestige, nor prestige unless he keeps his distance. Those under his command mutter in whispers about his arrogance and the demands he makes. But once action starts, criticism disappears. The man of character then draws to himself the hopes and the wills of everyone as the magnet draws iron. When the crisis comes, it is him they follow, it is he who carries the burden on his own shoulders, even though they collapse under it. On the other hand, the knowledge that the lesser men have confidence in him exalts the man of character. The confidence of those under him gives him a sense of obligation. It strengthens his determination but also increases his benevolence, for he is a born protector. If success attends upon his efforts he distributes its advantages with a generous hand. If he meets with failure, he will not let the blame fall on anybody but himself. The security he offers is repaid by the esteem of his men.

In his relationship with his superiors he is generally at a disadvantage. He is too sure of himself, too conscious of his strength to let his conduct be influenced by a mere wish to please. The fact that he finds his powers of decision within himself, and not imposed upon him by an order, often disinclines him to adopt an attitude of passive obedience. All he asks is that he shall be given a task to do, and then be left alone to do it. He wants to be the captain of his own ship, and this many senior officers find intolerable since, temperamentally incapable of taking a wide view, they concentrate on details and draw their mental sustenance from formalities. And so it comes about that the authorities dread any officer who has the gift of making decisions and cares nothing for routine and soothing words. "Arrogant and undisciplined" is what the mediocrities say of him, treating the thoroughbred with a tender mouth as they would a donkey which refuses to move, not realizing that asperity is, more often than not, the reverse side of a strong character, that you can only lean on something that offers resistance, and that resolute and inconveni-

ent men are to be preferred to easy-going natures without initiative.

But when the position becomes serious, when the nation is in urgent need of leaders with initiative who can be relied upon, and are willing to take risks, then matters are seen in a very different light, and credit goes to whom credit is due. A sort of a ground swell brings the man of character to the surface. His advice is listened to, his abilities are praised, and his true worth becomes apparent. To him is entrusted, as a matter of course, the difficult task, the direction of the main effort, the decisive mission. Everything he suggests is given serious consideration; all his demands are met. He, for his part, does not take advantage of this change in his fortunes, but shows a generous temperament and responds wholeheartedly when he is called upon. Scarcely, even, does he taste the sweet savor of revenge, for his every faculty is brought to bear upon the action he must take.

This rallying to character when danger threatens is the outward manifestation of an instinctive urge, for all men at heart realize the supreme value of self-reliance, and know that without it there can be no action of value. In the last resort, we must, to quote Cicero, "judge all conduct in the light of the best examples available," for nothing great has ever been achieved without that passion and that confidence which is to be found only in the man of character. Alexander would never have conquered Asia, Galileo would never have demonstrated the movement of the earth, Columbus would never have discovered America, nor Richelieu have restored the authority of the crown, had they not believed in themselves and taken full control of the task in hand. Boileau would never have established the laws of classic taste, Napoleon would

never have founded an empire, Lesseps would never have pierced the isthmus of Suez, Bismarck would never have achieved German unity, nor Clemenceau have saved his country, had they hearkened to the counsels of shortsighted prudence or the promptings of fainthearted modesty. We can go further and say that those who have done great deeds have often had to take the risk of ignoring the merely routine aspects of discipline. Examples are plentiful: Pélissier at Sebastopol stuffing the Emperor's threatening dispatches into his pocket unopened and reading them only after the action was over; Lanrezac saving his army after Charleroi by breaking off the battle, contrary to orders; Lyautey keeping the whole of Morocco in 1914, in the teeth of instructions issued at a higher level. After the Battle of Jutland and the English failure to take the opportunity offered them of destroying the German fleet, Admiral Fisher, then First Sea Lord, exclaimed in a fury after reading Jellicoe's dispatch: "He has all Nelson's qualities but one: he doesn't know how to disobey!"

It goes without saying that the successes achieved by great men have always depended on their possessing many different faculties. Character alone, if unsupported by other qualities, results only in rashness and obstinacy. On the other hand, purely intellectual gifts, even of the highest order, are not sufficient. History is filled with examples of men who, though they were gifted beyond the ordinary, saw their labors brought to nothing because they were lacking in character. Whether serving, or betraying, their masters in the most expert fashion, they were entirely uncreative. Notable they may have been, but famous never.

No one had a deeper understanding of political institutions than Sieyès. He was full of schemes and unsparing of advice.

He was a member of more than one Assembly at a time when the new France was supplanting the old at the cost of a tremendous crisis; yet, his only real achievement during the revolutionary period was to "remain alive." M. Henri Joly, in his study of Talleyrand's career, is at pains to stress the diplomat's "fertility of mind, quickness of eye, ability to foresee events, and knowledge of men," but observes that he did nothing great at a time which favored greatness, and quotes in support of this view, what Thiers said to him: "Choosing to please rather than to contradict, possessed of leanings rather than opinions . . . he was without firmness of mind or genuine passions." General Trochu, renowned in his own day for intelligence as well as knowledge, and, at an early age, concerned in great matters, was brought to a position of power at a critical moment in the history of his country. Quick-witted and experienced, he lacked none of the gifts which would have enabled him to play a great rôle—save only two—a readiness to launch great undertakings and a determination to see through to the end what he did attempt.

from de Gaulle, The Enemy's House Divided

The Enemy's House Divided

Foreword to the First Edition (1924)

The German defeat cannot deter French opinion from render ing our enemies the homage they earned, by the energy of their leader and the efforts of those who carried out their orders. But the exceptiona extent of the warlike qualities they demonstrated, from one end of th drama to the other, better enables us to measure the errors that the committed.

We can do so all the more easily because almost all the German per sonages who played a role of the first rank in the conduct of the struggl have now published their memoirs. And, while it would not be fitting t make use of these writings without very seriously weighing the spirit o self-justification in which they were written, it is possible—by compar ing them one with another, by counterpoising the theses they maintain and by grouping their affirmations and negations—to discern more o less the principal reversals,[1] and to form a judgment about the action o these personalities.

Among the multiple acts of this drama, the present study is concerne with the episodes that appear to be most freighted with consequence for the course and outcome of the war. Moreover, these seem to be mos characteristic of the spirit and conduct of the personalities who were in volved in them. It also happens—as is easily explained—that the mem oirs of the actors are particularly expansive and impassioned in regar to these events.

The five chapters to follow thus have for their subjects, respectively,

- The indiscipline of von Kluck, who from the 2nd to the 5th of September 1914, created the conditions favorable to our offensive at the Marne and called forth our victory;
- The unremitting struggle waged by Grand Admiral Tirpitz against Chancellor Bethmann-Hollweg from 1914 to 1919, to compel him to declare unlimited submarine warfare, which he by no means wished to do, and which induced the Americans to take up arms;

- The inability of Germany to establish a unified command in the coalition of central states, even though all the circumstances combined to offer it to them;
- The governmental crisis, thenceforth incurable, provoked at Berlin in 1917 by the intrigue of Ludendorff, who was resolved to seize de facto dictatorial power and did not hesitate, in order to achieve this, to overthrow Chancellor Bethmann, compelling the Kaiser's will, rousing up political parties, and creating a fatal agitation in public opinion;
- Finally, beginning on July 18, 1918, the abrupt and complete moral collapse of a valiant people, a degradation all the more grandiose because this people had, until then, been able to muster a collective will to conquer, an obstinacy in staying the course, a capacity for suffering that deserved the admiration and astonishment of its enemies from the first day of the war, and will assuredly secure the homage of history.

The German military leaders, whose task it was to guide and coordinate such immense efforts, gave proof of an audacity, of a spirit of enterprise, of a will to succeed, of a vigor in handling resources, whose reverberations have not been stilled by their ultimate defeat. Perhaps this study—or, more precisely, the disclosure of the events that are its object—may make evident the defects common to these eminent men: the characteristic taste for immoderate undertakings; the passion to expand their personal power at any cost; the contempt for the limits marked out by human experience, common sense, and the law.

Perhaps reading this will cause the reader to reflect that the German leaders, far from combatting these excesses in themselves, or at least concealing them as defects, considered them instead as forces, and erected them into a system; and that this error bore down with a crushing weight at the decisive moments of the war. One may perhaps find in their conduct the imprint of Nietzsche's theories of the elite and the Overman, adopted by the military generation that was to conduct the recent hostilities and which had come to maturity and definitively fixed its philosophy around the turn of the century.

The Overman—with his exceptional character, his will to power, his taste for risk, his contempt for others who want to see him as Zarathustra—appeared to these impassioned men of ambition as the ideal that they should attain. They voluntarily resolved to be part of that formi-

dable Nietzschean elite who are convinced that, in pursuing their ow glory, they are serving the general interest; who exercise compulsion o "the mass of slaves," holding them in contempt; and who do not hesitate in the face of human suffering, except to hail it as necessary an desirable.

Perhaps, finally, in meditating upon these events, one may wish t measure with what dignity we should clothe that superior philosophy o war which animated these leaders and which could at one time rende futile the harshest efforts of a great people and at another constitute th most universal and surest guarantee of the destinies of the fatherland.

This study will have attained its object if it helps in a modest way t induce our military leaders of tomorrow, following the example of thei victorious models in the recent war, to shape their minds and mold thei characters according to the rules of classical order. It is from those rule that they may draw that sense of balance, of what is possible, of measure, which alone renders the works of energy durable and fecund.

In the classical French garden, no tree seeks to stifle the others b overshadowing them; the plants accommodate themselves to being geometrically arranged; the pond does not aspire to be a waterfall; the statues do not vie to obtrude themselves upon the admiring spectator. A noble melancholy comes over us, from time to time. Perhaps it come from our feeling that each element, in isolation, might have been more radiantly brilliant. But that would be to the detriment of the whole; an the observer takes delight in the rule that impresses on the garden it magnificent harmony.

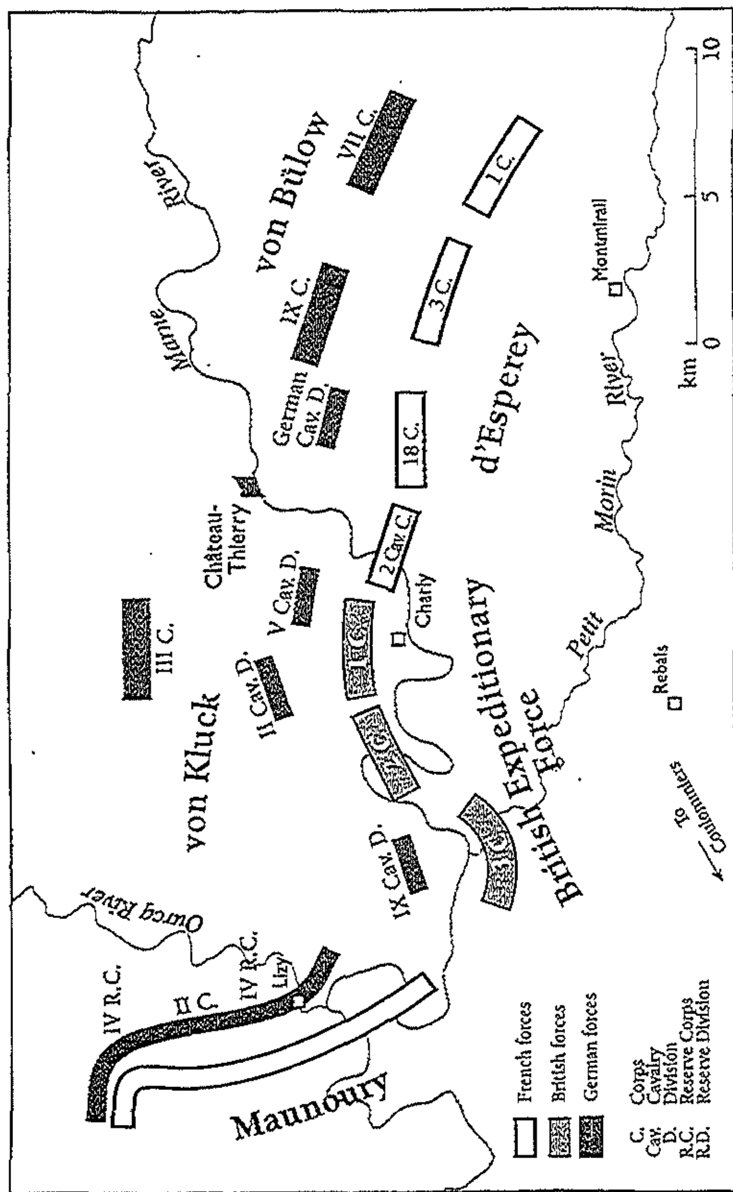

FIGURE 4E.
The Marne recrossed, morning of 9 September

2

de Gaulle, The Enemy's House Divided

The Declaration of Unlimited Submarine Warfare

The proclamation of an unlimited submarine blockade was bound to entail the gravest foreign policy consequences. There is no doubt that in this matter it was the chancellor of the Empire, the head of government exercising political direction of the war, who logically should have had final disposition over the decision. As we shall see, his authority was disputed furiously and at length, then torn away from him in the final reckoning.

A relentless battle between the government and the navy was allowed to go on around the weak mind of Wilhelm II over the course of two years. That struggle took every form: political controversy, sly intrigue, violent outbursts. In each of the two camps, the impossible was accomplished to assure the support of public opinion and of men of influence. What ought to have remained a question of utility and opportunity, at all costs, became a great affair of political parties and the standard by which personalities were to be judged. The conflict was finally resolved in the worst way and at the worst moment. This injected into German public opinion the gravest acrimony and divisiveness, from which it never recovered. And this resolution, decided contrary to the only man who ought to have been acquainted with it—against the head of the government, against the chancellor—was the direct cause of the German defeat.

If the logic of principles had been respected—if the government of the Empire had been allowed to conduct the war as it wished, if it had abstained from launching intensified submarine warfare in February 1917—then Germany would have pulled it off. Without American interven-

tion and the hope that the Entente drew from it, the events of this period —the Russian Revolution and the peace with Russia some months later, the failure of the French spring offensive combined with the moral crisis which was its consequence, and the efforts of Lansdowne and Ramsay MacDonald in London—would have placed the Empire in highly favorable circumstances to negotiate peace with the aid of the mediation that President Wilson had just offered.

I

Until the spring of 1916, Grand Admiral von Tirpitz was secretary of the Navy. Already well before the war, Chancellor Bethmann-Hollweg and Tirpitz were locked in a continuous, if veiled, struggle.

Bethmann, who was a jurist and a democrat, and Tirpitz, a quintessential Junker and an "old Prussian" despite his breadth of mind and culture, could not easily understand each other.[1] The grand admiral had properly been the father of the German fleet; and he was the soul of the naval challenge to England. The chancellor, however, desiring to achieve a rapprochement with England, had favored the visit of Lord Haldane to Berlin and accepted the principle of a limitation on naval construction. It was Tirpitz who prevented any agreement. Bethmann and Tirpitz never forgave each other for their respective parts in the episode.[2]

From the first day of hostilities [in 1914], the grand admiral's opposition to the war policy of the chancellor was entirely unconcealed. Bethmann never gave up hope of one day reconciling Germany and England; he intended to make Russia bear the costs of the conflict. Tirpitz, like many of the Old Prussians, dreamed of an alliance with the Tsar and of crushing the democracies of the West. Furthermore, his entire life had been devoted to preparing for war against Great Britain. He wanted to see the naval enemy smitten.

By 2 August 1914, the opposition between the admiral and the chancellor appeared plainly. That day a conference was held before the Kaiser, between Bethmann, the Minister of Foreign Affairs Jagow, Chief of the General Staff von Moltke, the Minister of War Falkenhayn, and Tirpitz. It was a question of reaching agreement on the dates for sending the different declarations of war. A violent altercation took place between the admiral, supported by Moltke, and the chancellor. The latter, very much annoyed, left the meeting. When he was gone, Tirpitz said to the sovereign, "For several years now our Foreign Ministry has not

functioned. It is not my role to give you advice in this matter, but the gravity of the hour constrains me"—(already!)—"to overstep the limits of my function. As the Chancellor is my superior, I do not wish to judge him. But as for Jagow, he must be replaced by Hintze, whom you will recall from Mexico."[3]

Recalled or not, Admiral von Hintze, minister to Mexico, in fact returned from there immediately. He found the means to open a route for himself all the way into the headquarters of the Kaiser. But from there, Bethmann, who had retaken the advantage, succeeded in sending him to Peking.[4]

Tirpitz, whose normal place was in Berlin, wished to follow the Headquarters of the General Staff, hoping to be able to exercise his influence on it. There [in Charleville]he chafed at the reins. He was held in distrust by the Kaiser's cabinet, was viewed in a rather bad light by the General Staff of the Army (which, under the orders of the moderate Falkenhayn,[a] judged him "tiresome and unrestrained"), and he was in open conflict with the chancellor's people and with Jagow's.[b] He avenged himself for this coldness by making pessimistic and sarcastic remarks about the military.[c] He had flatly proposed that the fleet should sail out at the first favorable occasion and seek battle. But this project enthused neither the Kaiser, nor the sailors themselves, nor Falkenhayn. Heartbroken, the grand admiral thus saw his life's work rendered vain. In an excess of bitterness, he naturally blamed his old adversary and threw himself into a shrill and dogged campaign of insinuation against the chancellor, claiming that "he was afraid to excite England" and that he was the cause of the inaction of the fleet.

[a] Recall that Falkenhayn had replaced Moltke, disgraced after his defeat at the Marne.

[b] At Charleville, Tirpitz had been lodged at the Place Carnot (the Maison of Madame G. Gailly), as far as possible from the Kaiser, who lived close to the station (Maison of M. Corneau). "Very few people come to see me," he wrote, "and only at night, hugging the wall in order not to compromise themselves." (*Wartime Letters of Tirpitz*).

[c] At the "Hotel du Lion d'Argent" at Charleville, the officers of the departments of the General Staff had their "casino." There, toward the end of 1914, it was said, "There is only one man at Charleville who does not wish to believe that the war will be over by 1 April 1915; that man is Grand-Admiral von Tirpitz." (*Wartime Letters of Tirpitz*). [See Tirpitz, *Memoirs*, 2:229.]

On 4 September 1914, through his friends in the Reichstag, Tirpitz was able to mount a demonstration in his favor. A motion was made, inviting the government to quickly present new legislation for naval construction. And Count von Reventlow, a personal friend of the grand admiral, opened a campaign along the same lines in a series of vigorous articles in the *German Daily News.*[5] On 4 September 1914, before the Marne, the entire world believed that the war would be quickly terminated. In any case, who believed that it would last more than three years? Now, three years would be required to construct new battleships. To put such a project into execution would be to proclaim that a war without quarter would be waged on England. The chancellor had the motion buried. His resentment against the admiral increased; and in return, the admiral fully reciprocated.

Tirpitz saw that he could not vanquish the opposition of the Kaiser and of many naval officers (notably von Pohl, the chief of the naval general staff, and von Müller, the chief of the Kaiser's naval cabinet) to his plans for a great naval battle. So he resolved, although without any enthusiasm, to devote his efforts to submarine warfare. An exclusive partisan of great combat ships, in peacetime he had systematically scorned the grandiose projects for mass producing submarines, projects that pitted against his own plans a certain number of officers and engineers, some theoreticians and publicists, and (in the Reichstag committees) politicians preoccupied with economizing.[6]

Once he had resolved on submarine warfare, however, Tirpitz wanted to see it begun only when the means existed to conduct it on a very grand scale. With good reason he judged that the moral and material results would be infinitely better if the maximum impact were obtained at a single blow. This would leave no time for the Entente to find a means of defense, or for neutrals—America in particular—to crystallize their attitude and perhaps to prepare their intervention.

According to him, it was expedient, therefore, prior to taking any action, to construct a considerable number of submarines, to arrange ports, to make sure that repairs would be possible, and to prepare for the action at sea.

But this was not the opinion of the chief of the Naval General Staff, von Pohl. This man of narrow, ambitious, and vain intellect was above all jealous of Tirpitz. He was inclined to propose (as if on principle) the contrary of whatever the grand admiral recommended. Moreover, it seemed clear that Pohl owed his position to this notorious hostility and

to the hope entertained by the chancellor and by the Kaiser's cabinet that they might use him to neutralize Tirpitz and be left in peace to some extent.

Von Pohl was determined to put the submarine war into effect immediately. He felt haste was all the more necessary because he was preparing to take command of the fleet and did not wish to leave the General Staff before he had put his name on the orders launching this new form of naval warfare for the first time in history.

Chancellor Bethmann had no technical understanding whatever of naval questions. But he understood that submarine warfare waged on commercial ships would be the start of a series of possibly very grave difficulties. His common sense, the reports of German ambassadors, in particular those sent by Count Bernstorff from Washington, and the declarations of U.S. Ambassador Gerard, all left him in no doubt whatever. He was sure that the destruction of neutral vessels and of English and French ocean liners (on which many Americans voyaged) would lead to acute complications with the United States and perhaps with other neutral powers. And in regard to the "unrestricted submarine warfare"[d] that was contemplated by the chief of staff of the Navy, the chancellor was rightly convinced that it would lead to a conflict over principles with Wilson and to war with America. Bethmann was resolved to do everything to insure that this new enemy did not join the Entente. Beyond the moral and material reinforcement that it would give to the adversaries of the Central Powers, he foresaw the dashing of his hopes for American mediation at the favorable moment.

From the moment Tirpitz became aware of the chancellor's opposition to submarine warfare, his resolve to impose it was immediate and implacable. The same passion, tenacity, and energy that he had previously brought to condemning it, he now put into recommending it, praising it, demanding it. To force it upon the government, which did not want it at all, he deployed every means and used every channel.

He threw the question into the political arena. He made it into a struggle over personalities, putting himself up against the chancellor before the public, thereby imparting to this controversy a fierce and furious character that we can hardly imagine today.

[d] Unrestricted submarine warfare consisted in sinking encountered vessels without giving warning or even surfacing, thus depriving passengers and crew of all possibility of saving themselves.

At the end of December 1914, Admiral von Pohl proposed to the Kaiser to declare the submarine blockade of the coasts of Great Britain and Ireland and to set the launching of operations for the end of January. Tirpitz made plain his disapproval of the date, finding it premature, but openly gave his assent to the principle. As the chancellor saw, the Kaiser and the High Command were dejected by recent setbacks on the Yser, and by the prospect of a whole winter of stalemate.[7] They were thus disposed to lend an ear to the hotheads in the navy, who claimed shrilly that with submarine warfare they had the means "to bring England to its knees in six weeks." To gain time, he tried to reconcile himself with Tirpitz; he knew Tirpitz was disposed to defer the proclamation of the submarine blockade for lack of resources. He had several conversations with the grand admiral on this subject. During the last, on 27 January [1915], he received assurances from Tirpitz that he would oppose von Pohl's hastiness. Reassured, Bethmann consented to have jurists and the staffs of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs go to work on the text of a declaration of blockade. This would gain several months. In the spring, great military events would surely develop, and the Kaiser would be thinking about something else.

What game did the grand admiral play during the few days that followed? The details are not known. However, enough is known to confirm that he was neither loyal nor above-board. On 4 February, von Pohl took advantage when the Kaiser was visiting the port of Wilhelmshafen by ship, far from the chancellor and Jagow. Taking this as a sign that slumbering naval ambitions were reawakening in the Kaiser, von Pohl had him approve the text of a declaration of blockade that had been drafted in his headquarters. He swore to Wilhelm II that he had obtained the approval of the chancellor in advance; and he had this text published immediately. Tirpitz was present but in no way opposed it. He limited himself to having a few details modified.[8] What is one to think of this change of face? Until we are more fully informed, are we not justified in concluding that the grand admiral's hatred of Bethmann, his desire to inflict a defeat on him, and no doubt also his hope that Bethmann might submit his resignation, prevailed in Tirpitz's mind and conscience, over his convictions and his word?

Bethmann could do no more than record the fait accompli. He discerned the series of new perils to which it exposed Germany. But since his character was too mediocre to oppose the thing squarely, he hoped

the future would offer him the occasion to unravel this web, whose weaving he had not been able to prevent.

II

On 12 February [1915], an American note was received in Berlin protesting the declaration of blockade and warning Germany that she would be responsible for all damages caused by submarines to the life and property of U.S. citizens. That threat had been easy to foresee; Ambassador Gerard in Berlin and Count Bernstorff in Washington had warned of it clearly.

The U.S. note restored the chancellor's energy. On 15 February he obtained from the Kaiser the decision to wait until further notice to start the operation. But distrusting the independent spirit of Tirpitz and of the new chief of the Naval General Staff, Bachmann,[e] he took the additional precaution of having it stipulated directly and specifically to all the submarine commanders that they were to spare all neutral vessels within the blockade zone. Finally, determined to cut off at their source the incredible rumors about the possibilities of submarine warfare that were streaming into the political world, the press, the salons, and the streets, he persuaded the Kaiser's cabinet to send Tirpitz the following telegram: "The Kaiser wishes that you may make known to him, without reticence, whether and in what measure you can guarantee that within six weeks the new commercial war will constrain England to capitulate. Respond by telegram."[9]

Twenty days previously, Tirpitz had declared to Bethmann, and had even written to the Kaiser, that in his opinion they ought to defer the beginning of the submarine war, because sufficient means to conduct it were lacking. Carried away this time by the passion of the personal fight into which he had thrown himself, seeing only the combat with his adversary Bethmann, who must be defeated, he had the audacity to respond, "The Secretary of State, Tirpitz, and the Chief of the General Staff of the Navy, Bachmann, are persuaded that England will be brought to capitulate six weeks after the commencement of the new submarine war, provided that, from the outset, all the available means are energetically engaged."[10]

[e] Admiral Bachmann had replaced von Pohl, named commander of the High Sea Fleet.

That promise removed the hesitations of the Kaiser's cabinet, and on the 20th of February 1915, the order to execute the policy was launched.

Of course, once the submarine blockade was announced, Tirpitz and Bachmann never ceased to intensify it, despite the entreaties of the Wilhelmstrasse. They began by excusing the submarine commanders from sparing neutral ships encountered in the blockade zone, under the pretext that all Allied commercial vessels sailed under a neutral flag. At first free passage was reserved for Swedish and Norwegian boats; later that privilege was denied them. Finally, alleging that the security of German crews outweighed all other considerations, the submarines were authorized to sink enemy ships without surfacing, which amounted to suppressing all prior warning.

Despite all the prayers and recommendations the chancellor sent to the navy, no account was taken of any of them. The foreign situation, however, should have inclined Germany toward moderation. Italy was reorienting itself toward the war. Bulgaria was beginning to propose its cooperation. To calm the one and draw the other along, it was absolutely necessary that the policy of the Central Powers not be condemned by neutral powers pushed to the limit; above all it was absolutely necessary that the ties between Berlin and Washington not be severed. Bethmann understood that quite well. But while he was responsible for the whole, he had neither the power to command this nor the character to insist on it.

On 7 May, the *Lusitania*, an English liner filled with American passengers, was sunk. As is well known, the incident triggered a truly national outburst of anger in the United States. Wilson immediately protested violently and demanded indemnities. The chancellor believed the moment had come to retake the offensive against the naval command.

General Headquarters, greatly preoccupied with the French attacks at Artois and with the advance march of Mackensen, after Gorlice, and now altogether skeptical about the results that would be "obtained against England in six weeks," no longer took any interest in submarines.[11]

Moreover Falkenhayn, overwhelmed by Austrian lamentations since Italy's entry into the war, absolutely insisted that Bulgaria be persuaded to fight and that the neutrals be kept neutral. At last the Kaiser and political opinion were, for the moment, favorable to the chancellor. His projects, of making a peace without annexations in the West and gaining much more advantage in the East, seemed to many to be good sense

itself, since Mackensen had pierced the Russian front and the French had leapt with one bound as far as Vimy.[12]

Thus on 31 May, at the council of war held at Pless,[f] when Tirpitz and Bachmann found themselves alone in proposing to continue submarine warfare as it had been conducted, Bethmann declared that "he wanted no responsibility for this." Falkenhayn approved that, as did also those from the Kaiser's cabinet; Wilhelm II therefore signed the order to spare all neutral vessels and, some days later, the order not to sink passenger liners, even those of enemy powers.

In order to apply balm to the wounds thus inflicted on the grand admiral, the Kaiser bestowed on him "the Order of Merit." On receiving it some weeks later, Tirpitz said, "I am greatly moved by this privilege, but not happy. Given the manner in which the war on the seas is being conducted, there is no more joy for me."

He was not, moreover, of a character to accept defeat in exchange for a ribbon. Seeing that he was persona ingrata to the Kaiser and the Supreme Command, he resorted to his political friends. In the corridors of the Reichstag, the battle against the chancellor became more and more ardent. There one saw the cold face of Count Westorp, the leader of the Conservatives, "take on an expression of contempt" when Bethmann's name was mentioned. One saw Bassermann, the leader of the National Liberals, incite the deputies, declaring to them that the resignation of the grand admiral was imminent. He read them a letter from von Pohl, commander of the fleet, addressed to the Kaiser, demanding to be relieved of his post "in view of the conditions imposed by the chancellor on the naval war." There one even saw Dr. Kämpf, the venerable leader of the Center and president of the Reichstag, shaking his prophet's beard and invoking the shade of Bismarck. It was hard going for the defenders of Bethmann. Among them were Jagow, stiff and phlegmatic, but a conscientious minister and loyal to his chancellor; Payer, skeptical and eloquent, disdainful of the military men and instinctively opposed to their conceptions; and above all, Erzberger: agitated, insinuating, his gaze lowered, gliding over the carpets, "his shoulders bent as if ever afraid of a blow from a baton," but devoured by ill-concealed ambition, detesting the political right, who paid him back amply in kind and

[f] In the spring of 1915 the headquarters of the Imperial General Staff was moved from Charleville to Pless, for the offensive against the Russians.

treated him as "a dangerous Jew." All these men, moreover, had neither the inclination to make a decision in this matter, nor the power to do so, but were all the more irritated and uncertain. Their agitation was not hidden from the public. In order to have some peace, the chancellor adjourned the Reichstag. At the last session of the "Principal Committee"[g] on August 15th, the right sharply pressured Jagow, who was representing the government: "You are afraid of America!" Jagow was obliged to promise, not without irony, that "The American attitude will in no way influence us regarding submarine warfare."

Some days later, the *Arabic* was sunk by the naval officers, without warning and in formal violation of the orders they had received from the Kaiser not to sink passenger steamers. This time Bethmann acted with vigor. In Washington, Count Bernstorff ran to Wilson to declare that the misfortune was solely due to the error of a submarine commander, that the officer had been punished and that Germany was ready to indemnify the victims. Tirpitz and Bachmann were called urgently to Pless. When they arrived on the morning of 26 August, they first met the chancellor, who immediately challenged them:

> Ambassador Gerard tells me that the situation is grave with regard to our relations with America. That is also the opinion of our naval attaché, in Washington . . . I have had enough of walking upon volcanoes! . . . I want to be able to telegraph, without lying to Washington, that we will no longer torpedo any passenger steamer without warning, and without the passengers and crew being put in a position to save themselves.[13]

Then he bitterly revisited the *Lusitania* affair, in which the naval officers refused to recognize their errors: "I will accept the judgment of a tribunal of arbitration. It will fix the indemnities that we shall pay."[14]

Thereupon they were received at the Kaiser's. Here Tirpitz did not show his usual arrogance. He even proposed to withdraw all the submarines from British waters and to dispatch them to the Mediterranean.

[g] The Reichstag had elected from its bosom a committee, called the "Principal" or Main Committee. The leaders of all the parties were members; it was charged "to keep itself current on all questions concerning the foreign and domestic conduct of the war, and to manifest at their discretion the sentiment and intentions of the representatives of the German people." The committee did not hold public meetings, and its discussions have not been published.

He agreed that a conciliatory note would be sent to America and insisted only that it should not sacrifice the principle of submarine warfare. Bachmann showed less pliancy, saying that this was no time to send Washington "a declaration of weakness."[15] If one was absolutely determined to appear conciliatory, he argued, one should restrict oneself to "an invitation, made by the chancellor to the Navy, to have measures taken for saving the passengers of torpedoed liners," an invitation that would be published in the newspapers. And Tirpitz and Bachmann discussed the content and form of what the chancellor was to write; no one saw fit to invite them to mind their own business.[16]

Lunch was announced and the Kaiser cut off the conference to dine.

The next day, von Treutler, Bethmann's confidant and his representative at General Headquarters, came to Tirpitz's quarters and announced to him that Wilhelm II, acting upon the advice of the chancellor, had ordered the Foreign Office to send Washington the note Bethmann wanted. And when the admiral exclaimed that one ought at least to have taken his advice on the wording, Treutler replied, "The note has already gone off."[17]

During the day, Tirpitz and Bachmann were sent the Kaiser's order not to send any new submarines into the commercial war "until the situation has been clarified."

That same evening, Tirpitz, the Secretary of State for the Navy, Bachmann, the head of the Naval General Staff, and von Pohl, the Commander of the Fleet, demanded to be relieved of their functions.

To von Pohl, a mediocrity, the reply was limited to saying "that he had no right to protest his Majesty's orders." Bachmann, an excellent soldier without political experience or any taste to meddle in politics, was dismissed. But they were afraid of Tirpitz, knowing that he was a man who could cause great trouble out of office. His resignation was therefore refused, while he was reprimanded severely by the Kaiser: "Much previous experience has convinced me that all collaboration between yourself and the chancellor is impossible in all naval questions which touch upon politics, that is to say, almost all those concerning the conduct of the war at sea. I shall therefore forgo consulting with you regularly in regard to these questions. . . ."[18]

Despite the authoritarian brusqueness of the imperial letter, Tirpitz surely sensed that he was feared. If he was unaware of it, moreover, he would have learned of it quickly enough, upon seeing the crowd of personalities that paraded to visit him in Berlin during these days of crisis,

to assure him loudly of their devotion. Half the Reichstag came to see and acclaim him. So did the boards of the six great German economic associations, "The Union of Farmers," "The German Association of the Peasantry," "The Group of Christian Peasants," "The Central Union of German Industrialists," "The Union of the Middle Classes of the Empire," and crowds of functionaries, businessmen, publicists.

Thus shored up, the grand admiral reiterated his resignation, declaring "that he could not remain at his post if he were not consulted in those questions which were the reason for the existence of his charge." The sovereign gave in and sent him this imperial promise: "It is entirely in accord with my intentions to request your advice in regard to all important naval questions."[19]

An extraordinary retreat of the supreme power, and unchallengeable proof of the crisis of authority, which (despite certain appearances) was the true moral cause of the defeat of the Empire!

III

The relations between the chancellor and the secretary of state of the Navy at this time had the character of open and public hostility. When, contrary to Tirpitz's advice, Admiral von Holtzendorf was named to replace Bachmann as head of the Naval General Staff, Tirpitz noisily refused to receive him. Everywhere it was said that Bethmann would be forced to depart and that Tirpitz would take his place. The grand admiral made every effort to bring people of weight around to his point of view: military men, politicians, businessmen. The empress, the crown princess, and Prince Henry of Prussia escaped him no better than Ballin, Cuno, or Stinnes. Hindenburg, already renowned, whom a large body of public opinion wanted to see made generalissimo, and moreover embittered because the Kaiser and Falkenhayn had rejected his strategic projects,[h] received the admiral's visit at his headquarters in Lötzen. What did Tirpitz propose to him? The Marshal has remained quite discreet on this point, but there are reasons to believe that the admiral offered him an alliance. "If I become chancellor, you will be generalissimo!" The

[h] At the beginning of 1915, Hindenburg had proposed that the Western front be substantially reduced, at the risk of losing some ground there, and that an offensive of very great scope be mounted against the Russians, to completely destroy their army. Falkenhayn preferred an effort conducted with limited means.

victor of Tannenberg detested politics and intrigue. But his chief of staff, Ludendorff, disdained neither.

Falkenhayn and the General Headquarters saw the second winter of the war arriving, and were obliged to halt the march on Russia; they began again to think favorably of the submarine weapon. In addition, Bulgaria had now intervened. Moreover, the offensive against Verdun, which it was hoped would be decisive, was being prepared, and it was considered imperative to disrupt English maritime traffic to the maximum, before and during the effort. Tirpitz could momentarily count on the cooperation of the Army Command.

The Reichstag, having returned from adjournment, began again to work itself up. The position of the chancellor there was difficult now because the right could not forgive his "softness," while the left found him insufficiently democratic and wanted to make him propose universal suffrage for Prussia, which would immediately have embroiled him with the Kaiser.

The grand admiral opened his door to all the politicians and held the most frank discussions with them. Remarkably, he declared to Erzberger, "It is my unshakable conviction that our navy is in a position, thanks to unrestricted submarine warfare, to bring England to its knees in six weeks, and to make it capitulate unconditionally."[20]

During the winter of 1915–16, such remarks, repeated on all sides, had become virtually the refrain of conversation for all Germans. The great economic associations named above offered a petition to the chancellor covered with signatures, protesting to him "that Germany's consideration for American interests ought not to go so far as to throw down the most redoubtable weapon she has at her disposal for conducting economic war against England."[21]

The right-wing press—above all the *Deutsche Tageszeitung*, followed by the *Gazette de la Croix*, the *Lokal Anzeiger*, and the *Gazette de Cologne*—treated America and Wilson like declared enemies and called with great clamor for a Bismarck to direct the policy of the Empire. Erzberger recounts:

> At the beginning of February, there was seen developing in the public, at whom fantastic statistics were being thrown, a movement of opinion in favor of unrestricted submarine warfare, comparable only to the movement in Rome in May 1915 which by pressure from the

streets compelled the Italian government to go to war. To my knowledge it was the first time in Germany that the people in the streets had taken part in politics. When I returned from the Orient, a veritable frenzy reigned in Berlin. Any man who was not a partisan of unrestricted submarine warfare found himself treated as an enemy of the nation, as an anti-patriot, a defeatist, etc. When it was squarely put to all these heroic armchair sailors what would become of Germany if America declared war on her, they fell silent or replied, "We shall see later," or "The submarines would act so swiftly that the Americans would not have time to enter the war."[22]

Tirpitz judged that the moment had come for him to move to the decisive attack. Reconciled for the moment with Admiral von Holtzendorf, chief of the Naval General Staff, he assembled at the home of the minister of war, Wild von Hohenborn, a council of conspirators, who met on 30 October 1915 and 5 January 1916. There Grand Admiral Holtzendorf and Wild von Hohenborn preached to Falkenhayn, whose support was indispensable. Falkenhayn declared himself decided, saying that if he had heretofore shown himself hostile to submarine warfare, it was in order to be assured of Bulgarian intervention. That intervention having taken place, there was no further obstacle, provided that the Navy promised to succeed. Tirpitz and Holtzendorf accepted this obligation with a light heart, and the agreement was made.[23]

On 7 January, Holtzendorf sent a categorical report to the Kaiser: "If we remove the trammels imposed on submarine warfare, we can affirm as certain, taking as a basis experiments already made, that the resistance of England will be broken in at most a half-year."[24]

At the same time, and with the same ink, Tirpitz wrote to the chancellor.

Once again in doubt about the undulating mind of Falkenhayn, the grand admiral sent to him at General Headquarters on 11 February a trusted aide, Ship's Captain Widenmann. This sailor, charged with creating a broil between the chief of the General Staff of the Army and the chancellor, touched Falkenhayn on a sensitive point. He insisted on the fact that Bethmann's peace projects were most unfortunate, for he meant not to keep any conquest in the West and to abandon Belgium, on the pretext that it would never be possible to crush the French and the British. Falkenhayn, who was completing preparations for the offensive

against Verdun, was greatly moved by the argument. Indeed, he counted on reaping a decisive victory in the next few days. But he knew that his project for an attack against the French had been strongly criticized by Bethmann's entourage, who agreed in this matter with his fortunate and menacing rival, Hindenburg. Thus cleverly outmaneuvered, Falkenhayn took his supreme decisions and replied to Tirpitz's messenger, "We are all in accord in thinking that England will fight until the decision. The decision is the possession of Belgium. If we let go of Belgium, we are lost!" And then, "I have decided in favor of submarine warfare, and I firmly count on its implementation. In order to insure that, I will fully commit myself to it, and I will obtain it. . . ."[25]

Finally, on 23 February, profiting from the arrival of the Kaiser at Wilhelmshafen and from the exaltation produced in his spirit by the first news of the assaults on Verdun, Tirpitz brusquely took it up: "It is with a profound joy that I learned of your Majesty's intention to conduct a serious struggle against English tonnage. The question of tonnage is the decisive question of the whole war. It is no longer possible to postpone it, for it is a question for Germany of its very existence. . . . It is necessary that you come to a decision. . . ."[26]

Bethmann saw the storm approach, and understood that it was high time to subjugate Tirpitz or resign his post. He maneuvered, notably, toward the side of the accessible Falkenhayn. On 6 March, the Kaiser's cabinet was called together to study the question of submarine warfare: Bethmann, Falkenhayn, and Holtzendorf.

Tirpitz, apprised, urgently demanded of von Müller, the chief of the naval cabinet, if the Kaiser had called him as well. "No," replied Muller. "His Majesty has not ordered that the Secretary of State for the Navy be present."[27]

What occurred during the course of that conference?

On 6 March, precisely, Falkenhayn found himself newly inclined toward moderation, because General Pétain had just restored the critical situation of the French at Verdun. . . .

In brief, the council decided, at the instance of the chancellor, to postpone submarine warfare until an indeterminate date.

The next day, Grand Admiral Tirpitz, secretary of state for the Navy and creator of the German fleet, reported sick. A telegram from the Kaiser invited him immediately to request a leave of absence, which he received on 17 March.[28]

IV

If the chancellor had waited such a long time to make his implacable adversary leave the government, it was because he foresaw that an independent Tirpitz would cause him more trouble than a Tirpitz with official duties.

The grand admiral left the Naval Ministry amidst intense popular and political emotion. The entire press on the right, and even the *Germania* from the center, outdid each other in celebrating him. In the Reichstag, Mr. Basserman, leader of the National Liberals, had his group pass a dithyrambic order of the day. In a brochure composed by him and distributed throughout the country, he wrote, "The faithful pilot has just left the ship." He extolled "the great statesman Tirpitz" and declared "that they would invade his retirement to beg him to enlighten the country with his counsels."[29]

The Conservatives demanded that a public session should be held on the incident, in which they intended to overwhelm the chancellor. He succeeded in avoiding this drama, but had to submit to very severe challenges in the "Principal Committee."

Popular demonstrations, the first since the mobilization and the last before the Revolution, were organized in favor of Tirpitz in Berlin and had to be prohibited by the military authorities and disbanded by force.

Tirpitz doubtless did not need these displays to convince him to pursue the battle against his enemy [Bethmann]. His conviction, his character, and his resentment were entirely sufficient for that. But he found in the public, and notably in the elite, all the desired elements for assembling a party. And this great military leader did not wait two weeks to create that party, "of the fatherland." He did not hesitate to traverse Germany, presiding in uniform over impassioned and tumultuous gatherings. Taking the floor to speak, he used all his powers to overstimulate the three sentiments that were agitating Germany: anxiety over the outcome of the war; greed for the benefits that would crown so many exertions; and finally, hatred of the enemy. And he threw out to the masses a tripartite demand for action: the resignation of the chancellor, the annexation of Belgium, and merciless submarine warfare.

Prince von Salm, president of the Naval League, accompanied Tirpitz everywhere, sending to the Kaiser's cabinet letters of this kind: "Nothing could make us happier than American intervention. At least we would thus recover the freedom of action that we have, alas, lost. . . . Unrestricted submarine warfare would be welcomed by the people with a cry of joy."[30]

Moreover, the resignation of the grand admiral had not increased the authority of the government over the Navy. On 24 March 1916, the French ocean liner *Sussex* was sunk, without warning, with several American passengers on board. To the indignant protestations of Wilson, the chancellor at first replied that the submarines surely had nothing to do with it, given the orders that they had received. Then, when it was proven that despite these orders, a submarine had torpedoed the *Sussex*, he had to make profuse excuses and promise reparations.[31] Tirpitz, in the name of the "Party of the Fatherland," sent the Kaiser a dispatch entreating him not to give way to Wilson's threats. And from everywhere in Germany, committees of the party showered on the General Headquarters and the Chancery what was henceforth called a "heavy bombardment of telegrams," all conceived with the same message and signed by recognized and weighty names. The Kaiser, nevertheless, declared that Bethmann was right and ordered that the commander of the submarine be punished. But the secretary of state, von Capelle, would not agree to pronounce the punishment. Nor would the chief of the Naval General Staff, the commander of the fleet, or the Flanders commander of the naval corps. The Kaiser had to do it himself.

The redoubled blows with which the enemy struck Germany during the summer of 1916 restrained for some months the propaganda of the Party of the Fatherland and the political agitation directed against Bethmann-Hollweg. The offensive on the Somme, the victories of Brusilov, the taking of Monastir by the French and the Serbs, the intervention of Romania, made the pan-Germanists fall silent and gave courage to the moderates.[32] The press no longer spoke of annexations, nor of the crushing of the Anglo-Saxons. What the public read now was no longer the frenzy of Reventlow in the *Deutsche Tageszeitung*, nor the fiery articles of the *Cologne Gazette*, nor the reports of Karl Endres in the *Lokal Anzeiger*. They hardly had a taste for anything except the pessimistic irony of Theodor Wolf in the *Berliner Tageblatt;* the acidic and bitter insinuations of the *Frankfurt Gazette*, and Georg Bernhard's theories in the *Voss Gazette* on reconciliation with the French.

The committees and corridors of the Reichstag were now anxiously quiet. Bethmann and Jagow no longer heard themselves criticized there. And the chancellor found no opposition when he shouted, raising his

fists toward heaven, "If we conducted unrestricted submarine warfare, as Tirpitz advocates, the entire world would rise up to destroy Germany as if she were a rabid dog."[33]

But on August 29, the Kaiser, crushed with anxiety, decided to relieve Falkenhayn, and to make Hindenburg Chief of the General Staff.

Nothing can convey an idea of the enthusiasm which seized the whole of Germany when it heard the news. The popularity of Marshal Hindenburg, the confidence that he inspired, the affection shown for him by the troops and the populace were literally indescribable. The victor of Tannenberg, of the Masurian Lakes, and of Niemen owed his extraordinary prestige to these successes, without a doubt. Also to the defeats that others had suffered and to the fact that he had advised against Verdun. But it was due still more to the disinterestedness of his character, to his profound calm, and to that obscure awareness of the downtrodden masses that he was a sympathetic and compassionate man as well as a resolute leader.[i]

People are often surprised by the rapidity and seeming ease with which tottering Germany righted herself at the end of 1916, and restored her imperiled situation. The prestige of Hindenburg suffices to explain them.

Bethmann-Hollweg understood, from the moment the nomination of the field marshal and his imperious adjutant Ludendorff was in question, that these military men would exercise a moral dictatorship, against which all the rights of the civilian power would have no weight. But he had to choose between their supremacy and the defeat of the Empire. The chancellor made the most of their good fortune.

He welcomed them all the more, furthermore, because he believed he was in accord with them on the way the war should be conducted. Hindenburg and Ludendorff were the men of the Eastern Front. They had often declared that peace ought to be made at the expense of the

[i]Marshal Hindenburg did not belong to the unbridled generation, that victorious Prussia molded on the morrow of 1870, and of which Ludendorff is the prototype. The marshal had received his intellectual formation, consolidated his philosophy, and completed his military apprenticeship, before 1866. A more fervent cult of duty, a greater moderation of judgment, a moral sense better developed, an almost religious taste for "service," also distinguished Hindenburg, in our opinion, from the younger, more supercilious, more subjective Prussians who surrounded him in the General Headquarters, and who were also more abreast of the times.

Russians. Above all, the very day after their installation at General Headquarters, discussing with Bethmann the question of unrestricted submarine warfare, they characterized it as "folly," protesting that "they had quite enough enemies to fight without adding America, Holland, and Denmark."

The unfortunate Bethmann believed he would henceforth be able to interpose the glorious person of the new leader between himself and his opponents from the "Party of the Fatherland." He modestly declared to Hindenburg that "since he did not want the submarine war, it would not be declared, and that in this matter he would act as the General Headquarters desired him to do." Thus he signed in advance the capitulation of the civil power to military authority, which was now without a counterweight.

In October, Germany had regained confidence. The offensive on the Somme reached its limit. Brusilov no longer advanced; the Romanians had been crushed. This was the moment for Tirpitz and his partisans to retake the advantage. The grand admiral was all the more moved to hatred because his pet ideas regarding a separate peace with Russia now appeared to be realizable. In Petersburg, Sturmer and his party clearly displayed their intention of entering into negotiations with Berlin. If the occasion were seized and moderation were shown toward the Russians, an armistice in the East was possible. And then one could turn all one's efforts to the West, annex Belgium, and perhaps even more. But to succeed, Bethmann had to cede his place, and the Party of the Fatherland had to redouble its attacks upon the chancellor without scruple.

Bethmann now no longer had any hope of preventing the entry of new enemies against the Empire and catastrophe, except by American mediation; so he actively prepared for it, Wilson having made it known in October that he would voluntarily accept the role of arbitrator. . . . Some weeks later, moreover, Wilson published the famous December Note, in which he declared "that in this war there should be neither victor nor vanquished," and in which he invited the belligerents to make known their respective conditions. But if American action were to produce these results, it would be necessary at all costs to gain a few months and to prevent unrestricted submarine warfare during this time. Tirpitz and his people would do everything to snatch these few months from the chancellor.

At the end of October, they once again chose as the arena for their attack the "Principal Committee" of the Reichstag. The Conservatives, the

National Liberals and the majority of deputies of the Center carried out a furious assault against Bethmann over the submarine war. Jagow brutally declared to them that if they prevailed, it meant war with America. Using statistics, the vice chancellor and economist Helfferich proved to the deputies that the submarine blockade would end in a fiasco, and that England could not be starved.[j] But the opponents [of the chancellor] found a vigorous collaborator in the person of the secretary of state for the Navy, von Capelle, once the adjutant, now the successor, but always the friend of Tirpitz. This minister declared that unrestricted submarine warfare must commence immediately, that in six months at the most England would be at bay, that a child could calculate the tonnage.

"All right! Let us suppose that England may be overcome," Erzberger said. "But how will America be overcome? Do you see any means of doing so?"

"There is no means for doing so," cut in Jagow, "and that is why there must be no submarine warfare."

"There must be!" cried Capelle. "The entry of America means zero!" And as that extraordinary affirmation raised murmurs, the admiral reiterated, "It is zero! It is zero!"[34]

The Conservatives and the National Liberals left the meeting proclaiming that "Nevertheless, the question of submarine warfare is not within the jurisdiction of the chancellor, but of Hindenburg." The Center voted a pharisaical order of the day:

> The Chancellor alone is responsible for the political conduct of the war. But his decision ought to be essentially supported by that of the military High Command. If their decision is to conduct unlimited submarine warfare, the Chancellor can be certain of the Reichstag's approbation.[35]

Only the Progressives took the part of Bethmann, declaring that "in these very grave circumstances, it was vital to avoid all unqualified pressure, from whatever direction it may come." The Socialists themselves did not have the courage to condemn submarine warfare forthrightly. They declared evasively, "That their way of seeing this matter did not depend

[j] Helfferich, moreover, soon passed to the side of the partisans of submarine warfare. "Some weeks later," Erzberger recounts, "he demonstrated its necessity, with the help of the same statistics that he had used to combat it." [Erzberger, *Erlebnisse im Weltkrieg*, 221.]

on that of the military command, and that they rejected the submarine weapon, if one were obliged to employ it without taking account of the interests of neutrals, provided that these interests were justified."[36]

A few days after this frenetic session, Jagow resigned.

Thus the desperate propaganda conducted in public by Grand Admiral Tirpitz had succeeded everywhere.

Furthermore Hindenburg, more and more discontented with Bethmann's policy, became more and more unpleasant toward him. The proclamation of Polish independence in November brought to a head the irritation of the marshal, who was systematically opposed to the resurrection of Poland.

Besides, having restored the military situation, Hindenburg and Ludendorff lent a willing ear to the assurances of the Naval General Staff. Beginning in November they declared to the chancellor "that they judged the time had come to re-impose the blockade on England." Bethmann succeeded in obtaining a respite by announcing his upcoming proposal for a general peace. But as soon as the negative response of the Entente became known, Hindenburg formally posed the question. And in response to a small hint of independence from Bethmann, he replied overbearingly, "With all my strength, and in full awareness of my responsibility for the victorious outcome of the war, I will make sure that what appears good to me from a military point of view will be done."

On 9 January 1917, the Marshal convened a decisive council of war at his headquarters at Pless. There the chancellor once again sketched out what consequences the submarine war would have for Germany. Not only would Wilson's mediation become impossible, but it was certain that they would soon see the United States join the battle. The chief of the Naval General Staff, Holtzendorf, reiterated the familiar assurances that with English tonnage so reduced within six months, London would have to beg for mercy. Hindenburg, finally, declared that he was going to call for unrestricted submarine warfare and that he would propose it to the Kaiser. Wilhelm II had only to nod for it to be done. He did so. The commencement of the blockade was fixed for the 1st of February.

Some days later, Bethmann made a new effort to obtain at least a delay from Hindenburg. On the 17th, he had received from Bernstorff a telegram that he then transmitted to General Headquarters: "The postponement of submarine warfare is highly desirable. Wilson believes he can obtain a peace on the basis of the equality of all nations."

But Hindenburg and Ludendorff wanted nothing of such a peace, and

their power was such that no one could dream of fixing the conditions of an eventual treaty without their approval. Bernstorff's appeal could not change their decision.

On the 29th of January, Bethmann arrived in Pless to make a final attempt. He brought a new telegram from Bernstorff: "Wilson," the ambassador says, "wants a peace to be made on the basis of the status quo ante bellum."

The military men protested loudly, and Ludendorff, seated at the corner of a table, set to dictating the *minim*al conditions demanded by the military command. This final discussion lasted hardly more than a few minutes. It unfolded amidst a general irritation increased by certain inconvenient material details. The Kaiser had received everyone in a room encumbered by presents that he had just been given on the occasion of his birthday. People disappeared among the parcels. It was difficult to find a seat.

Two days later, Germany notified Washington of the commencement of a merciless blockade. The die had been cast. An exasperated America went into the war, bringing to the Entente an endlessly expanding military assistance and, above all, a decisive moral reinforcement.

Some weeks after the proclamation of the blockade came the Russian Revolution, then the defeat of the French offensive. Some months later the peace of Brest-Litovsk and the peace of Bucharest were signed. But the hope of American relief restored courage in Paris and London. Having taken Tirpitz's advice, Germany no longer found President Wilson an accommodating mediator but instead a determined enemy. It was at the precise moment when the German Empire was unquestionably in a position to seize an advantageous peace that it condemned itself to destruction.

History, when it is provided later with documents and testimony that we lack today, will be in a better position than this summary study to measure the faults of the men who unleashed unrestricted submarine warfare. However, without waiting for her to render her sovereign judgment, we know enough of the matter to be astonished at the fact that neither Grand Admiral Tirpitz nor General Ludendorff have acknowledged their responsibility in it. The former protests that submarine warfare would have been decisive had it been initiated a year earlier, but that all the misfortunes that it called down on Germany, are due to Chancellor Bethmann-Hollweg, who set it in motion in 1917! The latter disloyally insinuates that the chancellor agreed to do it, that he was the

head of the government, and that he ought to answer for the consequences.

In this gloomy and pitiful subject, History will recognize greatness only in this conclusion of Field Marshal von Hindenburg. After announcing that the decision was taken by him because he judged it to be good, he wrote:

> When a leader on the field of battle throws his last reserves into combat, he does what the country rightly expects of him, and nothing else. He accepts the total responsibility and gives proof of the courage which consists in taking the supreme decision, without which there would be no victory. . . . If he fails, then he will see himself inundated by the outrage and fury of the weak and cowardly. . . . But that is the destiny of the soldier. . . .[37]

Giving all due homage to the moral courage of the field marshal, however, History will doubtless blame him for having employed his incomparable authority to violate a great principle.[38] It will not forgive Grand Admiral Tirpitz and the naval officers whom he inspired for having sought by every means to force the hand of the chancellor of the Empire in a political question of the first order and for unleashing in the nation a furious and fatal tempest.

Winston Churchill, 1919

7

The Bolshevik Menace

'An Aggressive and Predatory Form'

Connaught Rooms, London, 11 April 1919

Very soon afterwards, Churchill ended his active war service, returned to London and spent the next twelve months trying to justify his conduct at the Admiralty, to earn a living and to force his way back into office. Eventually, his political fortunes began to recover when Lloyd George brought him back into his Coalition Government in June 1917 as Minister of Munitions. After the General Election of December 1918, he became Secretary of State for War and Air.

During his tenure of these offices, Churchill became much preoccupied with what he saw as the menace of Bolshevism. He feared that the Russian Revolution would develop as the French Revolution had done, and strongly supported British and Allied intervention in support of the White Russian armies during the civil war. In fact, Churchill greatly misjudged the strength of the anti-Bolshevik forces, and by the spring of 1920 it was clear that his policy was doomed to failure.

This speech was delivered at a time when the outcome seemed much less certain. It is a very early example of Churchill's apocalyptic mode, which was to become so familiar during the inter-war years. The language seems both extravagantly violent and excessively pessimistic. But it must be remembered that in the aftermath of victory the prospects did, indeed, seem uncertain, for the victors no less than for the vanquished.

Connaught Rooms, London, 11 April 1919

WE ARE ALL ANXIOUSLY AWAITING THE RESULTS of the deliberations of the Peace Conference. We are in what is called the hush before a storm. Within a few weeks, or possibly less, we shall know what are the terms the Allies have agreed to impose on the enemy. Then after an interval we shall know whether the enemy will accept those terms or whether further measures are necessary on our part. In the meantime, I do not think we ought to concern ourselves with particular points. Any agreement which is reached by the very experienced and able heads of Governments now gathered together in Paris must be a comprehensive and general agreement. It must be judged as a whole, and no part of it must be judged except in relation to the general settlement. Fragmentary disclosures and fragmentary discussions would be mischievous and futile. We have chosen our ablest men. They are thinking of nothing else. They can have no other interests but our own to study. They are working on their task night and day. They are entitled to present their case as a whole and to receive the fullest measure of public sympathy and confidence meanwhile. The difficulties and perplexities of their task are unexampled, nor can the problem which has to be solved be solved to universal satisfaction. Nobody is going to get all they want. I would go so far as to say nobody ought to get all they want. Everybody must expect to have something to grumble about [*laughter*].

It is not a game of grab we are playing, but the quest of a just peace and a lasting peace. If that is achieved individual disappointments will be forgotten in the general joy. If it is not achieved no paper triumph of any individual country, gained by any nation or any Minister or representative, would be any use at all to that nation or to the world in general. Therefore, the work on which the Peace Conference is engaged must be judged as a whole, and not on this point or on that.

The course of events in the United Kingdom since the Armistice gives us good reason to be satisfied. When I think of the difficulties as I envisaged them on November 11 last year, and see how we have got over them, or how many of them we have got over in that period, I think we have good reason to be satisfied and grateful. Nearly two and a half million men have been demobilized from the Army and brought home to their families and peaceful industry. More than one million munition workers engaged in special war industry have found other tasks to do, and have been discharged from State employment. The labour troubles which must necessarily be expected at a time like this, and which on occasion appeared so menacing, have been tided over by the great skill and patience shown on the part of the Prime Minister and Mr Bonar Law, and also by the representatives of the responsible trade unions in this country [*'hear, hear'*]. The Army, which was so much unsettled by the working of the pivotal system of demobilization a few months ago, has now regained its old attitude of sober, solid, contented discipline. All these are important and vital matters, and although it is quite true that the trade revival is still hampered by restrictions from which in some cases it cannot immediately be free, if the world as a whole were as well off as Britain is, all the world would be very thankful this afternoon [*cheers*].

I have been informed since I arrived here that the city of Hull has not been so appreciative of our labours as one could wish [*laughter*], but I do not attach undue importance to by-elections which follow in the wake of a General Election where undoubtedly the swing was more than anyone expected or even desired [*laughter*]. It is natural that there should be reaction, and it is even healthy that there should be reaction. But nothing in these reactions should be taken by the Government as in any way deflecting them from their clear and definite course of reviving the prosperity of this country, of increasing the democratization of its institutions, of broadening the basis of social welfare in our land, and abroad of securing by the strong arm of Britain the legitimate fruits which our soldiers have gained in the great war from which we have emerged.

I only wish that the march of events on the Continent had been as favourable as in our own island. On the contrary, the process of degeneration has been steady and even rapid over large parts of Europe. The British Government has issued a White-book giving a vivid picture, based on authentic evidence, of Bolshevist atrocities. Tyranny presents itself in many forms. The British nation is the foe of tyranny in every form. That is why we fought Kaiserism and that is why we would fight it again. That is why we are opposing Bolshevism. Of all tyrannies in history the Bolshevist tyranny is the worst, the most destructive, and the most degrading. It is sheer humbug to pretend that it is not far worse than German militarism. The miseries of the Russian people under the Bolshevists far surpass anything they suffered even under the Tsar. The atrocities by Lenin and Trotsky are incomparably more hideous, on a larger scale, and more numerous than any for which the Kaiser himself is responsible. There is this also to be remembered – whatever crimes the Germans have committed, and we have not spared them in framing our indictment, at any rate they stuck to their Allies. They misled them, they exploited them, but they did not desert, or betray them. It may have been honour among thieves, but that is better than dishonour among murderers.

Lenin and Trotsky had no sooner seized on power than they dragged the noble Russian nation out of the path of honour and let loose on us and our Allies a whole deluge of German reinforcements, which burst on us in March and April of last year. Every British and French soldier killed last year was really done to death by Lenin and Trotsky, not in fair war, but by the treacherous desertion of an ally without parallel in the history of the world. There are still Russian Armies in the field, under Admiral Koltchak and General Deniken, who have never wavered in their faith and loyalty to the Allied cause, and who are fighting valiantly and by no means unsuccessfully against that foul combination of criminality and animalism which constitutes the Bolshevist regime. We are helping these men, within the limits which are assigned to us, to the very best of our ability. We are helping them with arms and munitions, with

instructions and technical experts, who volunteered for service. It would not be right for us to send our armies raised on a compulsory basis to Russia. If Russia is to be saved it must be by Russian manhood. But all our hearts are with these men who are true to the Allied cause in their splendid struggle to restore the honour of united Russia, and to rebuild on a modern and democratic basis the freedom, prosperity and happiness of its trustful and good-hearted people.

There is a class of misguided or degenerate people in this country and some others, who profess to take so lofty a view that they cannot see any difference between what they call rival Russian factions. They would have you believe that it is 'six of one and half-a-dozen of the other.' Their idea of a League of Nations is something which would be impartial as between Bolshevism on the one hand, and civilization on the other. We are still forced to distinguish between right and wrong, loyalty and treachery, health and disease, progress and anarchy. There is one part of the world in which these distinctions which we are bound to draw can translate itself into action. In the north of Russia the Bolshevists are continually attacking the British troops we sent there during the course of the war against Germany in order to draw off the pressure from the West, and who are now cut off by the ice from the resources of their fellow countrymen. Here we are in actual warfare with the representatives of a Bolshevist Government and with its Army, and, whatever views may be held by any section in the country on Russian affairs, we must all agree that our men who were sent there by the Government have to be properly supported and relieved from their dangerous situation [*cheers*]. We have no intention whatever of deserting our lads and of leaving them on this icy shore to the mercy of a cruel foe. The Prime Minister has given me the fullest authority to take whatever measures the General Staff of the Army think necessary to see that our men are relieved, and brought safely through the perils with which they are confronted, and so far as is physically possible we shall take whatever measures are required [*cheers*].

A second White-book issued by the Government deals with

the interior situation in Germany. When the Aldwych Club last entertained me, I remember saying to you that in war there are no substitutes for victory. You must either win or lose. And in victory there are no substitutes for peace [*cheers*]. I am in favour of making peace with Germany. After the war is over, after the enemy is beaten, after he has sued for mercy, I am in favour of making peace with him. Just as in August 1914, our duty was to make war on Germany, so now our duty is to make peace with Germany.

Making peace with Germany does not mean making friends with Germany [*cheers*]. Peace means – I do not say forgiveness, for after all that has happened this generation can never forgive – but peace, put at its very lowest, means a state of affairs where certain common interests are recognized, where the beaten side, having taken their beating and having paid their forfeit – that is a matter which must be attended to, and will be attended to [*cheers*] – may have still a chance of life, and have a chance for the future and some means of atonement. I do not think we can afford to carry on this quarrel, with all its apparatus of hatred, indefinitely. I do not think the structure of the civilized world is strong enough to stand the strain. With Russian on our hands in a state of utter ruin, with a greater part of Europe on the brink of famine, with bankruptcy, anarchy and revolution threatening the victorious as well as the vanquished, we cannot afford to drive over to the Bolshevist camp the orderly and stable forces which now exist in the German democracy. All the information I receive from military sources indicates that Germany is very near collapse. All my military advisers, without exception, have warned me that the most vital step we ought to take immediately to secure victory is to feed Germany, to supply Germany with food and the raw materials necessary for them to resume their economic life.

But the situation in Germany is grave. The Socialist Government of Scheidemann and Ebert and Noske is tottering, and if it falls no one knows what will take its place. If Germany sinks into Bolshevist anarchy she will no doubt be skinned alive, and not only will there be no indemnity, but we shall ourselves be

impoverished, and our trade revival will be paralysed by the increasing disorder and ruin of the world. I ask you not to let your eyes be blinded with false counsel. The policy which the Prime Minister has consistently pursued in Paris amid all the difficulties and turmoil of that tower of Babel had been clear and simple – to disarm Germany, to feed Germany, and to make peace with Germany. A way of atonement is open to Germany. By combating Bolshevism, by being the bulwark against it, Germany may take the first step toward ultimate reunion with the civilized world. I am sure the advice you would receive from those gifted soldiers who have conducted our Armies to victory would be to feed Germany, to make Germany do her share in clearing up the mess and ruin her Imperialistic Government has caused, and to stand by meanwhile, with a strong British and Allied Army on the Rhine, to guard against foul play or any failure to comply with our just and reasonable demands.

Very great perils still menace us in the world. Two mighty branches of the human race, the Slavs and the Teutons, are both plunged at the present time in the deepest misery. The Great Power which was our foe, and the Great Power which was our friend, are both in the pit of ruin and despair. It is extremely undesirable that they should come together. Germany is struggling against breaking down into Bolshevism. But if that were to happen it would produce reaction which it is no exaggeration to say would reach as far as China.

The Russian Bolshevist revolution is changing in its character. It has completed the Anarchist destruction of the social order in Russia itself. The political, economic, social, and moral life of the people of Russia has for the time being been utterly smashed. Famine and terror are the order of the day. Only the military structure is growing out of the ruin. That is still weak, but it is growing steadily stronger, and it is assuming an aggressive and predatory form, which French Jacobinism assumed after the fall of Robespierre, and before the rise of Napoleon. Bolshevist armies are marching on towards food and plunder, and in their path stand only the little weak States, exhausted and shattered by the war.

If Germany succumbs either from internal weakness, or from actual invasion, to this Bolshevist pestilence, Germany no doubt will be torn to pieces, but where shall we be? Where will be that peace for which we are all longing; where will be that revival of prosperity without which our domestic contentment is impossible. Where will be that League of Nations on which so many hopes are founded? If that should come to pass there will be two Leagues, not one. There will be the League of defeated nations and the League of victorious nations, and the League of defeated nations may easily be rearming while the League of victorious nations is laying aside the sword and shield. Once again there will have been created that terrible balance of antagonism which was the prelude to the explosion of the Great War five years ago [*cheers*].

We must not allow our attention to be diverted from the truth by our wishes or our inclinations. Those present have great influence on the formation of public opinion and I say to you, keep a strong Army loyal, compact, contented, adequate for the work which it has to do; make peace with the German people; resist by every means at your disposal the advances of Bolshevist tyranny in every country in the world.

12

Munich

'A Total and Unmitigated Defeat'

House of Commons, 5 October 1938

On 30 September 1938, Neville Chamberlain returned from Munich bearing what he believed was Hitler's reassurance of 'peace in our time'. For a brief interlude, he was the most popular man in the country, and his parliamentary majority was never in doubt. But during the Commons debate on the settlement, which lasted from 3 to 6 October, some very powerful speeches were made in opposition to the betrayal of Czechoslovakia, especially by Duff Cooper, who had resigned as First Lord of the Admiralty, Archibald Sinclair, Clement Attlee, Anthony Eden and Richard Law.

As so often, it was Churchill, who spoke late in the debate for 49 minutes, who provided, in another superb oration, the most damning indictment of all. *The Daily Telegraph* believed that his warnings, by now increasingly verified by events, 'have entitled him to be heard'. In the final vote, thirty Conservative MPs abstained – the most convincing demonstration yet of the opposition to Chamberlain within the ranks of his own supporters.

By this time, however, feeling against Churchill in the Conservative Party was very stong indeed. *The Times* claimed that he 'treated a crowded House to prophecies which made Jeremiah appear an optimist', and even Beaverbrook's *Daily Express* dismissed it as 'an alarmist oration by a man whose mind is soaked in the conquests of Marlborough'.

House of Commons, 5 October 1938

If I do not begin this afternoon by paying the usual, and indeed almost inevitable, tributes to the Prime Minister for his handling of this crisis, it is certainly not from any lack of personal regard. We have always, over a great many years, had very pleasant relations, and I have deeply understood from personal experiences of my own in a similar crisis the stress and strain he has had to bear; but I am sure it is much better to say exactly what we think about public affairs, and this is certainly not the time when it is worth anyone's while to court political popularity. We had a shining example of firmness of character from the late First Lord of the Admiralty two days ago. He showed that firmness of character which is utterly unmoved by currents of opinion, however swift and violent they may be. My hon. Friend the Member for South-West Hull [Mr Law], to whose compulsive speech the House listened on Monday, was quite right in reminding us that the Prime Minister has himself throughout his conduct of these matters shown a robust indifference to cheers or boos and to the alternations of criticism or applause.

If that be so, such qualities and elevation of mind should make it possible for the most severe expressions of honest opinion to be interchanged in this House without rupturing personal relations, and for all points of view to receive the fullest possible expression. Having thus fortified myself by the example of others, I will proceed to emulate them. I will, therefore, begin by saying the most unpopular and most unwelcome thing. I will begin by saying what everybody would like to ignore or forget but which must nevertheless be stated, namely, that we have sustained a total and unmitigated defeat, and that France has suffered even more than we have. The utmost my right hon. Friend the Prime Minister has been able to secure by all his immense exertions, by all the great efforts and mobilization which took place in this

country, and by all the anguish and strain through which we have passed in this country, the utmost he has been able to gain for Czechoslovakia in the matters which were in dispute has been that the German dictator, instead of snatching the victuals from the table, has been content to have them served to him course by course.

The Chancellor of the Exchequer [Sir John Simon] said it was the first time Herr Hitler had been made to retract – I think that was the word – in any degree. We really must not waste time after all this long Debate upon the difference between the positions reached at Berchtesgaden, at Godesberg and at Munich. They can be very simply epitomized, if the House will permit me to vary the metaphor. £1 was demanded at the pistol's point. When it was given, £2 were demanded at the pistol's point. Finally, the dictator consented to take £1 17s. 6d. and the rest in promises of goodwill for the future.

Now I come to the point, which was mentioned to me just now from some quarters of the House, about the saving of peace. No one has been a more resolute and uncompromising struggler for peace than the Prime Minister. Everyone knows that. Never has there been such intense and undaunted determination to maintain and secure peace. That is quite true. Nevertheless, I am not quite clear why there was so much danger of Great Britain or France being involved in a war with Germany at this juncture if, in fact, they were ready all along to sacrifice Czechoslovakia. The terms which the Prime Minister brought back with him could easily have been agreed, I believe, through the ordinary diplomatic channels at any time during the summer. And I will say this, that I believe the Czechs, left to themselves and told they were going to get no help from the Western Powers, would have been able to make better terms than they have got after all this tremendous perturbation; they could hardly have had worse.

There never can be any absolute certainty that there will be a fight if one side is determined that it will give way completely. When one reads the Munich terms, when one sees what is happening in Czechoslovakia from hour to hour, when one is sure, I will not say of Parliamentary approval but of Parliamentary

acquiescence, when the Chancellor of the Exchequer makes a speech which at any rate tries to put in a very powerful and persuasive manner the fact that, after all, it was inevitable and indeed righteous: when we saw all this – and everyone on this side of the House, including many members of the Conservative Party who are vigilant and careful guardians of the national interest, is quite clear that nothing vitally affecting us was at stake – it seems to me that one must ask, What was all the trouble and fuss about?

The resolve was taken by the British and the French Governments. Let me say that it is very important to realize that it is by no means a question which the British Government only have had to decide. I very much admire the manner in which, in the House, all references of a recriminatory nature have been repressed. But it must be realized that this resolve did not emanate particularly from one or other of the Governments but was a resolve for which both must share in common the responsibility. When this resolve was taken and the course was followed – you may say it was wise or unwise, prudent or short-sighted – once it had been decided not to make the defence of Czechoslovakia a matter of war, then there was really no reason, if the matter had been handled during the summer in the ordinary way, to call into being all this formidable apparatus of crisis. I think that point should be considered.

We are asked to vote for this Motion [That this House approves the policy of His Majesty's Government by which war was averted in the recent crisis and supports their efforts to secure a lasting peace.] which has been put upon the Paper, and it is certainly a Motion couched in very uncontroversial terms, as, indeed, is the Amendment moved from the Opposition side. I cannot myself express my agreement with the steps which have been taken, and as the Chancellor of the Exchequer has put his side to the case with so much ability I will attempt, if I may be permitted, to put the case from a different angle. I have always held the view that the maintenance of peace depends upon the accumulation of deterrents against the aggressor, coupled with a sincere effort to redress grievances. Herr Hitler's victory, like so

many of the famous struggles that have governed the fate of the world, was won upon the narrowest of margins. After the seizure of Austria in March we faced this problem in our Debates. I ventured to appeal to the Government to go a little further than the Prime Minister went, and to give a pledge that in conjunction with France and other Powers they would guarantee the security of Czechoslovakia while the Sudeten-Deutsch question was being examined either by a League of Nations Commission or some other impartial body, and I still believe that if that course had been followed events would not have fallen into this disastrous state. I agree very much with my right hon. Friend the Member for Sparkbrook [Mr Amery] when he said on that occasion: 'Do one thing or the other; either say you will disinterest yourself in the matter altogether or take the step of giving a guarantee which will have the greatest chance of securing protection for that country.'

France and Great Britain together, especially if they had maintained a close contact with Russia, which certainly was not done, would have been able in those days in the summer, when they had the prestige, to influence many of the smaller states of Europe; and I believe they could have determined the attitude of Poland. Such a combination, prepared at a time when the German dictator was not deeply and irrevocably committed to his new adventure, would, I believe, have given strength to all those forces in Germany which resisted this departure, this new design. They were varying forces – those of a military character which declared that Germany was not ready to undertake a world war, and all that mass of moderate opinion and popular opinion which dreaded war, and some elements of which still have some influence upon the Government. Such action would have given strength to all that intense desire for peace which the helpless German masses share with their British and French fellow men, and which, as we have been reminded, found a passionate and rarely permitted vent in the joyous manifestations with which the Prime Minister was acclaimed in Munich.

All these forces, added to the other deterrents which combinations of Powers, great and small, ready to stand firm upon the

front of law and for the ordered remedy of grievances, would have formed, might well have been effective. Between submission and immediate war there was this third alternative, which gave a hope not only of peace but of justice. It is quite true that such a policy in order to succeed demanded that Britain should declare straight out and a long time beforehand that she would, with others, join to defend Czechoslovakia against an unprovoked aggression. His Majesty's Government refused to give that guarantee when it would have saved the situation, yet in the end they gave it when it was too late, and now, for the future, they renew it when they have not the slightest power to make it good.

All is over. Silent, mournful, abandoned, broken, Czechoslovakia recedes into the darkness. She has suffered in every respect by her association with the Western democracies and with the League of Nations, of which she has always been an obedient servant. She has suffered in particular from her association with France, under whose guidance and policy she has been actuated for so long. The very measures taken by His Majesty's Government in the Anglo-French Agreement to give her the best chance possible, namely, the 50 per cent clean-cut in certain districts instead of a plebiscite, have turned to her detriment, because there is to be a plebiscite too in wide areas, and those other Powers who had claims have also come down upon the helpless victim. Those municipal elections upon whose voting the basis is taken for the 50 per cent cut were held on issues which had nothing to do with Germany. When I saw Herr Henlein over here he assured me that was not the desire of his people. Positive statements were made that it was only a question of home rule, of having a position of their own in the Czechoslovakian State. No one has a right to say that the plebiscite which is to be taken in areas under Saar conditions, and the clean-cut of the 50 per cent areas – that those two operations together amount in the slightest degree to a verdict of self-determination. It is a fraud and a farce to invoke that name.

We in this country, as in other Liberal and democratic countries, have a perfect right to exalt the principle of self-determination, but it comes ill out of the mouths of those in

totalitarian states who deny even the smallest element of toleration to every section and creed within their bounds. But, however you put it, this particular block of land, this mass of human beings to be handed over, has never expressed the desire to go into the Nazi rule. I do not believe that even now, if their opinion could be asked, they would exercise such an opinion.

What is the remaining position of Czechoslovakia? Not only are they politically mutilated, but, economically and financially, they are in complete confusion. Their banking, their railway arrangements, are severed and broken, their industries are curtailed, and the movement of their population is most cruel. The Sudeten miners, who are all Czechs and whose families have lived in that area for centuries, must now flee into an area where there are hardly any mines left for them to work. It is a tragedy which has occurred. There must always be the most profound regret and a sense of vexation in British hearts at the treatment and the misfortune which have overcome the Czechoslovakian Republic. They have not ended here. At any moment there may be a hitch in the programme. At any moment there may be an order for Herr Goebbels to start again his propaganda of calumny and lies; at any moment an incident may be provoked, and now that the fortress line is turned what is there to stop the will of the conqueror? Obviously, we are not in a position to give them the slightest help at the present time, except what everyone is glad to know has been done, the financial aid which the Government have promptly produced.

I venture to think that in future the Czechoslovak State cannot be maintained as an independent entity. I think you will find that in a period of time which may be measured by years, but may be measured only by months, Czechoslovakia will be engulfed in the Nazi regime. Perhaps they may join it in despair or in revenge. At any rate, that story is over and told. But we cannot consider the abandonment and ruin of Czechoslovakia in the light only of what happened only last month. It is the most grievous consequence of what we have done and of what we have left undone in the last five years – five years of futile good intentions, five years of eager search for the line of least

resistance, five years of uninterrupted retreat of British power, five years of neglect of our air defences. Those are the features which I stand here to expose and which marked an improvident stewardship for which Great Britain and France have dearly to pay. We have been reduced in those five years from a position of security so overwhelming and so unchallengeable that we never cared to think about it. We have been reduced from a position where the very word 'war' was considered one which could be used only by persons qualifying for a lunatic asylum. We have been reduced from a position of safety and power – power to do good, power to be generous to a beaten foe, power to make terms with Germany, power to give her proper redress for her grievances, power to stop her arming if we chose, power to take any step in strength or mercy or justice which we thought right – reduced in five years from a position safe and unchallenged to where we stand now.

When I think of the fair hopes of a long peace which still lay before Europe at the beginning of 1933 when Herr Hitler first obtained power, and of all the opportunities of arresting the growth of the Nazi power which have been thrown away, when I think of the immense combinations and resources which have been neglected or squandered, I cannot believe that a parallel exists in the whole course of history. So far as this country is concerned the responsibility must rest with those who have had the undisputed control of our political affairs. They neither prevented Germany from rearming, nor did they rearm ourselves in time. They quarrelled with Italy without saving Ethiopia. They exploited and discredited the vast institution of the League of Nations and they neglected to make alliances and combinations which might have repaired previous errors, and thus they left us in the hour of trial without adequate national defence or effective international security.

In my holiday I thought it was a chance to study the reign of King Ethelred the Unready. The House will remember that that was a period of great misfortune, in which, from the strong position which we had gained under the descendants of King Alfred, we fell very swiftly into chaos. It was the period of

Danegeld and of foreign pressure. I must say that the rugged words of the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle*, written a thousand years ago, seem to me apposite, at least as apposite as those quotations from Shakespeare with which we have been regaled by the last speaker from the Opposition Bench. Here is what the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle* said, and I think the words apply very much to our treatment of Germany and our relations with her. 'All these calamities fell upon us because of evil counsel, because tribute was not offered to them at the right time nor yet were they resisted; but when they had done the most evil, then was peace made with them.' That is the wisdom of the past, for all wisdom is not new wisdom.

I have ventured to express those views in justifying myself for not being able to support the Motion which is moved tonight, but I recognize that this great matter of Czechoslovakia, and of British and French duty there, has passed into history. New developments may come along, but we are not here to decide whether any of those steps should be taken or not. They have been taken. They have been taken by those who had a right to take them because they bore the highest executive responsibility under the Crown. Whatever we may think of it, we must regard those steps as belonging to the category of affairs which are settled beyond recall. The past is no more, and one can only draw comfort if one feels that one has done one's best to advise rightly and wisely and in good time. I, therefore, turn to the future, and to our situation as it is today. Here, again, I am sure I shall have to say something which will not be at all welcome.

We are in the presence of a disaster of the first magnitude which has befallen Great Britain and France. Do not let us blind ourselves to that. It must now be accepted that all the countries of Central and Eastern Europe will make the best terms they can with the triumphant Nazi power. The system of alliances in Central Europe upon which France has relied for her safety has been swept away, and I can see no means by which it can be reconstituted. The road down the Danube Valley to the Black Sea, the road which leads as far as Turkey, has been opened. In fact, if not in form, it seems to me that all those countries of

Middle Europe, all those Danubian countries, will, one after another, be drawn into this vast system of power politics – not only power military politics but power economic politics – radiating from Berlin, and I believe this can be achieved quite smoothly and swiftly and will not necessarily entail the firing of a single shot. If you wish to survey the havoc of the foreign policy of Britain and France, look at what is happening and is recorded each day in the columns of *The Times*. Why, I read this morning about Yugoslavia – and I know something about the details of that country –

> The effects of the crisis for Yugoslavia can immediately be traced. Since the elections of 1935, which followed soon after the murder of King Alexander, the Serb and Croat Opposition to the Government of Dr Stoyadinovitch have been conducting their entire campaign for the next elections under the slogan: 'Back to France, England, and the Little Entente; back to democracy.' The events of the past fortnight have so triumphantly vindicated Dr Stoyadinovitch's policy . . . [his is a policy of close association with Germany] that the Opposition has collapsed practically . . . overnight; the new elections, the date of which was in doubt, are now likely to be held very soon and can result only in an overwhelming victory for Dr Stoyadinovitch's Government.

Here was a country which, three months ago, would have stood in the line with other countries to arrest what has occurred.

Again, what happened in Warsaw? The British and French Ambassadors visited the Foreign Minister, Colonel Beck, or sought to visit him, in order to ask for some mitigation in the harsh measures being pursued against Czechoslovakia about Teschen. The door was shut in their faces. The French Ambassador was not even granted an audience and the British Ambassador was given a most curt reply by a political director. The whole matter is described in the Polish Press as a political indiscretion committed by those two powers, and we are today reading of the success of Colonel Beck's blow. I am not forgetting, I must say, that it is less than twenty years since British and French bayonets rescued Poland from the bondage of a century and a half. I think it is indeed a sorry episode in the history of that

country, for whose freedom and right so many of us have had warm and long sympathy.

Those illustrations are typical. You will see, day after day, week after week, entire alienation of those regions. Many of those countries, in fear of the rise of the Nazi power, have already got politicians, Ministers, Governments, who were pro-German, but there was always an enormous popular movement in Poland, Rumania, Bulgaria and Yugoslavia which looked to the Western democracies and loathed the idea of having this arbitrary rule of the totalitarian system thrust upon them, and hoped that a stand would be made. All that has gone by the board. We are talking about countries which are a long way off. But what will be the position, I want to know, of France and England this year and the year afterwards? What will be the position of that Western front of which we are in full authority the guarantors? The German army at the present time is more numerous than that of France, though not nearly so matured or perfected. Next year it will grow much larger, and its maturity will be more complete. Relieved from all anxiety in the East, and having secured resources which will greatly diminish, if not entirely remove, the deterrent of a naval blockade, the rulers of Nazi Germany will have a free choice open to them as to what direction they will turn their eyes. If the Nazi dictator should choose to look westward, as he may, bitterly will France and England regret the loss of that fine army of ancient Bohemia which was estimated last week to require not fewer than thirty German divisions for its destruction.

Can we blind ourselves to the great change which has taken place in the military situation, and to the dangers we have to meet? We are in process, I believe, of adding in four years, four battalions to the British Army. No fewer than two have already been completed. Here are at least thirty divisions which must now be taken into consideration upon the French front, besides the twelve that were captured when Austria was engulfed. Many people, no doubt, honestly believe that they are only giving away the interests of Czechoslovakia, whereas I fear we shall find that we have deeply compromised, and perhaps fatally endangered,

the safety and even the independence of Great Britain and France. This is not merely a question of giving up the German colonies, as I am sure we shall be asked to do. Nor is it a question only of losing influence in Europe. It goes far deeper than that. You have to consider the character of the Nazi movement and the rule which it implies. The Prime Minister desires to see cordial relations between this country and Germany. There is no difficulty at all in having cordial relations between the peoples. Our hearts go out to them. But they have no power. But never will you have friendship with the present German Government. You must have diplomatic and correct relations, but there can never be friendship between the British democracy and the Nazi power, that power which spurns Christian ethics, which cheers its onward course by a barbarous paganism, which vaunts the spirit of aggression and conquest, which derives strength and perverted pleasure from persecution, and uses, as we have seen, with pitiless brutality the threat of murderous force. That power cannot ever be the trusted friend of the British democracy.

What I find unendurable is the sense of our country falling into the power, into the orbit and influence of Nazi Germany, and of our existence becoming dependent upon their good will or pleasure. It is to prevent that that I have tried my best to urge the maintenance of every bulwark of defence – first, the timely creation of an Air Force superior to anything within striking distance of our shores; secondly, the gathering together of the collective strength of many nations; and thirdly, the making of alliances and military conventions, all within the Covenant, in order to gather together forces at any rate to restrain the onward movement of this power. It has all been in vain. Every position has been successfully undermined and abandoned on specious and plausible excuses.

We do not want to be led upon the high road to becoming a satellite of the German Nazi system of European domination. In a very few years, perhaps in a very few months, we shall be confronted with demands with which we shall no doubt be invited to comply. Those demands may affect the surrender of territory or the surrender of liberty. I foresee and foretell that the

policy of submission will carry with it restrictions upon the freedom of speech and debate in Parliament, on public platforms, and discussions in the Press, for it will be said – indeed, I hear it said sometimes now – that we cannot allow the Nazi system of dictatorship to be criticized by ordinary, common English politicians. Then, with a Press under control, in part direct but more potently indirect, with every organ of public opinion doped and chloroformed into acquiescence, we shall be conducted along further stages of our journey.

It is a small matter to introduce into such a Debate as this, but during the week I heard something of the talk of Tadpole and Taper. They were very keen upon having a general election, a sort of, if I may say so, inverted khaki election. I wish the Prime Minister had heard the speech of my hon. and gallant Friend the Member for the Abbey Division of Westminster [Sir Sidney Herbert] last night. I know that no one is more patient and regular in his attendance than the Prime Minister, and it is marvellous how he is able to sit through so much of our Debates, but it happened that by bad luck he was not here at that moment. I am sure, however, that if he had heard my hon. and gallant Friend's speech he would have felt very much annoyed that such a rumour could even have been circulated. I cannot believe that the Prime Minister, or any Prime Minister, possessed of a large working majority, would be capable of such an act of historic, constitutional indecency. I think too highly of him. Of course, if I have misjudged him on the right side, and there is a dissolution on the Munich Agreement, on Anglo-Nazi friendship, of the state of our defences and so forth, everyone will have to fight according to his convictions, and only a prophet could forecast the ultimate result; but whatever the result, few things could be more fatal to our remaining chances of survival as a great Power than that this country should be torn in twain upon this deadly issue of foreign policy at a moment when, whoever the Ministers may be, united effort can alone make us safe.

I have been casting about to see how measures can be taken to protect us from this advance of the Nazi power, and to secure

those forms of life which are so dear to us. What is the sole method that is open? The sole method that is open for us to regain our old island independence by acquiring that supremacy in the air which we were promised, that security in our air defences which we were assured we had, and thus to make ourselves an island once again. That, in all this grim outlook, shines out as the overwhelming fact. An effort at rearmament the like of which has not been seen ought to be made forthwith, and all the resources of this country and all its united strength should be bent to that task. I was very glad to see that Lord Baldwin yesterday in the House of Lords said that he would mobilize industry tomorrow. But I think it would have been much better if Lord Baldwin had said that two and a half years ago, when everyone demanded a Ministry of Supply. I will venture to say to hon. Gentlemen sitting here behind the Government Bench, hon. Friends of mine, whom I thank for the patience with which they have listened to what I have to say, that they have some responsibility for all this too, because, if they had given one tithe of the cheers they have lavished upon this transaction of Czechoslovakia to the small band of Members who were endeavouring to get timely rearmament set in motion, we should not now be in the position in which we are. Hon. Gentleman opposite, and hon. Members on the Liberal benches, are not entitled to throw these stones. I remember for two years having to face, not only the Government's deprecation, but their stern disapproval. Lord Baldwin has now given the signal, tardy though it may be; let us at least obey it.

After all, there are no secrets now about what happened in the air and in the mobilization of our anti-aircraft defences. These matters have been, as my hon. and gallant Friend the Member for the Abbey Division said, seen by thousands of people. They can form their own opinions of the character of the statements which have been persistently made to us by Ministers on this subject. Who pretends now, that there is air parity with Germany? Who pretends now that our anti-aircraft defences were adequately manned or armed? We know that the German General Staff are well informed upon these subjects, but the

House of Commons has hitherto not taken seriously its duty of requiring to assure itself on these matters. The Home Secretary [Sir Samuel Hoare] said the other night that he would welcome investigation. Many things have been done which reflect the greatest credit upon the administration. But the vital matters are what we want to know about. I have asked again and again during these three years for a secret Session where these matters could be thrashed out, or for an investigation by a Select Committee of the House, or for some other method. I ask now that, when we meet again in the autumn, that should be a matter on which the Government should take the House into its confidence, because we have a right to know where we stand and what measures are being taken to secure our position.

I do not begrudge our loyal, brave people, who were ready to do their duty no matter what the cost, who never flinched under the strain of last week – I do not grudge them the natural, spontaneous outburst of joy and relief when they learned that the hard ordeal would no longer be required of them at the moment; but they should know the truth. They should know that there has been gross neglect and deficiency in our defences; they should know that we have sustained a defeat without a war, the consequences of which will travel far with us along our road; they should know that we have passed an awful milestone in our history, when the whole equilibrium of Europe has been deranged, and that the terrible words have for the time being been pronounced against the Western democracies: 'Thou art weighed in the balance and found wanting.' And do not suppose that this is the end. This is only the beginning of the reckoning. This is only the first sip, the first foretaste of a bitter cup which will be proferred to us year by year unless by a supreme recovery of moral health and martial vigour, we arise again and take our stand for freedom as in the olden time.

16

Alone

'Their Finest Hour'

House of Commons, 18 June 1940

DESPITE ALL CHURCHILL'S EFFORTS, the crumbling French resistance could not be maintained much longer. On 10 June, the government left Paris; two last-minute visits by Churchill were to no avail; on 16 June Marshal Petain formed a new government; and on the next day France sued for peace. As the Prime Minister correctly predicted in this famous speech, the Battle of France was over, and the Battle of Britain was about to begin.

This great oration was delivered partly to report these recent and tumultuous events, and partly to reassure domestic and international opinion of the Government's resolve to fight on alone. As a parliamentary performance, it was generally reckoned inferior to his speech on Dunkirk, but the peroration was widely – and rightly – regarded as magnificent.

Four hours later, the same speech was broadcast, and this was the version heard and remembered by several million listeners. Churchill had hoped that the speech might be transmitted live from the Commons, so as to save him valuable time and effort; but there was opposition to the proposal, and so he did not pursue the idea. Again, it was not an outstanding declamatory performance. But of all Churchill's wartime speeches, it remains perhaps the best remembered. 'Rhetoric', he later wrote, 'was no guarantee of survival.' But in the aftermath of the fall of France, no other guarantee was available.

House of Commons, 18 June 1940

I SPOKE THE OTHER DAY of the colossal military disaster which occurred when the French High Command failed to withdraw the Northern Armies from Belgium at the moment when they knew that the French front was decisively broken at Sedan and on the Meuse. This delay entailed the loss of fifteen or sixteen French divisions and threw out of action for the critical period the whole of the British Expeditionary Force. Our Army and 120,000 French troops were indeed rescued by the British Navy from Dunkirk but only with the loss of their cannon, vehicles and modern equipment. This loss inevitably took some weeks to repair, and in the first two of those weeks the battle in France has been lost. When we consider the heroic resistance made by the French Army against heavy odds in this battle, the enormous losses inflicted upon the enemy and the evident exhaustion of the enemy, it may well be thought that these twenty-five divisions of the best-trained and best-equipped troops might have turned the scale. However, General Weygand had to fight without them. Only three British divisions or their equivalent were able to stand in the line with their French comrades. They had suffered severely, but they had fought well. We sent every man we could to France as fast as we could re-equip and transport their formations.

I am not reciting these facts for the purpose of recrimination. That I judge to be utterly futile and even harmful. We cannot afford it. I recite them in order to explain why it was we did not have, as we could have had, between twelve and fourteen British divisions fighting in the line in this great battle instead of only three. Now I put all this aside. I put it on the shelf, from which the historians, when they have time, will select their documents to tell their stories. We have to think of the future and not of the past. This also applies in a small way to our own affairs at home. There are many who would hold an inquest in the House of

Commons on the conduct of the Governments – and of Parliaments, for they are in it, too – during the years which led up to this catastrophe. They seek to indict those who were responsible for the guidance of our affairs. This also would be a foolish and pernicious process. There are too many in it. Let each man search his conscience and search his speeches. I frequently search mine.

Of this I am quite sure, that if we open a quarrel between the past and the present, we shall find that we have lost the future. Therefore, I cannot accept the drawing of any distinctions between Members of the present Government. It was formed at a moment of crisis in order to unite all the parties and all sections of opinion. It has received the almost unanimous support of both Houses of Parliament. Its Members are going to stand together, and, subject to the authority of the House of Commons, we are going to govern the country and fight the war. It is absolutely necessary at a time like this that every Minister who tries each day to do his duty shall be respected; and their subordinates must know that their chiefs are not threatened men, men who are here today and gone tomorrow, but that their directions must be punctually and faithfully obeyed. Without this concentrated power we cannot face what lies before us. I should not think it would be very advantageous for the House to prolong this Debate this afternoon under conditions of public stress. Many facts are not clear that will be clear in a short time. We are to have a Secret Session on Thursday, and I should think that would be a better opportunity for the many earnest expressions of opinion which Members will desire to make and for the House to discuss vital matters without having everything read the next morning by our dangerous foes.

The disastrous military events which have happened during the past fortnight have not come to me with any sense of surprise. Indeed, I indicated a fortnight ago as clearly as I could to the House that the worst possibilities were open; and I made it perfectly clear then that whatever happened in France would make no difference to the resolve of Britain and the British Empire to fight on, 'if necessary for years, if necessary alone.'

During the last few days we have successfully brought off the great majority of the troops we had on the lines of communication in France; and seven-eighths of the troops we have sent to France since the beginning of the war – that is to say, about 350,000 out of 400,000 men – are safely back in this country. Others are still fighting with the French, and fighting with considerable success in their local encounters against the enemy. We have also brought back a great mass of stores, rifles and munitions of all kinds which had been accumulated in France during the last nine months.

We have, therefore, in this island today a very large and powerful military force. This force comprises all our best-trained and our finest troops, including scores of thousands of those who have already measured their quality against the Germans and found themselves at no disadvantage. We have under arms at the present time in this island over a million and a quarter men. Behind these we have the Local Defence Volunteers, numbering half a million, only a portion of whom, however, are yet armed with rifles or other firearms. We have incorporated into our Defence Forces every man for whom we have a weapon. We expect very large additions to our weapons in the near future, and in preparation for this we intend forthwith to call up, drill and train further large numbers. Those who are not called up, or else are employed upon the vast business of munitions production in all its branches – and their ramifications are innumerable – will serve their country best by remaining at their ordinary work until they receive their summons. We have also over here Dominions armies. The Canadians had actually landed in France, but have now been safely withdrawn, much disappointed, but in perfect order, with all their artillery and equipment. And these very high-class forces from the Dominions will now take part in the defence of the Mother Country.

Lest the account which I have given of these large forces should raise the question: Why did they not take part in the great battle in France? I must make it clear that, apart from the divisions training and organizing at home, only twelve divisions were equipped to fight upon a scale which justified their being

sent abroad. And this was fully up to the number which the French had been led to expect would be available in France at the ninth month of the war. The rest of our forces at home have a fighting value for home defence which will, of course, steadily increase every week that passes. Thus, the invasion of Great Britain would at this time require the transportation across the sea of hostile armies on a very large scale, and after they had been so transported they would have to be continually maintained with all the masses of munitions and supplies which are required for continuous battle – as continuous battle it will surely be.

Here is where we come to the Navy – and after all, we have a Navy. Some people seem to forget that we have a Navy. We must remind them. For the last thirty years I have been concerned in discussions about the possibilities of overseas invasion, and I took the responsibility on behalf of the Admiralty, at the beginning of the last war, of allowing all regular troops to be sent out of the country. That was a very serious step to take, because our Territorials had only just been called up and were quite untrained. Therefore, this island was for several months practically denuded of fighting troops. The Admiralty had confidence at that time in their ability to prevent a mass invasion even though at that time the Germans had a magnificent battle fleet in the proportion of ten to sixteen, even though they were capable of fighting a general engagement every day and any day, whereas now they have only a couple of heavy ships worth speaking of – the *Scharnhorst* and the *Gneisenau*. We are also told that the Italian Navy is to come out and gain sea superiority in these waters. If they seriously intend it, I shall only say that we shall be delighted to offer Signor Mussolini a free and safeguarded passage through the Straits of Gibraltar in order that he may play the part to which he aspires. There is a general curiosity in the British Fleet to find out whether the Italians are up to the level they were at in the last war or whether they have fallen off at all.

Therefore, it seems to me that as far as seaborne invasion on a great scale is concerned, we are far more capable of meeting it

today than we were at many periods in the last war and during the early months of this war, before our other troops were trained, and while the BEF had proceeded abroad. Now, the Navy have never pretended to be able to prevent raids by bodies of 5,000 or 10,000 men flung suddenly across and thrown ashore at several points on the coast some dark night or foggy morning. The efficacy of sea-power, especially under modern conditions, depends upon the invading force being of large size. It has to be of large size, in view of our military strength, to be of any use. If it is of large size, then the Navy have something they can find and meet and, as it were, bite on. Now we must remember that even five divisions, however lightly equipped, would require 200 to 250 ships, and with modern air reconnaissance and photography it would not be easy to collect such an armada, marshal it and conduct it across the sea without any powerful naval forces to escort it; and there would be very great possibilities, to put it mildly, that this armada would be intercepted long before it reached the coast, and all the men drowned in the sea or, at the worst, blown to pieces with their equipment while they were trying to land. We also have a great system of minefields, recently strongly reinforced, through which we alone know the channels. If the enemy tries to sweep passages through these minefields, it will be the task of the Navy to destroy the minesweepers and any other forces employed to protect them. There should be no difficulty in this, owing to our great superiority at sea.

Those are the regular, well-tested, well-proved arguments on which we have relied during many years in peace and war. But the question is whether there are any new methods by which those solid assurances can be circumvented. Odd as it may seem, some attention has been given to this by the Admiralty, whose prime duty and responsibility it is to destroy any large seaborne expedition before it reaches, or at the moment when it reaches these shores. It would not be a good thing for me to go into details of this. It might suggest ideas to other people which they have not thought of, and they would not be likely to give us any of their ideas in exchange. All I will say is that untiring vigilance

and mind-searching must be devoted to the subject, because the enemy is crafty and cunning and full of novel treacheries and stratagems. The House may be assured that the utmost ingenuity is being displayed and imagination is being evoked from large numbers of competent officers, well trained in tactics and thoroughly up to date, to measure and counterwork novel possibilities. Untiring vigilance and untiring searching of the mind is being, and must be, devoted to the subject, because, remember, the enemy is crafty and there is no dirty trick he will not do.

Some people will ask why, then, was it that the British Navy was not able to prevent the movement of a large army from Germany into Norway across the Skaggerak? But the conditions in the Channel and in the North Sea are in no way like those which prevail in the Skaggerak. In the Skaggerak, because of the distance, we could give no air support to our surface ships, and consequently, lying as we did close to the enemy's main air power, we were compelled to use only our submarines. We could not enforce the decisive blockade or interruption which is possible from surface vessels. Our submarines took a heavy toll but could not, by themselves, prevent the invasion of Norway. In the Channel and in the North Sea, on the other hand, our superior naval surface forces, aided by our submarines, will operate with close and effective air assistance.

This brings me, naturally, to the great question of invasion from the air, and of the impending struggle between the British and German Air Forces. It seems quite clear that no invasion on a scale beyond the capacity of our land forces to crush speedily is likely to take place from the air until our Air Force has been definitely overpowered. In the meantime, there may be raids by parachute troops and attempted descents of airborne soldiers. We should be able to give those gentry a warm reception, both in the air and on the ground, if they reach it in any condition to continue the dispute. But the great question is: Can we break Hitler's air weapon? Now, of course, it is a very great pity that we have not got an Air Force at least equal to that of the most powerful enemy within striking distance of these shores. But we

have a very powerful Air Force which has proved itself far superior in quality, both in men and in many types of machine, to what we have met so far in the numerous and fierce air battles which have been fought with the Germans. In France, where we were at a considerable disadvantage and lost many machines on the ground when they were standing round the aerodromes, we were accustomed to inflict in the air losses of as much as two to two-and-a-half to one. In the fighting over Dunkirk, which was a sort of no-man's land, we undoubtedly beat the German Air Force, and gained the mastery of the local air, inflicting here a loss of three or four to one day after day. Anyone who looks at the photographs which were published a week or so ago of the re-embarkation, showing the masses of troops assembled on the beach and forming an ideal target for hours at a time, must realize that this re-embarkation would not have been possible unless the enemy had resigned all hope of recovering air superiority at that time and at that place.

In the defence of this island the advantages to the defenders will be much greater than they were in the fighting around Dunkirk. We hope to improve on the rate of three or four to one which was realized at Dunkirk; and in addition all our injured machines and their crews which get down safe – and, surprisingly, a very great many injured machines and men do get down safely in modern air fighting – all of these will fall, in an attack upon these islands, on friendly soil and live to fight another day; whereas all the injured enemy machines and their complements will be total losses as far as the war is concerned.

During the great battle in France, we gave very powerful and continuous aid to the French Army, both by fighters and bombers; but in spite of every kind of pressure we never would allow the entire metropolitan fighter strength of the Air Force to be consumed. This decision was painful, but it was also right, because the fortunes of the battle in France could not have been decisively affected even if we had thrown in our entire fighter force. That battle was lost by the unfortunate strategical opening, by the extraordinary and unforeseen power of the armoured columns and by the great preponderance of the German Army in

numbers. Our fighter Air Force might easily have been exhausted as a mere accident in that great struggle, and then we should have found ourselves at the present time in a very serious plight. But as it is, I am happy to inform the House that our fighter strength is stronger at the present time relatively to the Germans, who have suffered terrible losses, than it has ever been; and consequently we believe ourselves possessed of the capacity to continue the war in the air under better conditions than we have ever experienced before. I look forward confidently to the exploits of our fighter pilots – these splendid men, this brilliant youth – who will have the glory of saving their native land, their island home, and all they love, from the most deadly of all attacks.

There remains, of course, the danger of bombing attacks, which will certainly be made very soon upon us by the bomber forces of the enemy. It is true that the German bomber force is superior in numbers to ours; but we have a very large bomber force also, which we shall use to strike at military targets in Germany without intermission. I do not at all underrate the severity of the ordeal which lies before us; but I believe our countrymen will show themselves capable of standing up to it, like the brave men of Barcelona, and will be able to stand up to it, and carry on in spite of it, at least as well as any other people in the world. Much will depend upon this; every man and every woman will have the chance to show the finest qualities of their race, and render the highest service to their cause. For all of us, at this time, whatever our sphere, our station, our occupation or our duties, it will be a help to remember the famous lines:

He nothing common did or mean,
Upon that memorable scene.

I have thought it right upon this occasion to give the House and the country some indication of the solid, practical grounds upon which we base our inflexible resolve to continue the war. There are a good many people who say, 'Never mind. Win or lose, sink or swim, better die than submit to tyranny – and such a tyranny.' And I do not dissociate myself from them. But I can

assure them that our professional advisers of the three Services unitedly advise that we should carry on the war, and that there are good and reasonable hopes of final victory. We have fully informed and consulted all the self-governing Dominions, these great communities far beyond the oceans who have been built up on our laws and on our civilization, and who are absolutely free to choose their course, but are absolutely devoted to the ancient Motherland, and who feel themselves inspired by the same emotions which lead me to stake our all upon duty and honour. We have fully consulted them, and I have received from their Prime Ministers, Mr Mackenzie King of Canada, Mr Menzies of Australia, Mr Fraser of New Zealand, and General Smuts of South Africa – that wonderful man, with his immense profound mind, and his eye watching from a distance the whole panorama of European affairs – I have received from all these eminent men, who all have Governments behind them elected on wide franchises, who are all there because they represent the will of their people, messages couched in the most moving terms in which they endorse our decision to fight on, and declare themselves ready to share our fortunes and to persevere to the end. That is what we are going to do.

We may now ask ourselves: In what way has our position worsened since the beginning of the war? It has worsened by the fact that the Germans have conquered a large part of the coastline of Western Europe, and many small countries have been overrun by them. This aggravates the possibilities of air attack and adds to our naval preoccupations. It in no way diminishes, but on the contrary definitely increases, the power of our long-distance blockade. Similarly, the entrance of Italy into the war increases the power of our long-distance blockade. We have stopped the worst leak by that. We do not know whether military resistance will come to an end in France or not, but should it do so, then of course, the Germans will be able to concentrate their forces, both military and industrial, upon us. But for the reasons I have given to the House these will not be found so easy to apply. If invasion has become more imminent, as no doubt it has, we, being relieved from the task of maintain-

ing a large army in France, have far larger and more efficient forces to meet it.

If Hitler can bring under his despotic control the industries of the countries he has conquered, this will add greatly to his already vast armament output. On the other hand, this will not happen immediately, and we are now assured of immense, continuous and increasing support in supplies and munitions of all kinds from the United States; and especially of airplanes and pilots from the Dominions and across the oceans, coming from regions which are beyond the reach of enemy bombers.

I do not see how any of these factors can operate to our detriment on balance before the winter comes; and the winter will impose a strain upon the Nazi regime, with almost all Europe writhing and starving under its cruel heel, which, for all their ruthlessness, will run them very hard. We must not forget that from the moment when we declared war on the 3 September it was always possible for Germany to turn all her air force upon this country, together with any other devices of invasion she might conceive, and that France could have done little or nothing to prevent her doing so. We have, therefore, lived under this danger, in principle and in a slightly modified form, during all these months. In the meanwhile, however, we have enormously improved our methods of defence, and we have learned, what we had no right to assume at the beginning, namely, that the individual aircraft and the individual British pilot have a sure and definite superiority. Therefore, in casting up this dread balance sheet and contemplating our dangers with a disillusioned eye, I see great reason for intense vigilance and exertion, but none whatever for panic or despair.

During the first four years of the last war the Allies experienced nothing but disaster and disappointment. That was our constant fear: one blow after another, terrible losses, frightful dangers. Everything miscarried. And yet at the end of those four years the morale of the Allies was higher than that of the Germans, who had moved from one aggressive triumph to another, and who stood everywhere triumphant invaders of the lands into which they had broken. During that war we repeat-

edly asked ourselves the question: How are we going to win? And no one was able ever to answer it with much precision, until at the end, quite suddenly, quite unexpectedly, our terrible foe collapsed before us, and we were so glutted with victory that in our folly we threw it away.

We do not yet know what will happen in France or whether the French resistance will be prolonged, both in France and in the French Empire overseas. The French Government will be throwing away great opportunities and casting adrift their future if they do not continue the war in accordance with their Treaty obligations, from which we have not felt able to release them. The House will have read the historic declaration in which, at the desire of many Frenchmen – and of our own hearts – we have proclaimed our willingness at the darkest hour in French history to conclude a union of common citizenship in this struggle. However matters may go in France or with the French Government, or other French Governments, we in this island and in the British Empire will never lose our sense of comradeship with the French people. If we are now called upon to endure what they have been suffering, we shall emulate their courage, and if final victory rewards our toils they shall share the gains, aye, and freedom shall be restored to all. We abate nothing of our just demands; not one jot or tittle do we recede. Czechs, Poles, Norwegians, Dutch, Belgians have joined their causes to our own. All these shall be restored.

What General Weygand called the Battle of France is over. I expect that the Battle of Britain is about to begin. Upon this battle depends the survival of Christian civilization. Upon it depends our own British life, and the long continuity of our institutions and our Empire. The whole fury and might of the enemy must very soon be turned on us. Hitler knows that he will have to break us in this island or lose the war. If we can stand up to him, all Europe may be free and the life of the world may move forward into broad, sunlit uplands. But if we fail, then the whole world, including the United States, including all that we have known and cared for, will sink into the abyss of a new Dark Age made more sinister, and perhaps more protracted, by the

lights of perverted science. Let us therefore brace ourselves to our duties and so bear ourselves that, if the British Empire and its Commonwealth last for a thousand years, men will still say, 'This was their finest hour.'

28

The Soviet Danger: *'The Iron Curtain'*

Fulton, Missouri, 5 March 1946

Early in 1946, Churchill decided to absent himself from Parliament for a few months. He had accepted an invitation from Westminster College in Fulton, Missouri, to deliver an address, and President Truman (whose home state it was) agreed to introduce him to the audience, even though he was only speaking as a private citizen. Truman and Churchill travelled together, in the President's special train, and as usual Churchill worked on final revisions until the very last moment.

This was undoubtedly the most important, and the most influential, of all Churchill's post-war addresses. Ranging widely across the international scene, he urged that the United Nations should establish a peace-keeping force; that the Western Powers should retain their secret knowledge of the atomic bomb; that the 'special relationship' between the British Commonwealth and the United States should be strengthened; and that England and America must beware of the 'iron curtain' that had descended across the Continent of Europe.

In retrospect, with the world already at the brink of the Cold War, Churchill's words seem uncontroversially timely. But when delivered, the speech caused a furore. Stalin, predictably, denounced it; so did most American newspapers; so did *The Times* and many Labour MPs. As usual, Asquith's daughter was more appreciative: 'It is the root of the matter, whether people wish to recognize it or not.' And so, indeed, it soon proved to be.

Fulton, Missouri, 5 March 1946

I am glad to come to Westminster College this afternoon, and am complimented that you should give me a degree. The name 'Westminster' is somehow familiar to me. I seem to have heard of it before. Indeed, it was at Westminster that I received a very large part of my education in politics, dialectic, rhetoric, and one or two other things. In fact we have both been educated at the same, or similar, or, at any rate, kindred establishments.

It is also an honour, perhaps almost unique, for a private visitor to be introduced to an academic audience by the President of the United States. Amid his heavy burdens, duties, and responsibilities – unsought but not recoiled from – the President has travelled a thousand miles to dignify and magnify our meeting here today and to give me an opportunity of addressing this kindred nation, as well as my own countrymen across the ocean, and perhaps some other countries too. The President has told you that it is his wish, as I am sure it is yours, that I should have full liberty to give my true and faithful counsel in these anxious and baffling times. I shall certainly avail myself of this freedom, and feel the more right to do so because any private ambitions I may have cherished in my younger days have been satisfied beyond my wildest dreams. Let me, however, make it clear that I have no official mission or status of any kind, and that I speak only for myself. There is nothing here but what you see.

I can therefore allow my mind, with the experience of a lifetime, to play over the problems which beset us on the morrow of our absolute victory in arms, and to try to make sure with what strength I have that what has been gained with so much sacrifice and suffering shall be preserved for the future glory and safety of mankind.

The United States stands at this time at the pinnacle of world

power. It is a solemn moment for the American Democracy. For with primacy in power is also joined an awe-inspiring accountability to the future. If you look around you, you must feel not only the sense of duty done but also you must feel anxiety lest you fall below the level of achievement. Opportunity is here now, clear and shining for both our countries. To reject it or ignore it or fritter it away will bring upon us all the long reproaches of the after-time. It is necessary that constancy of mind, persistency of purpose and the grand simplicity of decision shall guide and rule the conduct of the English-speaking peoples in peace as they did in war. We must, and I believe we shall, prove ourselves equal to this severe requirement.

When American military men approach some serious situation they are wont to write at the head of their directive the words 'overall strategic concept'. There is wisdom in this, as it leads to clarity of thought. What then is the overall strategic concept which we should inscribe today? It is nothing less than the safety and welfare, the freedom and progress, of all the homes and families of all the men and women in all the lands. And here I speak particularly of the myriad cottage or apartment homes where the wage-earner strives amid the accidents and difficulties of life to guard his wife and children from privation and bring the family up in the fear of the Lord, or upon ethical conceptions which often play their potent part.

To give security to these countless homes, they must be shielded from the two giant marauders, war and tyranny. We all know the frightful disturbances in which the ordinary family is plunged when the curse of war swoops down upon the breadwinner and those for whom he works and contrives. The awful ruin of Europe, with all its vanished glories, and of large parts of Asia glares us in the eyes. When the designs of wicked men or the aggressive urge of mighty States dissolve over large areas the frame of civilized society, humble folk are confronted with difficulties with which they cannot cope. For them all is distorted, all is broken, even ground to pulp.

When I stand here this quiet afternoon I shudder to visualize what is actually happening to millions now and what is going to

happen in this period when famine stalks the earth. None can compute what has been called 'the unestimated sum of human pain'. Our supreme task and duty is to guard the homes of the common people from the horrors and miseries of another war. We are all agreed on that.

Our American military colleagues, after having proclaimed their 'over-all strategic concept' and computed available resources, always proceed to the next step – namely, the method. Here again there is widespread agreement. A world organization has already been erected for the prime purpose of preventing war. UNO, the successor of the League of Nations, with the decisive addition of the United States and all that that means, is already at work. We must make sure that its work is fruitful, that it is a reality and not a sham, that it is a force for action, and not merely a frothing of words, that it is a true temple of peace in which the shields of many nations can some day be hung up, and not merely a cockpit in a Tower of Babel. Before we cast away the solid assurances of national armaments for self-preservation we must be certain that our temple is built, not upon shifting sands or quagmires, but upon the rock. Anyone can see with his eyes open that our path will be difficult and also long, but if we persevere together as we did in the two world wars – though not, alas, in the interval between them – I cannot doubt that we shall achieve our common purpose in the end.

I have, however, a definite and practical purpose to make for action. Courts and magistrates may be set up but they cannot function without sheriffs and constables. The United Nations Organization must immediately begin to be equipped with an international armed force. In such a matter we can only go step by step, but we must begin now. I propose that each of the Powers and States should be invited to delegate a certain number of air squadrons to the service of the world organization. These squadrons would be trained and prepared in their own countries, but would move around in rotation from one country to another. They would wear the uniform of their own countries but with different badges. They would not be required to act against their own nation, but in other respects they would be

directed by the world organization. This might be started on a modest scale and would grow as confidence grew. I wished to see this done after the First World War, and I devoutly trust it may be done forthwith.

It would nevertheless be wrong and imprudent to entrust the secret knowledge or experience of the atomic bomb, which the United States, Great Britain and Canada now share, to the world organization, while it is still in its infancy. It would be criminal madness to cast it adrift in this still agitated and un-united world. No one in any country has slept less well in their beds because this knowledge and the method and the raw materials to apply it, are at present largely retained in American hands. I do not believe we should all have slept so soundly had the positions been reversed and if some Communist or neo-Fascist State monopolized for the time being these dread agencies. The fear of them alone might easily have been used to enforce totalitarian systems upon the free democratic world, with consequences appalling to human imagination. God has willed that this shall not be and we have at least a breathing space to set our house in order before this peril has to be encountered: and even then, if no effort is spared, we should still possess so formidable a superiority as to impose effective deterrents upon its employment, or threat of employment by others. Ultimately, when the essential brotherhood of man is truly embodied and expressed in a world organization with all the necessary practical safeguards to make it effective, these powers would naturally be confided to that world organization.

Now I come to the second danger of these two marauders which threatens the cottage, the home, and the ordinary people – namely, tyranny. We cannot be blind to the fact that the liberties enjoyed by individual citizens throughout the British Empire are not valid in a considerable number of countries, some of which are very powerful. In these States control is enforced upon the common people by various kinds of all-embracing police governments. The power of the State is exercised without restraint, either by dictators or by compact oligarchies operating through a privileged party and a political police. It is not our duty at this

time when difficulties are so numerous to interfere forcibly in the internal affairs of countries which we have not conquered in war. But we must never cease to proclaim in fearless tones the great principles of freedom and the rights of man which are the joint inheritance of the English-speaking world and which through Magna Carta, the Bill of Rights, the Habeas Corpus, trial by jury, and the English common law find their most famous expression in the American Declaration of Independence.

All this means that the people of any country have the right, and should have the power by constitutional action, by free unfettered elections, with secret ballot, to choose or change the character or form of government under which they dwell; that freedom of speech and thought should reign; that courts of justice, independent of the executive, unbiased by any party, should administer laws which have received the broad assent of large majorities or are consecrated by time and custom. Here are the title deeds of freedom which should lie in every cottage home. Here is the message of the British and American peoples to mankind. Let us preach what we practise – let us practise what we preach.

I have now stated the two great dangers which menace the homes of the people: War and Tyranny. I have not yet spoken of poverty and privation which are in many cases the prevailing anxiety. But if the dangers of war and tyranny are removed, there is no doubt that science and co-operation can bring in the next few years to the world, certainly in the next few decades newly taught in the sharpening school of war, an expansion of material well-being beyond anything that has yet occurred in human experience. Now, at this sad and breathless moment, we are plunged in the hunger and distress which are the aftermath of our stupendous struggle: but this will pass and may pass quickly, and there is no reason except human folly or sub-human crime which should deny to all the nations the inauguration and enjoyment of an age of plenty. I have often used words which I learned fifty years ago from a great Irish-American orator, a friend of mine, Mr Bourke Cockran. 'There is enough for all. The earth is a generous mother; she will provide in plentiful abundance food for all her children if they will but cultivate her soil in justice and in peace.' So far I feel that we are in full agreement.

Now, while still pursuing the method of realizing our overall strategic concept, I come to the crux of what I have travelled here to say. Neither the sure prevention of war, nor the continuous rise of world organization will be gained without what I have called the fraternal association of the English-speaking peoples. This means a special relationship between the British Commonwealth and Empire and the United States. This is no time for generalities, and I will venture to be precise. Fraternal association requires not only the growing friendship and mutual understanding between our two vast but kindred systems of society, but the continuance of the intimate relationship between our military advisers, leading to common study of potential dangers, the similarity of weapons and manuals of instructions, and to the interchange of officers and cadets at technical colleges. It should carry with it the continuance of the present facilities for mutual security by the joint use of all Naval and Air Force bases in the possession of either country all over the world. This would perhaps double the mobility of the American Navy and Air Force. It would greatly expand that of the British Empire Forces and it might well lead, if and as the world calms down, to important financial savings. Already we use together a large number of islands; more may well be entrusted to our joint care in the near future.

The United States has already a Permanent Defence Agreement with the Dominion of Canada, which is so devotedly attached to the British Commonwealth and Empire. This Agreement is more effective than many of those which have often been made under formal alliances. This principle should be extended to all British Commonwealths with full reciprocity. Thus, whatever happens, and thus only, shall we be secure ourselves and able to work together for the high and simple causes that are dear to us and bode no ill to any. Eventually there may come – I feel eventually there will come – the principle of common citizenship, but that we may be content to leave to destiny, whose outstretched arm many of us can already clearly see.

There is however an important question we must ask ourselves. Would a special relationship between the United States and the British Commonwealth be inconsistent with our overriding loyalties to the World Organization? I reply that, on the contrary, it is probably the only means by which that organization will achieve its full stature and strength. There are already the special United States relations with Canada which I have just mentioned, and there are the special relations between the United States and the South American Republics. We British have our twenty years Treaty of Collaboration and Mutual Assistance with Soviet Russia. I agree with Mr Bevin, the Foreign Secretary of Great Britain, that it might well be a fifty years Treaty so far as we are concerned. We aim at nothing but mutual assistance and collaboration. The British have an alliance with Portugal unbroken since 1384, and which produced fruitful results at critical moments in the late war. None of these clash with the general interest of a world agreement, or a world organization; on the contrary they help it. 'In my father's house are many mansions.' Special associations between members of the United Nations which have no aggressive point against any other country, which harbour no design incompatible with the Charter of the United Nations, far from being harmful, are beneficial and, as I believe, indispensable.

I spoke earlier of the Temple of Peace. Workmen from all countries must build that temple. If two of the workmen know each other particularly well and are old friends, if their families are intermingled, and if they have 'faith in each other's purpose, hope in each other's future and charity towards each other's shortcomings' – to quote some good words I read here the other day – why cannot they work together at the common task as friends and partners? Why cannot they share their tools and thus increase each other's working powers? Indeed they must do so or else the temple may not be built, or, being built, it may collapse, and we shall all be proved again unteachable and have to go and try to learn again for a third time in a school of war, incomparably more rigorous than that from which we have just been released. The dark ages may return, the Stone Age may return

on the gleaming wings of science, and what might now shower immeasurable material blessings upon mankind, may even bring about its total destruction. Beware, I say; time may be short. Do not let us take the course of allowing events to drift along until it is too late. If there is to be a fraternal association of the kind I have described, with all the extra strength and security which both our countries can derive from it, let us make sure that that great fact is known to the world, and that it plays its part in steadying and stabilizing the foundations of peace. There is the path of wisdom. Prevention is better than cure.

A shadow has fallen upon the scenes so lately lighted by the Allied victory. Nobody knows what Soviet Russia and its Communist international organization intends to do in the immediate future, or what are the limits, if any, to their expansive and proselytizing tendencies. I have a strong admiration and regard for the valiant Russian people and for my wartime comrade, Marshal Stalin. There is deep sympathy and goodwill in Britain – and I doubt not here also – towards the peoples of all the Russias and a resolve to persevere through many differences and rebuffs in establishing lasting friendships. We understand the Russian need to be secure on her western frontiers by the removal of all possibility of German aggression. We welcome Russia to her rightful place among the leading nations of the world. We welcome her flag upon the seas. Above all, we welcome constant, frequent and growing contacts between the Russian people and our own people on both sides of the Atlantic. It is my duty, however, for I am sure you would wish me to state the facts as I see them to you, to place before you certain facts about the present position in Europe.

From Stettin in the Baltic to Trieste in the Adriatic, an iron curtain has descended across the Continent. Behind that line lie all the capitals of the ancient states of Central and Eastern Europe. Warsaw, Berlin, Prague, Vienna, Budapest, Belgrade, Bucharest and Sofia, all these famous cities and the populations around them lie in what I must call the Soviet sphere, and all are subject in one form or another, not only to Soviet influence but to a very high and, in many cases, increasing measure of control

from Moscow. Athens alone – Greece with its immortal glories – is free to decide its future at an election under British American and French observation. The Russian-dominated Polish Government has been encouraged to make enormous and wrongful inroads upon Germany, and mass expulsions of millions of Germans on a scale grievous and undreamed-of are now taking place. The Communist parties, which were very small in all these Eastern States of Europe, have been raised to pre-eminence and power far beyond their numbers and are seeking everywhere to obtain totalitarian control. Police governments are prevailing in nearly every case, and so far, except in Czechoslovakia, there is no true democracy.

Turkey and Persia [Iran] are both profoundly alarmed and disturbed at the claims which are being made upon them and at the pressure being exerted by the Moscow Government. An attempt is being made by the Russians in Berlin to build up a quasi-Communist party in their zone of Occupied Germany by showing special favours to groups of left-wing German leaders. At the end of the fighting last June, the American and British Armies withdrew westwards, in accorance with an earlier agreement, to a depth at some points of 150 miles upon a front of nearly four hundred miles, in order to allow our Russian allies to occupy this vast expanse of territory which the Western Democracies had conquered.

If now the Soviet Government tries, by separate action, to build up a pro-Communist Germany in their areas, this will cause new serious difficulties in the British and American zones, and will give the defeated Germans the power of putting themselves up to auction between the Soviets and the Western Democracies. Whatever conclusions may be drawn from these facts – and facts they are – this is certainly not the Liberated Europe we fought to build up. Nor is it one which contains the essentials of permanent peace.

The safety of the world requires a new unity in Europe, from which no nation should be permanently outcast. It is from the quarrels of the strong parent races in Europe that the world wars we have witnessed, or which occurred in former times, have

sprung. Twice in our own lifetime we have seen the United States, against their wishes and their traditions, against arguments, the force of which it is impossible not to comprehend, drawn by irresistible forces, into these wars in time to secure the victory of the good cause, but only after frightful slaughter and devastation had occurred. Twice the United States has had to send several millions of its young men across the Atlantic to find the war; but now war can find any nation, wherever it may dwell between dusk and dawn. Surely we should work with conscious purpose for a grand pacification of Europe, within the structure of the United Nations and in accordance with its Charter. That I feel is an open cause of policy of very great importance.

In front of the iron curtain which lies across Europe are other causes for anxiety. In Italy the Communist Party is seriously hampered by having to support the Communist-trained Marshal Tito's claims to former Italian territory at the head of the Adriatic. Nevertheless, the future of Italy hangs in the balance. Again one cannot imagine a regenerated Europe without a strong France. All my public life I have worked for a strong France and I never lost faith in her destiny, even in the darkest hours. I will not lose faith now. However, in a great number of countries, far from the Russian frontiers and throughout the world. Communist fifth columns are established and work in complete unity and absolute obedience to the directions they receive from the Communist centre. Except in the British Commonwealth and in the United States where Communism is in its infancy, the Communist parties or fifth columns constitute a growing challenge and peril to Christian civilization. These are sombre facts for anyone to have to recite on the morrow of a victory gained by so much splendid comradeship in arms and in the cause of freedom and democracy; but we should be most unwise not to face them squarely while time remains.

The outlook is also anxious in the Far East and especially in Manchuria. The Agreement which was made at Yalta, to which I was a party, was extremely favourable to Soviet Russia, but it was made at a time when no one could say that the German war might not extend all through the summer and autumn of 1945

and when the Japanese war was expected to last for a further eighteen months from the end of the German war. In this country you are all so well informed about the Far East, and such devoted friends of China, that I do not need to expatiate on the situation there.

I have felt bound to portray the shadow which, alike in the west and in the east, falls upon the world. I was a high minister at the time of the Versailles Treaty and a close friend of Mr Lloyd George, who was the head of the British delegation at Versailles. I did not myself agree with many things that were done, but I have a very strong impression in my mind of that situation, and I find it painful to contrast it with that which prevails now. In those days there were high hopes and unbounded confidence that the wars were over, and that the League of Nations would become all-powerful. I do not see or feel that same confidence or even the same hopes in the haggard world at the present time.

On the other hand I repulse the idea that a new war is inevitable; still more that it is imminent. It is because I am sure that our fortunes are still in our own hands and that we hold the power to save the future, that I feel the duty to speak out now that I have the occasion and the opportunity to do so. I do not believe that Soviet Russia desires war. What they desire is the fruits of war and the indefinite expansion of their power and doctrines. But what we have to consider here today while time remains, is the permanent prevention of war and the establishment of conditions of freedom and democracy as rapidly as possible in all countries. Our difficulties and dangers will not be removed by closing our eyes to them. They will not be removed by mere waiting to see what happens; nor will they be removed by a policy of appeasement. What is needed is a settlement, and the longer this is delayed, the more difficult it will be and the greater our dangers will become.

From what I have seen of our Russian friends and Allies during the war, I am convinced that there is nothing they admire so much as strength, and there is nothing for which they have less respect than for weakness, especially military weakness. For

that reason the old doctrine of a balance of power is unsound. We cannot afford, if we can help it, to work on narrow margins, offering temptations to a trial of strength. If the Western Democracies stand together in strict adherence to the principles of the United Nations Charter, their influence for furthering those principles will be immense and no one is likely to molest them. If, however, they become divided or falter in their duty and if these all-important years are allowed to slip away then indeed catastrophe may overwhelm us all.

Last time I saw it all coming and cried aloud to my own fellow-countrymen and to the world, but no one paid any attention. Up till the year 1933 or even 1935, Germany might have been saved from the awful fate which has overtaken her and we might all have been spared the miseries Hitler let loose upon mankind. There never was a war in all history easier to prevent by timely action than the one which has just desolated such great areas of the globe. It could have been prevented in my belief without the firing of a single shot, and Germany might be powerful, prosperous and honoured today; but no one would listen and one by one we were all sucked into the awful whirlpool. We surely must not let that happen again. This can only be achieved by reaching now, in 1946, a good understanding on all points with Russia under the general authority of the United Nations Organization and by the maintenance of that good understanding through many peaceful years, by the world instrument, supported by the whole strength of the English-speaking world and all its connections. There is the solution which I respectfully offer to you in this Address to which I have given the title 'The Sinews of Peace'.

Let no man underrate the abiding power of the British Empire and Commonwealth. Because you see the forty-six millions in our island harassed about their food supply, of which they only grow one-half, even in wartime, or because we have difficulty in restarting our industries and export trade after six years of passionate war effort, do not suppose that we shall not come through these dark years of privation as we have come through the glorious years of agony, or that half a century from now, you

will not see seventy or eighty millions of Britons spread about the world and united in defence of our traditions, our way of life, and of the world causes which you and we espouse. If the population of the English-speaking Commonwealths be added to that of the United States with all that such co-operation implies in the air, on the sea, all over the globe and in science and in industry, and in moral force, there will be no quivering, precarious balance of power to offer its temptation to ambition or adventure. On the contrary, there will be an overwhelming assurance of security. If we adhere faithfully to the Charter of the United Nations and walk forward in sedate and sober strength seeking no one's land or treasure, seeking to lay no arbitrary control upon the thoughts of men; if all British moral and material forces and convictions are joined with your own in fraternal association, the highroads of the future will be clear, not only for us but for all, not only for our time, but for a century to come.

29

European Unity

'Something That Will Astonish You'

Zurich, 19 September 1946

Churchill spent much of the later part of 1946 triumphantly visiting the nations of Western Europe, receiving honorary degrees, medals and gifts, and widespread public homage. The theme of his speeches, first expounded at Brussels in November 1945, was that the only prospect for the Continent, in the aftermath of the carnage and destruction of the Second World War, and in the shadow of the new Soviet menace, was for its inhabitants to create some form of a 'United States of Europe.'

In August and September, Churchill spent some weeks in Switzerland as the guest of the Federal Government, and he delivered this speech – which was second only to his Fulton address in its importance and its impact – on receiving an honorary degree from the University of Zurich. Once again, he made his eloquent plea for European unity. But now he went even further, and put forward his 'astonishing' proposal that there must be an end to old nationalistic antagonisms, and that there must be 'partnership between France and Germany'.

At a time when the full extent of Nazi atrocities was only just being revealed at the Nuremberg Trials, this was indeed an audacious idea. *The Times* noted that, once again, it showed Churchill was 'not afraid to startle the world with new and even, as many must find them, outrageous propositions.' But Leo Amery was more encouraging: 'You have indeed lit a torch to give its message of hope to a shattered world.'

Zurich, 19 September 1946

I wish to speak to you today about the tragedy of Europe. This noble continent, comprising on the whole the fairest and the most cultivated regions of the earth, enjoying a temperate and equable climate, is the home of all the great parent races of the western world. It is the fountain of Christian faith and Christian ethics. It is the origin of most of the culture, arts, philosophy and science both of ancient and modern times. If Europe were once united in the sharing of its common inheritance, there would be no limit to the happiness, to the prosperity and glory which its three or four hundred million people would enjoy. Yet it is from Europe that have sprung that series of frightful nationalistic quarrels, originated by the Teutonic nations, which we have seen even in this twentieth century and in our own lifetime, wreck the peace and mar the prospects of all mankind.

And what is the plight to which Europe has been reduced? Some of the smaller States have indeed made a good recovery, but over wide areas a vast quivering mass of tormented, hungry, care-worn and bewildered human beings gape at the ruins of their cities and homes, and scan the dark horizons for the approach of some new peril, tyranny or terror. Among the victors there is a babel of jarring voices; among the vanquished the sullen silence of despair. That is all that Europeans, grouped in so many ancient States and nations, that is all that the Germanic Powers have got by tearing each other to pieces and spreading havoc far and wide. Indeed, but for the fact that the great Republic across the Atlantic Ocean has at length realized that the ruin or enslavement of Europe would involve their own fate as well, and has stretched out hands of succour and guidance, the Dark Ages would have returned in all their cruelty and squalor. They may still return.

Yet all the while there is a remedy which, if it were generally

and spontaneously adopted, would as if by a miracle transform the whole scene, and would in a few years make all Europe, or the greater part of it, as free and as happy as Switzerland is today. What is this sovereign remedy? It is to re-create the European Family, or as much of it as we can, and provide it with a structure under which it can dwell in peace, in safety and in freedom. We must build a kind of United States of Europe. In this way only will hundreds of millions of toilers be able to regain the simple joys and hopes which make life worth living. The process is simple. All that is needed is the resolve of hundreds of millions of men and women to do right instead of wrong and gain as their reward blessing instead of cursing.

Much work has been done upon this task by the exertions of the Pan-European Union which owes so much to Count Coudenhove-Kalergi and which commanded the services of the famous French patriot and statesman, Aristide Briand. There is also that immense body of doctrine and procedure, which was brought into being amid high hopes after the First World War, as the League of Nations. The League of Nations did not fail because of its principles or conceptions. It failed because these principles were deserted by those States who had brought it into being. It failed because the Governments of those days feared to face the facts and act while time remained. This disaster must not be repeated. There is, therefore, much knowledge and material with which to build; and also bitter dear-bought experience.

I was very glad to read in the newspapers two days ago that my friend President Truman had expressed his interest and sympathy with this great design. There is no reason why a regional organization of Europe should in any way conflict with the world organization of the United Nations. On the contrary, I believe that the larger synthesis will only survive if it is founded upon coherent natural groupings. There is already a natural grouping in the Western Hemisphere. We British have our own Commonwealth of Nations. These do not weaken, on the contrary they strengthen, the world organization. They are in fact its main support. And why should there not be a European group which could give a sense of enlarged patriotism and

common citizenship to the distracted peoples of this turbulent and mighty continent and why should it not take its rightful place with other great groupings in shaping the destinies of men? In order that this should be accomplished there must be an act of faith in which millions of families speaking many languages must consciously take part.

We all know that the two world wars through which we have passed arose out of the vain passion of a newly united Germany to play the dominating part in the world. In this last struggle crimes and massacres have been committed for which there is no parallel since the invasions of the Mongols in the fourteenth century and no equal at any time in human history. The guilty must be punished. Germany must be deprived of the power to rearm and make another aggressive war. But when all this has been done, as it will be done, as it is being done, there must be an end to retribution. There must be what Mr Gladstone many years ago called 'a blessed act of oblivion'. We must all turn our backs upon the horrors of the past. We must look to the future. We cannot afford to drag forward across the years that are to come the hatreds and revenges which have sprung from the injuries of the past. If Europe is to be saved from infinite misery, and indeed from final doom, there must be an act of faith in the European family and an act of oblivion against all the crimes and follies of the past.

Can the free peoples of Europe rise to the height of these resolves of the soul and instincts of the spirit of man? If they can, the wrongs and injuries which have been inflicted will have been washed away on all sides by the miseries which have been endured. Is there any need for further floods of agony? Is it the only lesson of history that mankind is unteachable? Let there be justice, mercy and freedom. The peoples have only to will it, and all will achieve their hearts' desire.

I am now going to say something that will astonish you. The first step in the re-creation of the European family must be a partnership between France and Germany. In this way only can France recover the moral leadership of Europe. There can be no revival of Europe without a spiritually great France and a

spiritually great Germany. The structure of the United States of Europe, if well and truly built, will be such as to make the material strength of a single state less important. Small nations will count as much as large ones and gain their honour by their contribution to the common cause. The ancient states and principalities of Germany, freely joined together for mutual convenience in a federal system, might each take their individual place among the United States of Europe. I shall not try to make a detailed programme for hundreds of millions of people who want to be happy and free, prosperous and safe, who wish to enjoy the four freedoms of which the great President Roosevelt spoke, and live in accordance with the principles embodied in the Atlantic Charter. If this is their wish, they have only to say so, and means can certainly be found, and machinery erected, to carry that wish into full fruition.

But I must give you warning. Time may be short. At present there is a breathing-space. The cannon have ceased firing. The fighting has stopped; but the dangers have not stopped. If we are to form the United States of Europe or whatever name or form it may take, we must begin now.

In these present days we dwell strangely and precariously under the shield and protection of the atomic bomb. The atomic bomb is still only in the hands of a State and nation which we know will never use it except in the cause of right and freedom. But it may well be that in a few years this awful agency of destruction will be widespread and the catastrophe following from its use by several warring nations will not only bring to an end all that we call civilization, but may possibly disintegrate the globe itself.

I must now sum up the propositions which are before you. Our constant aim must be to build and fortify the strength of UNO. Under and within that world concept we must re-create the European family in a regional structure called, it may be, the United States of Europe. The first step is to form a Council of Europe. If at first all the States of Europe are not willing or able to join the Union, we must nevertheless proceed to assemble and combine those who will and those who can. The salvation of the

common people of every race and of every land from war or servitude must be established on solid foundations and must be guarded by the readiness of all men and women to die rather than submit to tyranny. In all this urgent work, France and Germany must take the lead together. Great Britain, the British Commonwealth of Nations, mighty America, and I trust Soviet Russia – for then indeed all would be well – must be the friends and sponsors of the new Europe and must champion its right to live and shine.

Charles de Gaulle's Address in Bayeux (Normandy)

June 16th, 1946

Meanwhile, here, on the soil of our ancestors, is where the State came back; the legitimate State, because it was based on the interest and the sentiment of the nation; the State whose actual sovereignty had been transported to the side of war, freedom and victory while servitude was but apparent; the State whose rule, dignity, authority had been safeguarded despite the vicissitudes of deprivation and intrigue; the State which is protected from the interference of foreign countries; the State which is capable of restoring national unity and imperial unity, of gathering together all forces of the fatherland and of the French Union, of achieving victory, together with the Allied forces, of treating the other great nations of the world as equals, of maintaining law and order, of dispensing justice and starting the reconstruction of our nation.

That considerable task could only be completed outside framework of our institutions, for our institutions had failed to meet the national needs and, by themselves, given up as a result of the turmoil. Salvation was to come from elsewhere.

It first came from some elite who spontaneously stemmed from the depths of the nation and who, regardless of any party's or class's interest, dedicated themselves to the fight for the the liberation, the grandeur and the restoration of France. The feeling of their moral superiority, the awareness of their somewhat sacerdotal sacrifice and example, the passion for risk and undertaking, the despise for agitations, claims and outbidding, the supreme confidence in the force and the astuteness of their powerful conjuration as well as in the victory and in the future of their fatherland, such were psychological traits of that elite which started from the nothingness and which, despite heavy losses, was to lead the whole Empire and France as a whole.

The elite would not however have succeeded, had it not been for the consent of the immense majority of the French people. Driven by their instinctive will to survive and triumph, they had never indeed seen the disaster of 1940 as nothing short of an episode of the world war where France served as a vanguard. If a great deal of them were forced to bow in the face of the circumstances, the number of those who accepted such circumstances in their mind and in their heart was literally miniscule. Never did France believe that the enemy was someone else than her enemy and that salvation might be somewhere else than on the sides of the arms of freedom.

As things were unveiled, the deep feeling of the country became clear in its reality. Wherever the cross of Lorraine appeared, there collapsed the frail structure of authorities which were but fictional, although they seemed to be constitutionally based.

To such an extent that authorities are not worth being actually and legally called so unless they are in harmony with the utmost interest of the country, unless they rely on the confident support of citizens. As regards institutions, building on anything else amounts to building on sand. We would take a risk to see the building collapse once again on the occasion of one of those crises to which, as it is in the nature of things, our country has found itself so often exposed.

That is why, once the State has been safely restored, when the victory has been complete and the national unity maintained, the urgent and essential task above all will be to install new institutions in France. As soon as it was possible, the French people was therefore invited to elect the members of the Constituent Assembly, meanwhile determining precise limits to their term and reserving for itself the right to make the final decision. Then, once things were back on the rails, we personally withdrew from the stage, not only in order not to involve in the struggles between parties what, owing to the events, we may symbolize and belongs to the nation on the whole, but also in order that no consideration related to one man, whilst he was leading the State, could anyhow bias the work of legislators.

However, the nation and the French Union are still expecting a Constitution to be written for them and to be as happily as possible approved of by them. Truthfully, much as one may wish the building were not still to be built, everyone surely admits that a slightly postponed success is better than a fast, albeit unsatisfactory achievement.

During a period of time that did not last twice as long as a man's life, France was invaded seven times and given seven regimes, for a people's mishaps are consistent with one another. So many tumults have been accumulating in our public life poisons with which our centuries-old Gallic inclination for divisions and quarrels has been getting tainted. The unprecedented ordeals we have just been through could of course not but worsen that state of things. The present situation in the world, where some Powers surrounding us are fighting each other as a result of opposed ideologies, is constantly introducing a factor of passionate trouble into our political struggles. For short, the competition between parties at home is basically always questioning everything and too often fading out the utmost interest of the country. That patent fact is due to the national character, the historical mishaps and the present collapse; it must nevertheless be taken into account and be steered clear of for the future of the country and that of democracy if our institutions are to maintain the credit of laws, the consistency of governments, the efficiency of administration, the prestige and authority of the State.

For, indeed, the trouble in the State has ineluctably resulted in the citizens' disregard for institutions. On any occasion dictatorship may thus become a threat. All the more since the somewhat mechanical organisation of modern society is making the right order in the ruling and regular functioning of institutions ever more necessary and wanted. How and why did the 1st, 2nd and 3rd Republics come to their end in France ? How and why did the Italian democracy, the German Republic of Weimar, the Spanish Republic leave room for the regimes we all know ? And yet, what is dictatorship but a great adventure ? It certainly seems to have many advantages in the beginning. In the midst of some people's enthusiasm and of some others' resignation, with the rigor of the order it imposes, thanks to some conspicuous décor and one-way propaganda, dictatorship first appears as a dynamic system contrasting with the previous anarchy. But dictatorship is doomed to overdo its endeavours. As citizens are growing more and more aware of their impatience towards constraints and of their nostalgia of freedom, dictatorship has to offer them at all costs ever greater successful achievements as a compensation. The nation becomes a machine, of which the master endlessly accelerates the rhythm. No matter the designs for the country or towards other nations, goals, risks, efforts exceed by and by all measures. Any step further leads to more and more obstacles, be they inside or outside the country. In the end, the spring gets loose.

The great building collapses, sorrow is spread and blood is shed. The nation finds itself broken, on a lower level than that before the adventure started.

Such an evocation suffices to understand how necessary it is for our new democratic institutions to compensate, by themselves, for the effects of our perpetual political effervescence. Furthermore it is for us a question of life or death, in the world and in the century we are in, where the position, the independence and even the existence of our country and of our French Union are really at stake. That opinions can be expressed and try, by means of elections, to orientate policies and legislation according to their conceptions is admittedly essential in a democracy and consistent with it. But all principles and all experiences also require authorities, that is the legislative, the executive and the judiciary, to be clearly separate from one another and strongly balanced and they require, above all political contingencies, a national referee to see to continuity despite combinations.

It clearly and certainly behooves a universally and directly elected Assembly to eventually pass bills and vote budgets. But the first move of such an Assembly is not necessarily made with clearsightedness. A second Assembly, which should be elected and composed in an other way, must therefore be given the duty to publicly examine what the first one has considered and to table amendments and submit proposals. Now much as national political mainstreams are naturally reproduced in the House of Representatives, local life has its tendencies and rights, too. So it has in continental France. So it has, firstly, in overseas territories which are attached to the French Union by very diverse bonds. So it has in Sarre to which the nature of things, revealed with our victory, designate the place thereof among the Franks' children. The future of the 110 million men and women who live under our flag lies in a federal organization which will be precisely defined little by little with the time; the start of that organization must be set and its development must be arranged by our new Constitution.

Hence all this leads us to institute a second House whose members shall be elected mostly by departmental and municipal councils. That House will complete the first as it will, if need be, ask the latter either to revise its own proposals, or to examine some others, and as it will, in the process of lawmaking, enhance the factor of administrative order that a purely political college necessary tends to overlook. On the other hand, it will be normal to introduce into the second House some representatives from organizations committed to the economic, families, intellectual debates, so that the voice of the major activities in the country can be heard in the very midst of the State. Joining the elected officials from the local assemblies in the overseas territories, the members of that Assembly will make up a great Council of the French Union that shall be entitled to discuss laws and issues regarding the Union, budgets, foreign and domestic affairs, national defence, economy, communication.

It is needless to say that the executive power may not proceed from the Parliament, consisting in two Houses and exerting the legislative power, lest the resulting confusion of powers lead the Government to soon be nothing else but a cluster of assembled delegations. In the current transitory period, the president of the temporary Governement was certainly to be elected by the national Assembly, since, after everything had been swept away, there was no other acceptable way of designating him. But that must be only a momentary disposition. The truth is that the unity, the consistency and the internal discipline of the French Government must be sacred, lest the very ruling of the country be rapidly powerless and disqualified. How could such unity, such consistency, such discipline be preserved on a long term, should the executive power stem from the other power that it must balance and each of the members of the Government be, in their position, only the representative of a party, whereas the Government is collectively responsible before those representing the whole nation ?

The executive power must therefore proceeds from the head of State, placed above parties, elected by a college that encompasses the Parliament but that is much larger than it and made up so he can be the President of the French Union as well as that of the Republic.

It behooves the Head of State to pay attention to the general interest when it comes to choosing men with the prevailing orientation of the Parliament. The mission is his to appoint ministers and, first of all, obviously, the Prime Minister, who will conduct policies and lead the work of the Government.

The Head of State's is the function of enabling laws and issuing decrees, because the former and the latter involve citizens towards the State. His is the task of presiding over Cabinet Meetings and exerting then that influence of the continuity from which a nation cannot be deprived. His is the ability of serving as a referee above political contingencies, either ordinarily in attending Cabinet Meetings, or, in the moments of serious confusion, in inviting citizens to express their sovereign decision in elections. His is the duty of being the warrant of national independence and of treaties concluded by France, should the fatherland ever be endangered.

Some Greeks once asked Solon the Wise : "What is the best constitution". He answered: "Tell me first for what people and in what era?". Today, the question is asked about the French people and the peoples of the French Union, in a very tough and dangerous time! Let us take ourselves as we are. Let us take our time as it is. Despite enormous difficulties, we have to carry out the in-depth renewing that shall lead every man and woman of our nation to enjoy more prosperity, safety, joy and that shall make us more numerous, more powerful, more brotherly. We have to safeguard the freedom that has been so painstakingly saved. We have to ensure France's destiny in the midst of all obstacles arising on her way and on that of peace. We have to endeavour, as much and hard as we can, together with our human brothers, to help our poor, old mother Earth. Let us be lucid and strong enough to give ourselves some rules for our national life which we shall comply with and which shall tend to gather us together whereas, without respite, we are so apt to divide ourselves against ourselves! Our whole history is that of alternating periods of immense sufferings for a scattered people and periods of fertile grandeur for a free nation gathered within a strong State.

(Extract transl. by Ch.-P. Ghillebaert)

France, Abassade U.S. Service de presse et d'infomation

Major Addresses, Statements and Press Conferences of General Charles de Gaulle

May 19, 1958-January 31, 1964

FRENCH EMBASSY • Press and Information Division • 972 Fifth Avenue • New York, N. Y. 10021

SIXTH PRESS CONFERENCE HELD BY GENERAL DE GAULLE AS PRESIDENT OF THE FRENCH REPUBLIC IN PARIS AT THE ELYSEE PALACE ON MAY 15, 1962

Ladies and gentlemen:

I am very happy to see you. Before we begin our interchange, allow me to make a few general remarks to you which represent, as it were, the philosophy of what I may be saying to you presently in response to your questions.

Our times and our world are dominated by an overwhelming factor, which holds in suspense the destiny of each people and of each individual. This factor is, of course, the atomic one. There are two powers in the world that possess the means to destroy nations in a few hours. I think that one does not have to seek elsewhere the fundamental reasons for the sort of doubt and lack of political interest that present generations show with regard to principles and doctrines which in former days used to inspire faith and ardor. Many people do not see any reason to trust in ideologies since, in one second, the whole world could be totally annihilated and since, in these circumstances, great world problems cannot be resolved in a deliberate manner.

In this general context, France's policy is prompted as much as possible by common sense and—let us speak plainly—by modesty. She is seeking to accomplish what she believes to be possible and what is within her scope. Taking advantage of the continuity and the stability that her institutions provide, France has, in order to carry out her international action, set herself three chief goals, which are, moreover, linked to each other:

First, to free herself, with regard to the overseas peoples which were formerly under her jurisdiction, of the political, economic and military obligations which she used to have in those countries and which world evolution rendered more useless and more costly each day, and to transform her relations with them into a contractual and regular cooperation that will benefit both development and friendship and that can, furthermore, be extended to other countries.

On the other hand, to contribute to the construction of Europe in the fields of politics, of defense and of economy, so that the expansion and action of this ensemble may aid French prosperity and security and, at the same time, re-establish the possibility of a European balance vis-à-vis the Eastern countries.

Finally, to coordinate the creation of a modern national force with our scientific, technical, economic and social progress, in order that—within the framework of a necessary alliance and with the hope of an international détente—we should be able, whatever happens, to play our own part in our destiny.

This is what I wanted to tell you to start with, and now, it is your turn to speak if you wish. I shall ask you to state the questions that some of you want to raise. We shall hear them in order, one after another, and I shall answer them to the best of my ability.

* * *

After hearing the various questions put to him General de Gaulle stated:

Your questions are, on the whole, centered on France's attitude, position and policy in foreign matters, and I notice that they are related: first, to Europe, to the concept that France has brought forward with regard to the organization of Europe, and to the objections raised with regard to her project; second, to the German question as a whole and to the attitude that France is maintaining in this regard, in particular from the standpoint of the talks presently being held on this subject between Washington and Moscow; and finally, to the NATO issue, to the part that France is taking in it and to France's intentions with regard to this organization. The questions also concern the issue of the French nuclear force, the prospects that may open up and are already opening up to a large degree with regard to France's relations with the African group, in particular—as a result of the Evian agreements—with North Africa and with Black Africa, on the eve of self-determination and on the morrow of the useful and pleasant private visit that the King of Morocco made to Paris.

European Political Integration

Question: What are the reasons that made France present a plan—known as the Fouchet Plan—for the political organization of the Europe of the Six?

Answer: In a world such as ours, where everything is permeated by the threat of a world conflict, the idea of a united Western Europe with sufficient strength, sufficient means and sufficient cohesion to exist by itself—an idea such as this occurs quite naturally and all the more so as the enmities that had for centuries torn Europe apart, particularly the differences between Germany and France, have now come to an end. Suddenly, we perceive first of all, what may be termed the complementary character—from the geographic strategic, economic, cultural and other points of view—of the peoples of this part of the

old continent, Western Europe; then, at the same time, the global capacity that they represent in terms of power, production, creativity and trade, in relation to the general activity of the world; and, finally, the opportunities that their union would present to the two billion people that inhabit the underdeveloped countries. Such is the factual data that has led six States of the Continent to attempt to establish special bonds between them.

Already during World War II, I shall take the liberty of recalling, I declared that this evolution was one of France's chief goals. Along this line, something positive has already been accomplished. It is the European Economic Community, which was created in principle by the Treaty of Rome and implemented, first of all, thanks to our economic and financial recovery of 1958-1959—for if we had not made this recovery, there could have been no enduring Community; implemented, secondly, thanks to the fact that last January we obtained the inclusion of agriculture in the Common Market and, correlatively, the agreement of the participants to move on to the second stage, in other words, to real implementation. We thus have an economic organization of a kind that will lead to the gradual removal of trade barriers between the Six—a fact which is not failing to stimulate their efforts—while their respective production will gradually be adjusted and regulated, in such a way that the Common Market can, in orderly fashion, either absorb this production itself or else trade it with other countries. This is something; this is a great deal; but it is not everything.

In the French view, this economic construction is not enough. Western Europe—whether it be a matter of its action vis-à-vis other peoples, of its own defense, of its contribution to the development of regions that are in need of it, or of its duty to European balance and international détente—Western Europe must form itself politically, Moreover, if it did not succeed in doing so, the Economic Community itself could not in the long run become stronger or even continue to exist. In other words, Europe must have institutions that will lead it to form a political union, just as it is already a union in the economic sphere.

Thus France took the initiative of proposing such an organization and, as you know, last year in April the six Heads of State or of Government met in Paris to discuss France's project. They did so again in Bonn in July. Then a political commission was formed in Paris—the Fouchet Commission—which was given the task of drawing up the final text for a treaty of union. In the meantime, many bilateral and multilateral contacts were made on this subject. Finally it was agreed that there would be a summit meeting of the Six in Rome in order to conclude matters, should this be possible. You know the reasons why we have not yet succeeded.

What is it that France is proposing to her five partners? I shall repeat it once again: to organize ourselves politically, let us begin at the beginning. Let us organize our cooperation, let our Heads of State or of Government meet periodically to examine

our problems together and to make decisions with regard to these problems which will be the decisions of Europe. Let us set up a political commission, a defense commission and a cultural commission, just as we have already formed an economic commission in Brussels which studies common questions and prepares the decision of the six Governments. Naturally the political commission and the others will proceed, in this regard, in conditions that are appropriate to their particular domains. Moreover, the Ministers in charge of these various fields will meet whenever necessary to implement in concert the decisions that will be taken by the Council. Finally, we have a European parliamentary assembly that meets in Strasbourg and is composed of delegations from our six national Parliaments. Let us enable this assembly to discuss common political questions as it already discusses economic questions. After we have tried it, we shall see, in three years' time, what we can do to strengthen our ties; but at least we shall have begun to acquire the habit of living and acting together. This is what France has proposed. She believes that this is the most practical thing that can be done.

Question: What do you think of the objections that have been raised to this plan abroad—notably by M. Paul-Henri Spaak—and in France, particularly during the recent debate in the National Assembly?

Answer: It is true that the French proposals have given rise to two objections—quite contradictory ones, incidentally, even though they were raised by the same objectors.

These objectors say to us on the one hand, "You want to establish a Europe of nations, while we want to establish a supranational Europe"—as if one formula were sufficient to merge together these firmly established entities that are known as peoples and States. On the other hand they say to us, "Great Britain has applied for entry into the Common Market; so long as it is not a member, we can do nothing of a political nature." Yet everyone knows that Great Britain, in its capacity as a great State and a nation loyal to itself, would never agree to lose its identity in some utopian structure.

I would like incidentally, since the opportunity has arisen, to point out to you, gentlemen of the press—and you are perhaps going to be very surprised by this—that I have never personally, in any of my statements, spoken of a "Europe of nations," although it is always being claimed that I have done so. It is not, of course, that I am repudiating my own; quite the contrary, I am more attached to France than ever, and I do not believe that Europe can have any living reality if it does not include France and her Frenchmen, Germany and its Germans, Italy and its Italians, and so forth. Dante, Goethe, Chateaubriand belong to all Europe to the very extent that they were respectively and eminently Italian, German and French. They would not have served Europe very well if they had been stateless, or if they had thought and written in some kind of integrated Esperanto or Volapük.

But it is true that the nation is a human and sentimental element, whereas Europe can be built on the basis of active, authoritative and responsible elements. What elements? The States, of course; for, in this respect, it is only the States that are valid, legitimate and capable of achievement. I have already said, and I repeat, that at the present time there cannot be any other Europe than a Europe of States, apart, of course, from myths, stories and parades. What is happening with regard to the Economic Community proves this every day, for it is the States, and only the States, that created this Economic Community, that furnished it with funds, that provided it with staff members; and it is the States that give it reality and efficiency, all the more so as it is impossible to take any far-reaching economic measure without committing a political action.

It is a political action, when tariffs are dealt with in common, when coal-mining areas are converted, when wages and social welfare funds are made the same in the six States, when each State allows workers from the five other States to settle on its territory, when decrees are consequently taken and when Parliament is asked to vote necessary laws, funds and sanctions. It is a political action when agriculture is included in the Common Market, and it is the six States, and they alone, that succeeded in doing so last January by means of their political bodies. It is a political action when the association of Greece or of the African States or of the Malagasy Republic is being dealt with. It is a political action when one negotiates with Great Britain on the request that it has made to enter the Common Market. It is again a political action when the applications of other States for participation or association are considered. It is still a political action when one comes to consider the requests that the United States announces that it will make with regard to its economic relations with the Community.

In fact, the economic development of Europe cannot be assured without its political union and, in this regard, I want to point out the arbitrary nature of a certain idea that was voiced during the recent discussions in Paris and that claimed to keep economic matters out of the meetings of the heads of State or of Government, whereas, for each of them, in their respective countries, economy is the constant and primary issue.

I should like to speak more particularly about the objection to integration. The objection is presented to us with the words, "Let us merge the six States into a supranational entity; this way, things will be quite simple and practical." But such an entity cannot be found without there being in Europe today a federator with sufficient power, authority and skill. That is why one falls back on a type of hybrid, in which the six States would undertake to comply with what will be decided upon by a certain majority. At the same time, although there are already six national Parliaments, plus the European Parliament, plus the Consultative Assembly of the Council of Europe—which did, it is true, predate the conception of the Six and which, I am told, is dying on the shore where it was abandoned—we must, it seems, elect yet another parliament, a so-called European one—which would lay down the law for the six States.

These are ideas that may, perhaps, beguile certain minds, but I certainly do not see how they could be carried out in practice, even if there were six signatures on the dotted line. Is there a France, a Germany, an Italy, a Holland, a Belgium, a Luxembourg, that would be ready–in a matter that is important for them from the national or the international point of view–to do something that they would consider bad because this would be dictated to them by others? Would the French people, the German people, the Italian people, the Dutch people, the Belgian people, or the Luxembourg people dream of submitting to laws voted by foreign deputies if these laws were to run contrary to their own deep-seated will? This is not so; there is no way, at the present time, for a foreign majority to be able to constrain recalcitrant nations. It is true that, in this "integrated" Europe, as they say, there would perhaps be no policy at all. This would simplify things a great deal. Indeed, once there would be no France and no Europe, once there would be no policy–since no one policy could be imposed on each of the six States–one would refrain from making any policies at all. But then, perhaps, this world would follow the lead of some outsider who did have a policy. There would perhaps be a federator, but the federator would not be European. And it would not be an integrated Europe, it would be something quite different, much broader and much more extensive with, I repeat, a federator. Perhaps it is this which, sometimes and to a certain degree, is at the basis of some remarks of such or such an advocate of European integration. In that case, it would be best to say so.

You see, when one's mind dwells on matters of great import, it is pleasant to dream of the marvelous lamp that Aladdin had only to rub in order to soar above the real. But there is no magic formula that will make it possible to build something as difficult as a united Europe. Thus, let us place reality at the basis of the edifice and, when we shall have completed the work, this will be the time for us to lull ourselves to sleep with the tales of "The Thousand and One Nights."

The German Problem

Question: Why has France refused to take part in the talks that have been opened between Moscow and Washington on the subject of Germany?

Answer: Why is she not taking part in it? You know why: the German problem is certainly the most burning one in the world just now. This is easily understandable in light of the position and situation of Germany from the geographical and, consequently, the strategic point of view; and also in light of its economic power, its human potential and even–I could say–the fact that, as you know, this country abused the power that it once had. In the great dispute which is facing us at this time, and which is being nourished by the ambitions of the Soviets, Germany is quite naturally the principal stake.

In this regard, I must say that, as far as we are concerned, we think that, in the present international situation, the elements of which are known as tension, threat and cold war, it is vain to wish for a satisfactory settlement of the German problem. This appears to us to be the same as trying to square the circle.

The Soviets, moreover, who are summoning the West to settle the question in their fashion, are making use of the situation in the city of Berlin to exert pressure and issue threats. They are making use of the fact that, Berlin being located where it is, the Western troops that are stationed there and that are the city's safeguard, can easily be interfered with, annoyed and harassed in their communications. Thus the Soviets proceed to announce periodically that they are going to hand over to their agents in Pankow the rights that they hold by virtue of a four-power agreement, to build a wall through the city to cut it in two and, from time to time, to threaten the freedom of the air corridors, and so on. All these demonstrations being calculated to induce the West to enter into negotiations with Moscow on the whole of the German question, on the assumption that the West, by dint of being subjected to lassitude, alarm and the lure of compromises, will end up by agreeing to embark on the beginnings of a retreat. After which, the Soviets would move on to the next stage which would be easier than the first, because it would occur at a time when there would be a certain amount of trouble and divergence among the Western powers.

Frankly, and I regret it, in the present international climate, and as long as the East behaves as it is doing now, particularly in Berlin, we have considerable doubts that such negotiations, in which the driving force is unilateral, can lead to good results.

Of course, France cannot object to her American ally embarking on its own account on talks with Moscow, which, by euphemism, are being called "soundings." Fully aware that the burden of the United States, in absolute value within the total framework of defense armament, is by far the heaviest of all the Western powers; aware also that the United States is in the process of increasing this burden, under extremely praiseworthy and costly conditions; aware that, in the event of a conflict, it is the United States that would have to assume, probably not the greatest risk, but in any event the greatest effort–France cannot object to the United States' making use, as it wishes, of its diplomatic means. But, as for ourselves, we consider it much more preferable to maintain an attitude of reserve.

What about our view on Germany? I repeat, in light of the extremely precarious balance that exists between the East and the West, our view on Germany is that it is not opportune, at the present time, to alter the facts that have already been accomplished there. We believe that these facts must be taken as they are and lived with.

For example, as regards the status of Berlin, which was settled by a four-power agreement, we believe that it should not be changed and we would not, a fortiori, be

inclined to accept a measure that would submit the Western forces in Berlin, particularly our own, to controls other than those which were settled at their time by the four victors.

If we believe that, at the present time and in the present circumstances, what exists in Germany should not be altered, it is first of all because we think that any negotiation on this subject would risk, as I said before, bringing about a retreat by the West and would heighten the danger. But it is also because there is a solidarity between Germany and France. On this solidarity depends the immediate security of the two peoples. You have only to look at the map to be convinced of this. On this solidarity depend all hopes of uniting Europe on the political and defense levels as on the economic level.

On this solidarity depends, in consequence, the destiny of the whole of Europe, from the Atlantic to the Ural Mountains; for if a structure, a firm, prosperous and attractive organization, can be created in Western Europe—then there reappear the possibilities of a European balance with the Eastern States and the prospect of a truly European cooperation, particularly if, at the same time, the totalitarian regime ceased to poison the springs.

In such an event, we could and we should, I believe, resolve the German problem in an objective manner. In such an event, I have already said it and I repeat, France would be ready to make solid proposals. Otherwise, if the solidarity about which I am speaking did not exist or ceased to exist, Europe as a whole would be exposed to being the arena of the demons of misfortune.

Question: Would not the eventual furnishing of the Bundeswehr units with nuclear arms be a serious modification of the status quo of which you presently express support?

Answer: At the present time we have no atomic weapons to give. Consequently, this question does not arise. But perhaps you could ask this question of the White House.

Atlantic Alliance

Question: Is it true that France intends to modify the conditions of her participation in NATO?

Answer: The Atlantic Alliance exists. So long as the Soviets threaten the world, this alliance must be maintained. France is an integral part of it. If the free world were attacked, on the old or the new continent, France would take part in the common defense of the coasts of her allies and with all the means that she has.

Having made this statement—which is indisputable—there is within the Atlantic Alliance a certain military organization, NATO, which was built thirteen years ago, in conditions which are greatly changed today. Since that time, a certain number of new elements have appeared on the scene and one has only to mention them in order to make everyone understand that, with regard to the defense of France, the problem is no longer what it was in the past. At the beginning, America, and to a certain extent Great Britain, were the only countries in the world with nuclear weapons. Then Western Europe found it most expedient to turn over to the United States the responsibility for its protection, granted the fact that the American bombs would suffice to prevent any aggressive action that might be launched against Europe. In exchange, Western Europe—or at least continental Western Europe—turned over to the United States the command of its forces, and, thereby, its defense policy and strategy. This is what was termed integration. On this basis, America transported a part of its atomic weapons to Europe and organized an expeditionary corps there. At the same time, it kept for itself enormous capabilities for using them should the occasion arise, wherever it may arise, according to the circumstances.

England, for its part, set aside certain land and air units for the defense of Europe, and it reserved the rest for itself.

In the case of France, it was agreed at that time that everything which she possessed in Europe belonged to NATO. Only, since the major part of her military resources were committed overseas, her direct contribution was fairly limited. But, since then, new elements of an extraordinary dimension have been introduced into the picture, and France must take them into consideration. First, Soviet Russia also now has an enormous nuclear arsenal which is increasing every day, as moreover, is that of the United States. Henceforth, America and Soviet Russia will be capable of striking each other directly and, doubtless, of reciprocally destroying each other. It is not certain that they will take this risk. No one can tell today when, how, or why one or the other of these great atomic powers would employ its nuclear arsenal. It is enough to say this in order to understand that, as regards the defense of France, the battle of Europe and even a world war as they were imagined when NATO was born, everything is now in question. On the other hand, a French atomic deterrent force is coming into existence and is going to grow continuously. It is a relatively modest force, it is true, but one which is changing and will completely change the conditions of our own defense, those of our intervention in faraway lands and those of the contribution that we would be able to make to the safeguard of our allies. Furthermore, the gradual return of our military forces from Algeria is enabling us to acquire a modernized army; an army which is not, I daresay, destined to play a separate or isolated role, but one which must and can play a role that would be France's own. Finally, it is absolutely necessary, morally and politically, for us to make our army a more

integral part of the nation. Therefore, it is necessary for us to restation it, for the most part, on our soil; for us to give it once again a direct responsibility in the external security of the country; in short, for our defense to become once again a national defense. It is indispensable, I repeat, both morally and politically.

Without further developing the new elements of the problem, it will be understood that they lead us to make far-reaching changes in what we have done in this respect up to now.

The Geneva Conference

Didn't somebody ask me a question about the Geneva Conference? Since we are not taking part in the negotiations of the United States with Moscow, we are not taking part in the Geneva conference either. Should you be curious, without saying so, about the reasons for our not taking part in it, I shall mention them rapidly.

It would be necessary, I believe, to have a great deal of imagination or else a great many illusions in order to believe that such a conference could make the two great atomic powers that I just spoke of do away with their arms, and France is too modest to believe that her presence at such a conference would change things very much. It is not, of course, that we also do not deplore the proliferation of bombs and nuclear devices in the two camps. We have proposed in the past, on several occasions, a measure which was to our mind the only practical one and which consisted in banning, while there was still time, and perhaps there still is time, the vehicles--rockets, airplanes, submarines, etc.–for the delivery of nuclear warheads. Once again, we do not think that there is any chance for this measure to be adopted in Geneva, since it has never been adopted anywhere else. We therefore do not see any reason to increase the size of the honorable assembly that is being held there, which intends to present irreconcilable plans and can do nothing but moan a little, like the chorus of old men and women in ancient tragedy: "Insoluble difficulty! How to find a way out?"

Under these circumstances, we are not at Geneva. It is true that one might have thought that the United States and Great Britain, who seemed to have had such an idea at one time, would agree at least to refrain from making any new tests. Had they agreed on this subject, they could have expected that every other State in the world–and that includes France–would then halt its own tests. These two powers would, of course, have retained and continued to develop their terrifying weapons, but they would be giving the public, not their disarmament, of course, but an appearance of satisfaction. And then, they would be maintaining their monopoly. There was nothing there to induce France to join the seventeen countries at Geneva.

Naturally, we are quite prepared to applaud the Anglo-Saxons and the Soviets, if they decide not to carry out any more tests.

But once again, that is not the problem. The problem is disarmament: that is to say, the reciprocal controlled destruction of weapons, beginning with vehicles. In this respect, we have our problem too. So long as this disarmament is not being carried out–and there is nothing to indicate that steps are being taken in that direction–we have, with regard to ourselves, the obligation and the necessity of constituting, in our turn, our own atomic deterrent force. Consequently, we shall continue our tests in any case until the goal is reached, unless, I repeat, the others rid themselves of their means of destruction. From this point of view as well, we do not see why we should be at Geneva. Of course, if there should one day be a meeting of States that truly want to organize disarmament–and such a meeting should, in our mind, be composed of the four atomic powers–France would participate in it wholeheartedly. Until such time, she does not see the need for taking part in proceedings whose inevitable outcome is termed disillusion.

French-African Relations

Question: On the eve of the vote on self-determination in Algeria and after your meeting with the King of Morocco, how do you envisage France's relations with North Africa?

Question: What do you think of the wish that was recently expressed by several African Chiefs of State to see new relationships defined between France and the French-speaking African and Malagasy States?

Answer: I am going to try to answer these two questions, which are related, although they are not identical.

There is actually the certainty that, in a few weeks, Algeria will emerge as an independent State and, I am sure, in organized cooperation with France. What is happening at this time and what is, of course, deplorable–I am speaking of the crimes–tarnishes this achievement, but will certainly not prevent it. This being said, the emergence of Algeria in the position of an independent State, cooperating organically with France, is certainly a new factor, the last in the process which you know about and which is almost at an end as regards our relations with the territory that was formerly our African colonies.

There are, in addition, events such as the one mentioned–the trip of King Hassan II to Paris.

I am availing myself of this occasion to say what an honor and what a pleasure this was for us, because, as you know, I have the highest regard, esteem and confidence in this young sovereign for the courage and dignity that he displays in the conduct of the affairs of the country of which he is king. There had previously been, I recall, a visit by the President of the Tunisian Republic and I had reason to believe then that that would permit something positive to be established in that quarter also. However, all is not lost in this respect, I hasten to say. This whole ensemble is proof of the fact that, without a doubt, something new is emerging in North Africa. In addition, as you know, the President of Mauritania will be coming to Paris in a few days. We shall have with him, I think, useful and specific conversations.

Finally, further away, beyond the Sahara, there is Black Africa. Its States are already making rapid strides in regard to their independence, their sovereignty and the beginning of their development. This whole ensemble is in fact extremely varied. It would be a mistake to consider it as one and the same unit. There are, in fact, many different situations—and this is very natural—between the States of North Africa and the States of Black Africa, and in North Africa even, as in Black Africa, between the different States within them. Consequently, France cannot, in her relations with them, adopt an over-simplified policy. The ideas that she has, however, with regard to them come down to the same principle.

First, she passionately desires for them to live in peace. They need this for their development and because anything harmful that happened to them would not fail to have consequences for us. Similarly, the good things that happen to them are comforting to us and make us happy. In addition, we wish not only peace for them; we also wish for them to develop. It is essential for them and essential for the world. These States, having attained their sovereignty, must in their turn contribute to the common good of humanity and, in order to do that, develop as the modern age urges and permits them to do. Finally, it is a good thing that they are organizing themselves. Not in one single group, for I do not think that is possible, but at least in different groupings. Therein lies their common interest, in particular from the economic point of view; all the activity of the world today depends on that, political life included, as I mentioned earlier.

May these States live in peace. We are all prepared, to the best of our abilities and if they should want it, to help them live in peace. May these States develop. We are all committed to giving them assistance in all friendship and this is in our interest. Finally, we wished them to organize themselves so that their relations with us should be more coherent and, if I may say so, better arranged. If the States of which you were speaking earlier see fit to set up among themselves something that, as a body, would wish to enter into direct relations with us, it is not General de Gaulle who will have any objections to it.

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Ladies and gentlemen, all that remains is for me to thank you for your attention. I do, however, wish to answer the person who asked me if I wanted to put on the agenda the election of the President of the Republic by universal suffrage. I did mention this last year. Today I answer you: not at the moment. I shall add a word on this subject, since I have the pleasure of seeing you and speaking to you, bearing in mind a fairly widespread idea, that is: what will happen when de Gaulle is no longer here? Well, I shall say this to you, and it might perhaps explain what direction we shall take in this respect. What is to be feared, to my mind, after the event about which I am speaking, is not a political void but rather an overflow!

The Second World War

THE Gathering Storm

Winston S. Churchill

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The Follies of the Victors

The War to End War — A Blood-Drained France — The Rhine Frontier — The Economic Clauses of the Versailles Treaty — Ignorance About Reparations — Destruction of the Austro-Hungarian Empire by the Treaties of St. Germain and of Trianon — The Weimar Republic — The Anglo-American Guarantee to France Repudiated by the United States — The Fall of Clemenceau — Poincaré Invades the Ruhr — The Collapse of the Mark — American Isolation — End of the Anglo-Japanese Alliance — Anglo-American Naval Disarmament — Fascism the Child of Communism — How Easy to Prevent a Second Armageddon — The One Solid Security for Peace — The Victors Forget — The Vanquished Remember — Moral Havoc of the Second World War — Failure to Keep Germany Disarmed the Cause.

After the end of the World War of 1914 there was a deep conviction and almost universal hope that peace would reign in the world. This heart's desire of all the peoples could easily have been gained by steadfastness in righteous convictions, and by reasonable common sense and prudence. The phrase "the war to end war" was on every lip, and measures had been taken to turn it into reality. President Wilson, wielding, as was thought, the authority of the United States, had made the conception of a League of Nations dominant in all minds. The British delegation at Versailles moulded and shaped his ideas into an instrument which will for ever constitute a milestone in the hard march of man. The victorious Allies were at that time all-powerful, so far as their outside enemies were concerned. They had to face grave internal difficulties and many

riddles to which they did not know the answer, but the Teutonic Powers in the great mass of Central Europe which had made the upheaval were prostrate before them, and Russia, already shattered by the German flail, was convulsed by civil war and falling into the grip of the Bolshevik or Communist Party.

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In the summer of 1919, the Allied armies stood along the Rhine, and their bridgeheads bulged deeply into defeated, disarmed, and hungry Germany. The chiefs of the victor Powers debated and disputed the future in Paris. Before them lay the map of Europe to be redrawn almost as they might resolve. After fifty-two months of agony and hazards the Teutonic Coalition lay at their mercy, and not one of its four members could offer the slightest resistance to their will. Germany, the head and forefront of the offence, regarded by all as the prime cause of the catastrophe which had fallen upon the world, was at the mercy or discretion of conquerors, themselves reeling from the torment they had endured. Moreover, this had been a war, not of governments, but of peoples. The whole life-energy of the greatest nations had been poured out in wrath and slaughter. The war leaders assembled in Paris had been borne thither upon the strongest and most furious tides that have ever flowed in human history. Gone were the days of the Treaties of Utrecht and Vienna, when aristocratic statesmen and diplomats, victor and vanquished alike, met in polite and courtly disputation, and, free from the clatter and babel of democracy, could reshape systems upon the fundamentals of which they were all agreed. The peoples, transported by their sufferings and by the mass teachings with which they had been inspired, stood around in scores of millions to demand that retribution should be exacted to the full. Woe betide the leaders now perched on their dizzy pinnacles of triumph if they cast away at the conference table what the soldiers had won on a hundred blood-soaked battlefields.

France, by right alike of her efforts and her losses, held the leading place. Nearly a million and a half Frenchmen had perished defending the soil of France on which they stood against the invader. Five times in a hundred years, in 1814, 1815, 1870, 1914, and 1918, had the towers of Notre Dame seen the flash of Prussian guns and heard the thunder of their cannonade. Now for four horrible years thirteen provinces of France had lain in the rigorous grip of Prussian military rule. Wide regions had been systematically devastated by the enemy or pulverised in the encounter of the armies. There was hardly a cottage nor a family from Verdun to Toulon that did not mourn its dead or shelter its cripples. To those Frenchmen — and there were many in high authority — who had fought and suffered in 1870, it seemed almost a miracle that France should have emerged victorious from the incomparably more terrible struggle which had just ended. All their lives they had dwelt in fear of the German Empire. They remembered the preventive war which Bismarck had sought to wage in 1875; they remembered the brutal threats which had driven Delcassé from office in 1905; they had quaked at the Moroccan menace in 1906, at the Bosnian dispute of 1908, and at the Agadir crisis of 1911. The Kaiser's "mailed fist" and "shining armour" speeches might be received with ridicule in England and America. They sounded a knell of horrible reality in the hearts of the French. For fifty years almost they had lived under the terror of the German arms. Now, at the price of their life-blood, the long oppression had been rolled away. Surely here at last was peace and safety. With one passionate spasm the French people cried, "Never again!"

But the future was heavy with foreboding. The population of France was less than two-thirds that of Germany. The French population was stationary, while the German grew. In a decade or less the annual flood of German youth reaching the military age must be double that of France. Germany had fought nearly the whole world, almost single-handed, and she had almost conquered. Those who knew the most knew best the several occasions when the result of the Great War had trembled in the balance, and the accidents and chances which had turned the fateful scale. What prospect was there in the

future that the Great Allies would once again appear in their millions upon the battlefields of France or in the East? Russia was in ruin and convulsion, transformed beyond all semblance of the past. Italy might be upon the opposite side. Great Britain and the United States were separated by the seas or oceans from Europe. The British Empire itself seemed knit together by ties which none but its citizens could understand. What combination of events could ever bring back again to France and Flanders the formidable Canadians of the Vimy Ridge; the glorious Australians of Villers-Brettonneaux; the dauntless New Zealanders of the crater-fields of Passchendaele; the steadfast Indian Corps which in the cruel winter of 1914 had held the line by Armentières; and the South Africans? When again would peaceful, careless, anti-militarist Britain tramp the plains of Artois and Picardy with armies of two or three million men? When again would the ocean bear two millions of the splendid manhood of America to Champagne and the Argonne? Worn down, doubly decimated, but undisputed masters of the hour, the French nation peered into the future in thankful wonder and haunting dread. Where then was that SECURITY without which all that had been gained seemed valueless, and life itself, even amid the rejoicings of victory, was almost unendurable? The mortal need was Security at all costs and by all methods, however stern or even harsh.

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On Armistice Day, the German armies had marched homeward in good order. "They fought well," said Marshal Foch, Generalissimo of the Allies, with the laurels bright upon his brow, speaking in soldierly mood: "let them keep their weapons." But he demanded that the French frontier should henceforth be the Rhine. Germany might be disarmed; her military system shivered in fragments; her fortresses dismantled: Germany might be impoverished; she might be loaded with measureless indemnities; she might become a prey to internal feuds: but all this would pass in ten years or in twenty. The indestructible might "of all the German tribes" would rise once more and the unquenched fires of warrior Prussia glow

and burn again. But the Rhine, the broad, deep, swift-flowing Rhine, once held and fortified by the French Army, would be a barrier and a shield behind which France could dwell and breathe for generations. Very different were the sentiments and views of the English-speaking world, without whose aid France must have succumbed. The territorial provisions of the Treaty of Versailles left Germany practically intact. She still remained the largest homogeneous racial block in Europe. When Marshal Foch heard of the signing of the Peace Treaty of Versailles he observed with singular accuracy: "This is not Peace. It is an Armistice for twenty years."

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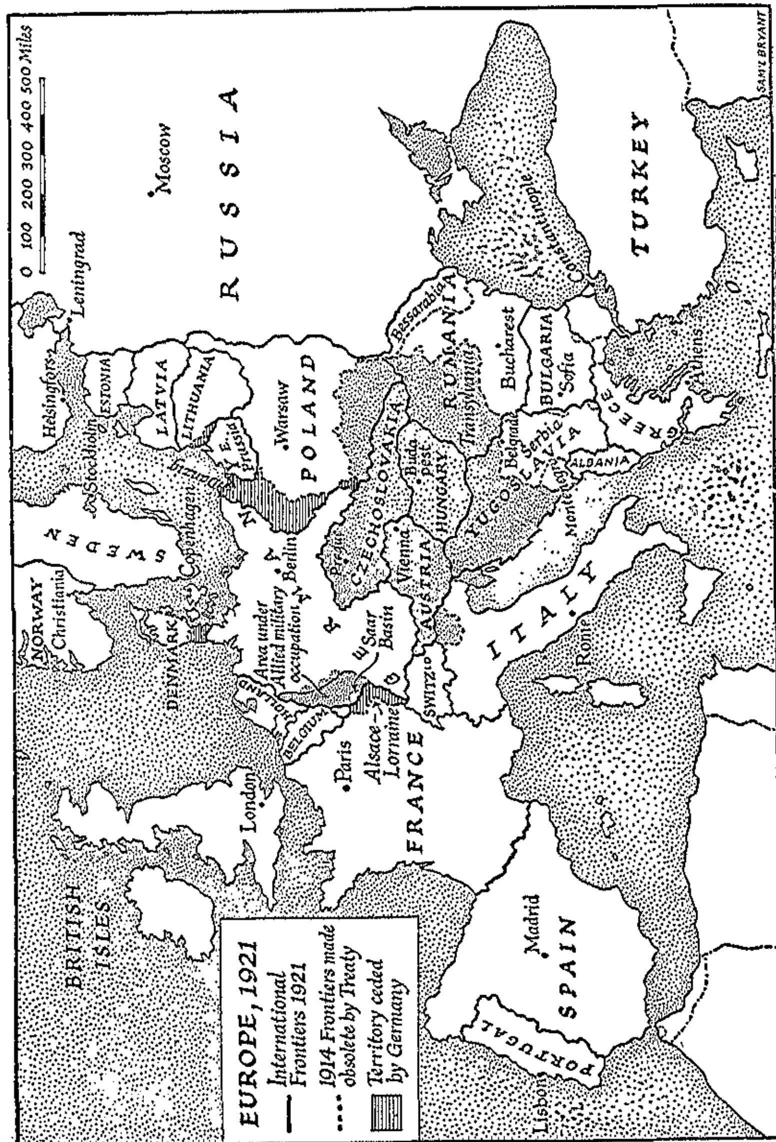
The economic clauses of the Treaty were malignant and silly to an extent that made them obviously futile. Germany was condemned to pay reparations on a fabulous scale. These dictates gave expression to the anger of the victors, and to the belief of their peoples that any defeated nation or community can ever pay tribute on a scale which would meet the cost of modern war.

The multitudes remained plunged in ignorance of the simplest economic facts, and their leaders, seeking their votes, did not dare to undeceive them. The newspapers, after their fashion, reflected and emphasised the prevailing opinions. Few voices were raised to explain that payment of reparations can only be made by services or by the physical transportation of goods in wagons across land frontiers or in ships across salt water; or that when these goods arrive in the demanding countries, they dislocate the local industry except in very primitive or rigorously controlled societies. In practice, as even the Russians have now learned, the only way of pillaging a defeated nation is to cart away any movables which are wanted, and to drive off a portion of its manhood as permanent or temporary slaves. But the profit gained from such processes bears no relation to the cost of the war. No one in great authority had the wit, ascendancy, or detachment from public folly to declare these fundamental, brutal facts to the electorates; nor would



anyone have been believed if he had. The triumphant Allies continued to assert that they would squeeze Germany "till the pips squeaked." All this had a potent bearing on the prosperity of the world and the mood of the German race.

In fact, however, these clauses were never enforced. On the contrary, whereas about one thousand million pounds of German assets were appropriated by the victorious Powers, more than one thousand five hundred millions were lent a few years later to Germany, principally by the United States and Great Britain, thus enabling the ruin of the war to be rapidly repaired in Germany. As this apparently magnanimous process was still accompanied by the machine-made howlings of the unhappy and embittered populations in the victorious countries, and the assurances of their statesmen that Germany should be made to pay "to the uttermost farthing," no gratitude or good will was to be expected or reaped.

Germany only paid, or was only able to pay, the indemnities later extorted because the United States was profusely lending money to Europe, and especially to her. In fact, during the three years 1926 to 1929 the United States was receiving back in the form of debt-instalment indemnities from all quarters about one-fifth of the money which she was lending to Germany with no chance of repayment. However, everybody seemed pleased and appeared to think this might go on for ever.

History will characterise all these transactions as insane. They helped to breed both the martial curse and the "economic blizzard," of which more later. Germany now borrowed in all directions, swallowing greedily every credit which was lavishly offered her. Misguided sentiment about aiding the vanquished nation, coupled with a profitable rate of interest on these loans, led British investors to participate, though on a much smaller scale than those of the United States. Thus, Germany gained the two thousand millions sterling in loans as against the one thousand million of indemnities which she paid in one form or another by surrender of capital assets and *valuta* in foreign countries, or by juggling with the enormous American loans.

All this is a sad story of complicated idiocy in the making of which much toil and virtue was consumed.

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The second cardinal tragedy was the complete break-up of the Austro-Hungarian Empire by the Treaties of St. Germain and Trianon. For centuries this surviving embodiment of the Holy Roman Empire had afforded a common life, with advantages in trade and security, to a large number of peoples, none of whom in our own time had the strength or vitality to stand by themselves in the face of pressure from a revivified Germany or Russia. All these races wished to break away from the federal or imperial structure, and to encourage their desires was deemed a liberal policy. The Balkanisation of Southeastern Europe proceeded apace, with the consequent relative aggrandisement of Prussia and the German Reich, which, though tired and war-scarred, was intact and locally overwhelming. There is not one of the peoples or provinces that constituted the Empire of the Hapsburgs to whom gaining their independence has not brought the tortures which ancient poets and theologians had reserved for the damned. The noble capital of Vienna, the home of so much long-defended culture and tradition, the centre of so many roads, rivers, and railways, was left stark and starving, like a great emporium in an impoverished district whose inhabitants have mostly departed.

The victors imposed upon the Germans all the long-sought ideals of the liberal nations of the West. They were relieved from the burden of compulsory military service and from the need of keeping up heavy armaments. The enormous American loans were presently pressed upon them, though they had no credit. A democratic constitution, in accordance with all the latest improvements, was established at Weimar. Emperors having been driven out, nonentities were elected. Beneath this flimsy fabric raged the passions of the mighty, defeated, but substantially uninjured German nation. The prejudice of the Americans against monarchy, which Mr. Lloyd George made no attempt to counteract, had made it clear to the beaten Empire that it would have better treatment from the Allies as a republic than as a monarchy. Wise policy would have crowned and fortified the Weimar Republic with a constitutional sovereign in the person of an infant grandson of the Kaiser, under a council of regency. Instead, a gaping void was opened in the national life of the German people. All the strong elements, military and feudal, which might have rallied to a constitutional monarchy and for its sake respected and sustained the new democratic and parliamentary processes, were for the time being unhinged. The Weimar Republic, with all its liberal trappings and blessings, was regarded as an imposition of the enemy. It could not hold the loyalties or the imagination of the German people. For a spell they sought to cling as in desperation to the aged Marshal Hindenburg. Thereafter mighty forces were adrift; the void was open, and into that void after a pause there strode a maniac of ferocious genius, the repository and expression of the most virulent hatreds that have ever corroded the human breast — Corporal Hitler.

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France had been bled white by the war. The generation that had dreamed since 1870 of a war of revenge had triumphed, but at a deadly cost in national life-strength. It was a haggard France that greeted the dawn of victory. Deep fear of Germany pervaded the French nation on the morrow of their dazzling success. It was this fear that had prompted Marshal Foch to demand the Rhine frontier for the safety of France against her far larger neighbour. But the British and American statesmen held that the absorption of German-populated districts in French territory was contrary to the Fourteen Points and to the principles of nationalism and self-determination upon which the Peace Treaty was to be based. They therefore withstood Foch and France. They gained Clemenceau by promising: first, a joint Anglo-American guarantee for the defence of France; secondly, a demilitarised zone; and thirdly, the total, lasting disarmament of Germany. Clemenceau accepted this in spite of Foch's protests and his own instincts.

The Treaty of Guarantee was signed accordingly by Wilson and Lloyd George and Clemenceau. The United States Senate refused to ratify the treaty. They repudiated President Wilson's signature. And we, who had deferred so much to his opinions and wishes in all this business of peacemaking, were told without much ceremony that we ought to be better informed about the American Constitution.

In the fear, anger, and disarray of the French people, the rugged, dominating figure of Clemenceau, with his world-famed authority, and his special British and American contacts, was incontinently discarded. "Ingratitude towards their great men," says Plutarch, "is the mark of strong peoples." It was imprudent for France to indulge this trait when she was so grievously weakened. There was little compensating strength to be found in the revival of the group intrigues and ceaseless changes of governments and ministers which were the characteristic of the Third Republic, however profitable or diverting they were to those engaged in them.

Poincaré, the strongest figure who succeeded Clemenceau, attempted to make an independent Rhineland under the patronage and control of France. This had no chance of success. He did not hesitate to try to enforce reparations on Germany by the invasion of the Ruhr. This certainly imposed compliance with the Treaties on Germany; but it was severely condemned by British and American opinion. As a result of the general financial and political disorganisation of Germany, together with reparation payments during the years 1919 to 1923, the mark rapidly collapsed. The rage aroused in Germany by the French occupation of the Ruhr led to a vast, reckless printing of paper notes with the deliberate object of destroying the whole basis of the currency. In the final stages of the inflation the mark stood at forty-three million millions to the pound sterling. The social and economic consequences of this inflation were deadly and far-reaching. The savings of the middle classes were wiped out, and a natural following was thus provided for the banners of National Socialism. The whole structure of German industry was distorted by the

growth of mushroom trusts. The entire working capital of the country disappeared. The internal national debt and the debt of industry in the form of fixed capital charges and mortgages were, of course, simultaneously liquidated or repudiated. But this was no compensation for the loss of working capital. All led directly to the large-scale borrowings of a bankrupt nation abroad which were the feature of ensuing years. German sufferings and bitterness marched forward together — as they do today.

The British temper towards Germany, which at first had been so fierce, very soon went as far astray in the opposite direction. A rift opened between Lloyd George and Poincaré, whose bristling personality hampered his firm and far-sighted policies. The two nations fell apart in thought and action, and British sympathy or even admiration for Germany found powerful expression.

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The League of Nations had no sooner been created than it received an almost mortal blow. The United States abandoned President Wilson's offspring. The President himself, ready to do battle for his ideals, suffered a paralytic stroke just as he was setting forth on his campaign, and lingered henceforward a futile wreck for a great part of two long and vital years, at the end of which his party and his policy were swept away by the Republican Presidential victory of 1920. Across the Atlantic on the morrow of the Republican success isolationist conceptions prevailed. Europe must be left to stew in its own juice, and must pay its lawful debts. At the same time tariffs were raised to prevent the entry of the goods by which alone these debts could be discharged. At the Washington Conference of 1921, far-reaching proposals for naval disarmament were made by the United States, and the British and American Governments proceeded to sink their battleships and break up their military establishments with gusto. It was argued in odd logic that it would be immoral to disarm the vanquished unless the victors also stripped themselves of their weapons. The finger of Anglo-American reprobation was presently to be pointed at

France, deprived alike of the Rhine frontier and of her treaty guarantee, for maintaining, even on a greatly reduced scale, a French Army based upon universal service.

The United States made it clear to Britain that the continuance of her alliance with Japan, to which the Japanese had punctiliously conformed, would constitute a barrier in Anglo-American relations. Accordingly, this alliance was brought to an end. The annulment caused a profound impression in Japan, and was viewed as the spurning of an Asiatic Power by the Western World. Many links were sundered which might afterwards have proved of decisive value to peace. At the same time, Japan could console herself with the fact that the downfall of Germany and Russia had, for a time, raised her to the third place among the world's naval Powers, and certainly to the highest rank. Although the Washington Naval Agreement prescribed a lower ratio of strength in capital ships for Japan than for Britain and the United States (5:5:3), the quota assigned to her was well up to her building and financial capacity for a good many years, and she watched with an attentive eye the two leading naval Powers cutting each other down far below what their resources would have permitted and what their responsibilities enjoined. Thus, both in Europe and in Asia, conditions were swiftly created by the victorious Allies which, in the name of peace, cleared the way for the renewal of war.

While all these untoward events were taking place, amid a ceaseless chatter of well-meant platitudes on both sides of the Atlantic, a new and more terrible cause of quarrel than the imperialism of czars and kaisers became apparent in Europe. The Civil War in Russia ended in the absolute victory of the Bolshevik Revolution. The Soviet armies which advanced to subjugate Poland were indeed repulsed in the Battle of Warsaw, but Germany and Italy nearly succumbed to Communist propaganda and designs. Hungary actually fell for a while under the control of the Communist dictator, Bela Kun. Although Marshal Foch wisely observed that "Bolshevism had never crossed the frontiers of victory," the foundations of European civilisation trembled in the early post-war years. Fascism was the shadow or ugly child of Communism. While Corporal Hitler was making himself useful to the German officer class in Munich by arousing soldiers and workers to fierce hatred of Jews and Communists, on whom he laid the blame of Germany's defeat, another adventurer, Benito Mussolini, provided Italy with a new theme of government which, while it claimed to save the Italian people from Communism, raised himself to dictatorial power. As Fascism sprang from Communism, so Nazism developed from Fascism. Thus were set on foot those kindred movements which were destined soon to plunge the world into even more hideous strife, which none can say has ended with their destruction.

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Nevertheless, one solid security for peace remained. Germany was disarmed. All her artillery and weapons were destroyed. Her fleet had already sunk itself in Scapa Flow. Her vast army was disbanded. By the Treaty of Versailles only a professional long-service army not exceeding one hundred thousand men, and unable on this basis to accumulate reserves, was permitted to Germany for purposes of internal order. The annual quotas of recruits no longer received their training; the cadres were dissolved. Every effort was made to reduce to a tithe the officer corps. No military air force of any kind was allowed. Submarines were forbidden, and the German Navy was limited to a handful of vessels under ten thousand tons. Soviet Russia was barred off from Western Europe by a cordon of violently anti-Bolshevik states, who had broken away from the former Empire of the Czars in its new and more terrible form. Poland and Czechoslovakia raised independent heads, and seemed to stand erect in Central Europe. Hungary had recovered from her dose of Bela Kun. The French Army, resting upon its laurels, was incomparably the strongest military force in Europe, and it was for some years believed that the French air force was also of a high order.

Up till the year 1934, the power of the conquerors remained

unchallenged in Europe and indeed throughout the world. There was no moment in these sixteen years when the three former allies, or even Britain and France with their associates in Europe, could not, in the name of the League of Nations and under its moral and international shield, have controlled by a mere effort of the will the armed strength of Germany. Instead, until 1931 the victors, and particularly the United States, concentrated their efforts upon extorting by vexatious foreign controls their annual reparations from Germany. The fact that these payments were made only from far larger American loans reduced the whole process to the absurd. Nothing was reaped except ill-will. On the other hand, the strict enforcement at any time till 1934 of the disarmament clauses of the Peace Treaty would have guarded indefinitely, without violence or bloodshed, the peace and safety of mankind. But this was neglected while the infringements remained petty, and shunned as they assumed serious proportions. Thus the final safeguard of a long peace was cast away. The crimes of the vanquished find their background and their explanation, though not, of course, their pardon, in the follies of the victors. Without these follies crime would have found neither temptation nor opportunity.

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In these pages I attempt to recount some of the incidents and impressions which form in my mind the story of the coming upon mankind of the worst tragedy in its tumultuous history. This presented itself not only in the destruction of life and property inseparable from war. There had been fearful slaughters of soldiers in the First World War, and much of the accumulated treasure of the nations was consumed. Still, apart from the excesses of the Russian Revolution, the main fabric of European civilisation remained erect at the close of the struggle. When the storm and dust of the cannonade passed suddenly away, the nations despite their enmities could still recognise each other as historic racial personalities. The laws of war had on the whole been respected. There was a common professional meeting-ground between military men who had fought one another. Vanquished and victors alike still preserved the semblance of civilised states. A solemn peace was made which, apart from unenforceable financial aspects, conformed to the principles which in the nineteenth century had increasingly regulated the relations of enlightened peoples. The reign of law was proclaimed, and a World Instrument was formed to guard us all, and especially Europe, against a renewed convulsion.

Now in the Second World War every bond between man and man was to perish. Crimes were committed by the Germans, under the Hitlerite domination to which they allowed themselves to be subjected, which find no equal in scale and wickedness with any that have darkened the human record. The wholesale massacre by systematised processes of six or seven millions of men, women, and children in the German execution camps exceeds in horror the rough-and-ready butcheries of Genghis Khan, and in scale reduces them to pigmy proportions. Deliberate extermination of whole populations was contemplated and pursued by both Germany and Russia in the Eastern war. The hideous process of bombarding open cities from the air, once started by the Germans, was repaid twentyfold by the ever-mounting power of the Allies, and found its culmination in the use of the atomic bombs which obliterated Hiroshima and Nagasaki.

We have at length emerged from a scene of material ruin and moral havoc the like of which had never darkened the imagination of former centuries. After all that we suffered and achieved, we find ourselves still confronted with problems and perils not less but far more formidable than those through which we have so narrowly made our way.

It is my purpose, as one who lived and acted in these days, first to show how easily the tragedy of the Second World War could have been prevented; how the malice of the wicked was reinforced by the weakness of the virtuous; how the structure and habits of democratic states, unless they are welded into larger organisms, lack those elements of persistence and con-

viction which can alone give security to humble masses; how, even in matters of self-preservation, no policy is pursued for even ten or fifteen years at a time. We shall see how the counsels of prudence and restraint may become the prime agents of mortal danger; how the middle course adopted from desires for safety and a quiet life may be found to lead direct to the bull's-eye of disaster. We shall see how absolute is the need of a broad path of international action pursued by many states in common across the years, irrespective of the ebb and flow of national politics.

It was a simple policy to keep Germany disarmed and the victors adequately armed for thirty years, and in the meanwhile, even if a reconciliation could not be made with Germany, to build ever more strongly a true League of Nations capable of making sure that treaties were kept or changed only by discussion and agreement. When three or four powerful Governments acting together have demanded the most fearful sacrifices from their peoples, when these have been given freely for the common cause, and when the longed-for result has been attained, it would seem reasonable that concerted action should be preserved so that at least the essentials would not be cast away. But this modest requirement the might, civilisation, learning, knowledge, science, of the victors were unable to supply. They lived from hand to mouth and from day to day, and from one election to another, until, when scarcely twenty years were out, the dread signal of the Second World War was given, and we must write of the sons of those who had fought and died so faithfully and well:

> "Shoulder to aching shoulder, side by side
> They trudged away from life's broad wealds of light." [1]

[1] Siegfried Sassoon.

17

The Tragedy of Munich

Chamberlain in Control — He Visits Berchtesgaden — His Meeting with Hitler — The End of the Runciman Mission — Anglo-French Pressure upon Czechoslovakia — President Benes' Submission — General Faucher Renounces French Citizenship — My Statement of September 21 — Litvinov's Formidable Declaration at the League Assembly — Soviet Power Ignored — The Vultures Gather Round the Doomed State — Chamberlain and Hitler at Godesberg — Hitler's Ultimatum — Rejection by the British and French Cabinets — Sir Horace Wilson's Mission to Berlin — My Visit to Downing Street on September 26 — Lord Halifax's Communiqué — Mobilisation of the British Navy — Behind the German Front — Dismissal of General von Beck — Hitler's Struggle with His Own Army Staff — General von Halder's Plot — Alleged Reason for Its Collapse, September 14 — Memorial of the German General Staff to Hitler, September 26 — Admiral Raeder's Remonstrance — Hitler Wavers — Mr. Chamberlain's Broadcast of September 27 — His Third Offer to Visit Hitler — His Appeal to Mussolini — Drama in the House of Commons, September 28 — Conference at Munich — A Scrap of Paper — Chamberlain's Triumphant Return — "Peace with Honour!" — Marshal Keitel's Evidence at Nuremberg — Hitler's Judgment Again Vindicated — Some General Principles of Morals and Action — A Fatal Course for France and Britain.

MR. CHAMBERLAIN was now in complete control of British foreign policy, and Sir Horace Wilson was his principal confidant and agent. Lord Halifax, in spite of increasing doubts derived from the atmosphere of his department, followed the guidance of his chief. The Cabinet was deeply perturbed, but obeyed. The Government majority in the House of Commons was skilfully handled by the Whips. One man and one man only conducted our affairs. He did not shrink either from the responsibility which he incurred, or from the personal exertions required.

During the night of September 13/14, M. Daladier got in touch with Mr. Chamberlain. The French Government were of the opinion that a joint approach to Hitler on a personal basis by the French and British leaders might be of value. Chamberlain, however, had been communing with himself. On his own initiative he telegraphed to Hitler proposing to come to see him. He informed the Cabinet of his action the next day, and in the afternoon received Hitler's reply inviting him to Berchtesgaden. Accordingly, on the morning of September 15, the British Prime Minister flew to the Munich airfield. The moment was not in all respects well chosen. When the news reached Prague, the Czech leaders could not believe it was true. They were astonished that at the very moment when for the first time they had the internal situation in the Sudeten areas in hand, the British Prime Minister should himself pay a direct visit to Hitler. This they felt would weaken their position with Germany. Hitler's provocative speech of September 12, and the German-sponsored revolt of Henlein's adherents which had followed, had failed to gain local support. Henlein had fled to Germany, and the Sudeten German Party, bereft of his leadership, was clearly opposed to direct action. The Czech Government in the so-called "Fourth Plan" had officially proposed to the Sudeten German leaders administrative schemes for regional autonomy which not only exceeded Henlein's Carlsbad requests of April, but also fully met Chamberlain's view expressed in his speech of March 24, and Sir John Simon's statements in his speech of August 27. But even Lord Runciman realised that the last thing the Germans wanted was a satisfactory bargain between the Sudeten leaders and the Czech Government. Chamberlain's journey gave them an opportunity to increase their demands; and on instructions

from Berlin the extremists in the Sudeten Party now openly claimed union with the Reich.

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The Prime Minister's plane arrived at Munich airport in the afternoon of September 16; he travelled by train to Berchtesgaden. Meanwhile, all the radio stations of Germany broadcast a proclamation by Henlein demanding the annexation of the Sudeten areas to the Reich. This was the first news that reached Mr. Chamberlain when he landed. It was no doubt planned that he should know it before meeting Hitler. The question of *annexation* had never yet been raised either by the German Government or by Henlein; and a few days earlier, the Foreign Office had stated that it was not the accepted policy of the British Government.

Mr. Feiling has already published such records as are extant of the conversations between Chamberlain and Hitler. The salient point we may derive from his account is this: "In spite of the hardness and ruthlessness I thought I saw in his face, I got the impression that *here was a man who could be relied upon when he had given his word.*" [1] In fact, Hitler had for months past, as we have seen, resolved and prepared for the invasion of Czechoslovakia, which awaited only the final signal. When the Prime Minister reached London on Saturday, September 17, he summoned the Cabinet. Lord Runciman had now returned, and his report was assured of attention. He had all this time been failing in health, and the violent stress to which he had been exposed in his mission had reduced him to the most modest dimensions. He now recommended "a policy for immediate and drastic action," namely, "the transfer of predominantly German districts to Germany." This at least had the merit of simplicity.

Both the Prime Minister and Lord Runciman were convinced that only the cession of the Sudeten areas to Germany

[1] Feiling, *op. cit.*, page 367.

would dissuade Hitler from ordering the invasion of Czechoslovakia. Mr. Chamberlain had been strongly impressed at his meeting with Hitler "that the latter was in a fighting mood." His Cabinet were also of the opinion that the French had no fight in them. There could, therefore, be no question of resisting Hitler's demands upon the Czech State. Some ministers found consolation in such phrases as "the rights of self-determination," "the claims of a national minority to just treatment"; and even the mood appeared of "championing the small man against the Czech bully."

It was now necessary to keep in backward step with the French Government. On September 18, Daladier and Bonnet came to London. Chamberlain had already decided in principle to accept Hitler's demands as explained to him at Berchtesgaden. There only remained the business of drafting the proposals to be presented to the Czech Government by the British and French representatives in Prague. The French Ministers brought with them a set of draft proposals which were certainly more skilfully conceived. They did not favour a plebiscite because, they observed, there might be demands for further plebiscites in the Slovak and Ruthene areas. They favoured an outright cession of the Sudetenland to Germany. They added, however, that the British Government with France, *and with Russia,* whom they had not consulted, should guarantee the new frontiers of the mutilated Czechoslovakia.

Many of us, even outside Cabinet circles, had the sensation that Bonnet represented the quintessence of defeatism, and that all his clever verbal manoeuvres had the aim of "peace at any price." In his book, written after the war, he labours naturally to thrust the whole burden upon Chamberlain and Halifax. There can be no doubt of what he had in his own mind. At all costs he wished to avoid having to fulfil the solemn, precise, and so recently renewed obligations of France to go to war in defence of Czechoslovakia. The British and French Cabinets at this time presented a front of two overripe melons crushed together; whereas what was needed was a gleam of steel. On one thing they were all agreed: there should be

no consultation with the Czechs. These should be confronted with the decision of their guardians. The Babes in the Wood had no worse treatment.

In presenting their decision or ultimatum to the Czechs, England and France said: "Both the French and British Governments recognise how great is the sacrifice thus required of Czechoslovakia. They have felt it their duty jointly to set forth frankly the conditions essential to security. . . . The Prime Minister must resume conversations with Herr Hitler not later than Wednesday, or sooner if possible. We, therefore, feel we must ask for your reply at the earliest possible moment." Proposals involving the immediate cession to Germany of all areas in Czechoslovakia containing over fifty per cent of German inhabitants were, therefore, handed to the Czech Government in the afternoon of September 19.

Great Britain, after all, had no treaty obligation to defend Czechoslovakia, nor was she pledged in any informal way. But France had definitely bound herself by treaty to make war upon Germany if she attacked Czechoslovakia. For twenty years President Benes had been the faithful ally and almost vassal of France, always supporting French policies and French interests on the League of Nations and elsewhere. If ever there was a case of solemn obligation, it was here and now. Fresh and vivid were the declarations of MM. Blum and Daladier. It was a portent of doom when a French Government failed to keep the word of France. I have always believed that Benes was wrong to yield. He should have defended his fortress line. Once fighting had begun, in my opinion at that time, France would have moved to his aid in a surge of national passion, and Britain would have rallied to France almost immediately. At the height of this crisis (on September 20) I visited Paris for two days in order to see my friends in the French Government, Reynaud and Mandel. Both these Ministers were in lively distress and on the verge of resigning from the Daladier Cabinet. I was against this, as their sacrifice could not alter the course of events, and would only leave the French Government weakened by the loss of its two most capable and resolute men. I

ventured even to speak to them in this sense. After this painful visit I returned to London.

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At 2 A.M. on the night of September 20/21, the British and French Ministers in Prague called on President Benes to inform him in effect that there was no hope of arbitration on the basis of the German-Czechoslovak Treaty of 1925, and to urge upon him the acceptance of the Anglo-French proposals *"before producing a situation for which France and Britain could take no responsibility."* The French Government at least was sufficiently ashamed of this communication to instruct its Minister only to make it verbally. Under this pressure on September 21, the Czech Government bowed to the Anglo-French proposals. There was in Prague at this moment a general of the French Army named Faucher. He had been in Czechoslovakia with the French Military Mission since 1919, and had been its chief since 1926. He now requested the French Government to relieve him of his duties, and placed himself at the disposal of the Czechoslovak Army. He also adopted Czech citizenship.

The following French defence has been made, and it cannot be lightly dismissed: If Czechoslovakia had refused to submit, and war had resulted, France would have fulfilled her obligations; but if the Czechs chose to give in under whatever pressures were administered, French honour was saved. We must leave this to the judgment of history.

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On the same day, September 21, I issued a statement on the crisis to the press in London:

The partition of Czechoslovakia under pressure from England and France amounts to the complete surrender of the Western Democracies to the Nazi threat of force. Such a collapse will bring peace or security neither to England nor to France. On the contrary, it will place these two nations in an ever-weaker and more

dangerous situation. The mere neutralisation of Czechoslovakia means the liberation of twenty-five German divisions, which will threaten the Western Front; in addition to which it will open up for the triumphant Nazis the road to the Black Sea. It is not Czechoslovakia alone which is menaced, but also the freedom and the democracy of all nations. The belief that security can be obtained by throwing a small state to the wolves is a fatal delusion. The war potential of Germany will increase in a short time more rapidly than it will be possible for France and Great Britain to complete the measures necessary for their defence.

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At the Assembly of the League of Nations on September 21, an official warning was given by Litvinov:

. . . at the present time, 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, who acquired their independence after centuries of oppression, today or tomorrow may decide to take up arms in defence of that independence. . . .

Such an event as the disappearance of Austria passed unnoticed by the League of Nations. Realising 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 . . . 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." . . . 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.

It is indeed astonishing that this public, and unqualified, declaration by one of the greatest Powers concerned should not have played its part in Mr. Chamberlain's negotiations, or in the French conduct of the crisis. I have heard it suggested that it was geographically impossible for Russia to send troops into Czechoslovakia and that Russian aid in the event of war would have been limited to modest air support. The assent of Rumania, and also to a lesser extent of Hungary, to allow Russian forces to pass through their territory was, of course, necessary. This might well have been obtained from Rumania at least, as indicated to me by M. Maisky, through the pressures and guarantees of a Grand Alliance acting under the aegis of the League of Nations. There were two railways from Russia into Czechoslovakia through the Carpathian Mountains, the northerly from Czernowitz through the Bukovina, the southerly through Hungary by Debreczen. These two railways alone, which avoid both Bukarest and Budapest by good margins, might well have supported Russian armies of thirty divisions. As a counter for keeping the peace, these possibilities would have been a substantial deterrent upon Hitler, and would almost certainly have led to far greater developments in the event of war. Stress has also been laid upon Soviet duplicity and bad faith, and the Soviet offer was in effect ignored. They were not brought into the scale against Hitler, and were treated with an indifference — not to say disdain — which left a mark in Stalin's mind. Events took their course as if Soviet Russia did not exist. For this we afterwards paid dearly.

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Mussolini, speaking at Treviso on September 21, said — not

without some pith — "If Czechoslovakia finds herself today in what might be called a 'delicate situation,' it is because she was — one may already say 'was,' and I shall tell you why immediately — not just Czechoslovakia, but 'Czecho-Germano-Polono-Magyaro-Rutheno-Rumano-Slovakia,' and I would emphasise that now that this problem is being faced, it is essential it should be solved in a general manner." [2]

Under the humiliation of the Anglo-French proposals, the Czech Government resigned, and a non-party Administration was formed under General Syrovy, the commander of the Czechoslovak legions in Siberia during the First World War. On September 22, President Benes broadcast to the Czech nation a dignified appeal for calm. While Benes was preparing his broadcast, Chamberlain had been flying to his second meeting with Hitler, this time at the Rhineland town of Godesberg. The British Prime Minister carried with him, as a basis for final discussion with the Fuehrer, the details of the Anglo-French proposals accepted by the Czech Government. The two men met in the hotel at Godesberg which Hitler had quitted in haste four years earlier for the Roehm purge. From the first, Chamberlain realised that he was confronted with what he called, in his own words, "a totally unexpected situation." He described the scene in the House of Commons on his return:

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 the House 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.

2 Quoted in Ripka, *Munich and After*, page 117.

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.

Discussions were broken off until the next day. Throughout the morning of September 23, Chamberlain paced the balcony of his hotel. He sent a written message to Hitler after breakfast stating that he was ready to convey the new German proposals to the Czech Government, but pointing out grave difficulties. Hitler's reply in the afternoon showed little signs of yielding, and Chamberlain asked that a formal memorandum accompanied by maps should be handed to him at a final meeting that evening. The Czechs were now mobilising, and both the British and French Governments officially stated to their representatives in Prague that they could no longer take the responsibility of advising them not to. At 10.30 that night Chamberlain again met Hitler. The description of the meeting is best told in his own words:

The memorandum 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 documents, 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.

I should add that Hitler 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; but that is not a matter for war."

On the afternoon of September 24, Mr. Chamberlain returned to London, and on the following day three meetings of the Cabinet were held. There was a noticeable stiffening of opinion both in London and in Paris. It was decided to reject the Godesberg terms, and this information was conveyed to the German Government. The French Cabinet agreed, and a partial French mobilisation was carried out promptly and with more efficiency than was expected. On the evening of September 25, the French Ministers came again to London and reluctantly accepted their obligations to the Czechs. During the course of the following afternoon, Sir Horace Wilson was sent with a personal letter to Hitler in Berlin three hours before the latter was to speak in the Sports Palace. The only answer Sir Horace was able to obtain was that Hitler would not depart from the time limit set by the Godesberg ultimatum, namely, Saturday, October 1, on which day he would march into the territories concerned unless he received Czech acquiescence by 2 P.M. on Wednesday, twenty-eighth.

That evening Hitler spoke in Berlin. He referred to England and France in accommodating phrases, launching at the same time a coarse and brutal attack on Benes and the Czechs. He said categorically that the Czechs must clear out of the Sudetenland by the twenty-sixth, but once this was settled, he had no more interest in what happened to Czechoslovakia. *"This is the last territorial claim I have to make in Europe."*

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As on similar occasions, my contacts with His Majesty's Government became more frequent and intimate with the mounting of the crisis. On September 10, I had visited the Prime Minister at Downing Street for a long talk. Again on

September 26, he either invited me or readily accorded me an interview. At 3.30 in the afternoon of this critical day, I was received by him and Lord Halifax in the Cabinet Room. I pressed upon them the policy set forth in my letter to Lord Halifax of August 31, namely, a declaration showing the unity of sentiment and purpose between Britain, France, *and Russia* against Hitlerite aggression. We discussed at length and in detail a communiqué, and we seemed to be in complete agreement. Lord Halifax and I were at one, and I certainly thought the Prime Minister was in full accord. There was present a high official of the Foreign Office who built up the draft. When we separated, I was satisfied and relieved.

About eight o'clock that night, Mr. Leeper, then head of the Foreign Office Press Department, now Sir Reginald Leeper, presented to the Foreign Secretary a communiqué of which the following is the pith:

> If, in spite of the efforts made by the British Prime Minister, a German attack is made upon Czechoslovakia, the immediate result must be that France will be bound to come to her assistance, and Great Britain *and Russia* will certainly stand by France.

This was approved by Lord Halifax and immediately issued.

When earlier I returned to my flat at Morpeth Mansions, I found about fifteen gentlemen assembled. They were all Conservatives: Lord Cecil, Lord Lloyd, Sir Edward Grigg, Sir Robert Horne, Mr. Boothby, Mr. Bracken, and Mr. Law. The feeling was passionate. It all focused on the point, "We must get Russia in." I was impressed and indeed surprised by this intensity of view in Tory circles, showing how completely they had cast away all thoughts of class, party, or ideological interests, and to what a pitch their mood had come. I reported to them what had happened at Downing Street and described the character of the communiqué. They were all greatly reassured.

The French Right press treated this communiqué with suspicion and disdain. The *Matin* called it "A clever lie." M. Bonnet, who was now very busy showing how forward in action

he was, told several Deputies that he had no confirmation of it, leaving on them the impression that this was not the British pledge he was looking for. This was no doubt not difficult for him to convey.

I dined that night with Mr. Duff Cooper at the Admiralty. He told me that he was demanding from the Prime Minister the immediate mobilisation of the Fleet. I recalled my own experiences a quarter of a century before when similar circumstances had presented themselves.

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It seemed that the moment of clash had arrived and that the opposing forces were aligned. The Czechs had a million and a half men armed behind the strongest fortress line in Europe, and equipped by a highly organised and powerful industrial machine. The French Army was partly mobilised, and, albeit reluctantly, the French Ministers were prepared to honour their obligations to Czechoslovakia. Just before midnight on September 27, the warning telegram was sent out from the Admiralty ordering the mobilisation of the Fleet for the following day. This information was given to the British press almost simultaneously (at 11.38 P.M.). At 11.20 A.M. on September 28, the actual orders to the British Fleet to mobilise were issued from the Admiralty.

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We may now look behind the brazen front which Hitler presented to the British and French Governments. General Beck, the Chief of the Army General Staff, had become profoundly alarmed about Hitler's schemes. He entirely disapproved of them, and was prepared to resist. After the invasion of Austria in March, he had sent a memorandum to Hitler arguing by detailed facts that the continuance of a programme of conquest must lead to world-wide catastrophe and the ruin of the now reviving Reich. To this Hitler did not reply. There was a pause. Beck refused to share the responsibility before history for the war plunge which the Fuehrer was

resolved to make. In July, a personal confrontation took place. When the imminence of an attack on Czechoslovakia became clear, Beck demanded an assurance against further military adventures. Here was a crunch. Hitler rejoined that the Army was the instrument of the State, that he was the head of the State, and that the Army and other forces owed unquestioning obedience to his will. On this Beck resigned. His request to be relieved of his post remained unanswered. But the General's decision was irrevocable. Henceforth he absented himself from the War Ministry. Hitler was, therefore, forced to dismiss him, and appointed Halder as his successor. For Beck there remained only a tragic but honourable fate.

All this was kept within a secret circle; but there now began an intense, unceasing struggle between the Fuehrer and his expert advisers. Beck was universally trusted and respected by the Army Staff, who were united, not only in professional opinion, but in resentment of civilian and party dictation. The September crisis seemed to provide all the circumstances which the German generals dreaded. Between thirty and forty Czech divisions were deploying upon Germany's eastern frontier, and the weight of the French Army, at odds of nearly eight to one, began to lie heavy on the Western Wall. A hostile Russia might operate from Czech airfields, and Soviet armies might wend their way forward through Poland or Rumania. Finally, in the last stage the British Navy was said to be mobilising, As all this developed, passions rose to fever heat.

First, we have the account, given by General Halder, of a definite plot to arrest Hitler and his principal associates. The evidence for this does not rest only on Halder's detailed statements. Plans were certainly made, but how far they were at the time backed by resolve cannot be judged precisely. The generals were repeatedly planning revolts, and as often drew back at the last moment for one reason or another. It was to the interest of the parties concerned after they were the prisoners of the Allies to dwell upon their efforts for peace. There can be no doubt, however, of the existence of the plot at this moment, and of serious measures to make it effective.

By the beginning of September [Halder says], we had taken the necessary steps to immunize Germany from this madman. At this time the prospect of war filled the great majority of the German people with horror. We did not intend to kill the Nazi leaders — merely to arrest them, establish a military Government, and issue a proclamation to the people that we had taken this action only because we were convinced they were being led to certain disaster.

The following were in the plot: Generals Halder, Beck, Stuelpnagel, Witzleben (Commander of the Berlin garrison), Thomas (Controller of Armaments), Brockdorff (Commander of the Potsdam garrison), and Graf von Helldorf, who was in charge of the Berlin police. The Commander-in-Chief, General von Brauchitsch, was informed, and approved.

It was easy, as a part of the troop movements against Czechoslovakia and of ordinary military routine, to hold one Panzer division so near to Berlin that it could reach the capital by a night's march. The evidence is clear that the Third Panzer Division, commanded by General Hoeppner, was at the time of the Munich crisis stationed south of Berlin. General Hoeppner's secret mission was to occupy the capital, the Chancellery, and the important Nazi Ministries and offices at a given signal. For this purpose it was added to General Witzleben's command. According to Halder's account, Helldorf, Chief of the Berlin police, then made meticulous arrangements to arrest Hitler, Goering, Goebbels, and Himmler. "There was no possibility of a hitch. All that was required for a completely successful *coup* was Hitler's presence in Berlin." He arrived there from Berchtesgaden on the morning of September 14. Halder heard of this at midday, and immediately went over to see Witzleben and complete the plans. It was decided to strike at eight that same evening. At 4 P.M., according to Halder, a message was received in Witzleben's office that Mr. Chamberlain was going to fly to see the Fuehrer at Berchtesgaden. A meeting was at once held, at which he, Halder, told Witzleben that "if Hitler had succeeded in his bluff, he would not be justified, as Chief of Staff, in calling it." It was accordingly decided to defer action, and await events.

Such is the tale, which historians should probe, of this internal crisis in Berlin as told by General von Halder, at that time Chief of the Staff. It has since been confirmed by other generals — Mueller and Hillebrandt — and has been accepted as genuine by various authorities who have examined it. If it should eventually be accepted as historical truth, it will be another example of the very small accidents upon which the fortunes of mankind turn.

Of other less violent but earnest efforts of the General Staff to restrain Hitler there can be no doubt. On September 26, a deputation, consisting of General von Hanneken, Ritter von Leeb, and Colonel Bodenschatz, called at the Chancellery of the Reich and requested to be received by Herr Hitler. They were sent away. At noon on the following day, the principal generals held a meeting at the War Office. They agreed upon a memorial which they left at the Chancellery. This document was published in France in November, 1938.[3] It consisted of eighteen pages divided into five chapters and three appendices. Chapter I stresses the divergences between the political and military leadership of the Third Reich, and declares that the low morale of the German population renders it incapable of sustaining a European war. It states that in the event of war breaking out, exceptional powers must be given to the military authorities. Chapter II describes the bad condition of the Reichswehr and mentions that the military authorities have felt obliged "to shut their eyes in many serious cases to the absence of discipline." Chapter III enumerates the various deficiencies in German armaments, dwelling upon the defects in the Siegfried Line, so hurriedly constructed, and the lack of fortifications in the Aix-la-Chapelle and Saarbruecken areas. Fear is expressed of an incursion into Belgium by the French troops concentrated around Givet. Finally, emphasis is laid on the shortage of officers. No fewer than forty-eight thousand officers and one hundred thousand N.C.O.'s were necessary to bring the Army up to war strength, and in the event of a gen-

[3] Published by Professor Bernard Lavergne, in *L'Année Politique Française et Etrangère* in November, 1938. Quoted in Ripka, *op. cit.*, page 212 ff.

eral mobilisation, no fewer than eighteen divisions would find themselves devoid of trained subordinate commanders.

The document presents the reasons why defeat must be expected in any but a strictly local war, and affirms that less than a fifth of the officers of the Reichswehr believe in the possibility of a victory for Germany. A military appreciation about Czechoslovakia in the Appendix states that the Czechoslovak Army, even if fighting without allies, could hold out for three months, and that Germany would need to retain covering forces on the Polish and French frontiers as well as on the Baltic and North Sea coasts, and to keep a force of at least a quarter of a million troops in Austria to guard against popular risings and a possible Czechoslovak offensive. Finally, the General Staff believed that it was highly improbable that hostilities would remain localised during the three-month period.

The warnings of the soldiers were finally reinforced by Admiral Raeder, Chief of the German Admiralty. At 10 P.M. on September 27, Raeder was received by the Fuehrer. He made a vehement appeal, which was emphasised a few hours later by the news that the British Fleet was being mobilised. Hitler now wavered. At 2 A.M. the German radio broadcast an official denial that Germany intended to mobilise on the twenty-ninth, and at 11.45 the same morning a statement of the German official news agency was given to the British press, again denying the reports of the intended German mobilisation. The strain upon this one man and upon his astounding will-power must at this moment have been most severe. Evidently he had brought himself to the brink of a general war. Could he take the plunge in the face of an unfavourable public opinion and of the solemn warnings of the Chiefs of his Army, Navy, and air force? Could he, on the other hand, afford to retreat after living so long upon prestige?

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While the Fuehrer was at grips with his generals, Mr. Chamberlain himself was preparing to broadcast to the English nation. On the evening of September 27, he spoke as follows:

How horrible, fantastic, incredible, it is that we should be digging trenches and trying on gas-masks here because of a quarrel in a faraway country between people of whom we know nothing! . . . I would not hesitate to pay even a third visit to Germany, if I thought it would do any good. . . . 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.

After delivering this balancing broadcast, he received Hitler's reply to the letter he had sent through Sir Horace Wilson. This letter opened a chink of hope. Hitler offered to join in a guarantee of the new frontiers of Czechoslovakia, and was willing to give further assurances about the manner of carrying out the new plebiscite. There was little time to lose. The German ultimatum contained in the Godesberg memorandum was due to expire at 2 P.M. on the following day, Wednesday, September 28. Chamberlain, therefore, drafted a personal message to 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 the Czech Government, together with representatives of France and Italy if you desire. I feel convinced that we could reach agreement in a week.[4]

At the same time he telegraphed to Mussolini informing him of this last appeal to Hitler:

I trust your Excellency will inform the German Chancellor that you are willing to be represented, and urge him to agree to my proposal, which will keep our peoples out of war.

It is one of the remarkable features of this crisis that no close and confidential consultation seems to have existed be-

[4] Feiling, *op. cit.*, page 372.

tween London and Paris. There was a broad coincidence of view, but little or no personal contact. While Mr. Chamberlain, without consulting either the French Government or his own Cabinet colleagues, was drafting these two letters, the French Ministers were taking their own separate measures along parallel lines. We have seen the strength of the forces opposed to standing up to Germany in the French press, and how the firm British communiqué, naming Russia, was suggested in Paris newspapers, inspired by the French Foreign Office, to be a forgery. The French Ambassador in Berlin was instructed on the night of the twenty-seventh to make yet further proposals extending the territory in the Sudetenland to be handed over for immediate German occupation. While M. François-Poncet was with Hitler, a message arrived from Mussolini advising that Chamberlain's idea of a conference should be accepted and that Italy should take a part. At three o'clock on the afternoon of September 28, Hitler sent messages to Chamberlain and Daladier proposing a meeting at Munich on the following day together with Mussolini. At that hour Mr. Chamberlain was addressing the House of Commons, giving them a general view of recent events. As he neared the end of his speech, the message inviting him to Munich was passed down to him by Lord Halifax, who was sitting in the Peers' Gallery. Mr. Chamberlain was at that moment describing the letter which he had sent to Mussolini and the results of this move:

In reply to my message to Signor Mussolini, I was informed that instructions had been sent by the Duce . . . 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, which the Chancellor had told Sir Horace Wilson was to be taken at 2 P.M. today, for at least twenty-four 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 mobilisation for twenty-four hours. . . . 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 tomorrow 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. . . . 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.

Thus, for the third time Mr. Chamberlain flew to Germany.

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Many accounts have been written of this memorable meeting, and it is not possible here to do more than emphasise some special features. No invitation was extended to Russia. Nor were the Czechs themselves allowed to be present at the meetings. The Czech Government had been informed in bald terms on the evening of the twenty-eighth that a conference of the representatives of the four European Powers would take place the following day. Agreement was reached between "the Big Four" with speed. The conversations began at noon and lasted till two o'clock the next morning. A memorandum was drawn up and signed at 2 A.M. on September 30. It was in essentials the acceptance of the Godesberg ultimatum. The Sudetenland was to be evacuated in five stages beginning on October 1 and to be completed within ten days. An International Commission was to determine the final frontiers. The document was placed before the Czech delegates who had been allowed to come to Munich to receive the decisions.

While the three statesmen were waiting for the experts to draft the final document, the Prime Minister asked Hitler whether he would care for a private talk. Hitler "jumped at the idea." [5] The two leaders met in Hitler's Munich flat on the morning of September 30 and were alone except for the interpreter. Chamberlain produced a draft declaration which he had prepared, as follows:

We, the German Fuehrer and Chancellor, and the British Prime Minister, have had a further meeting today and are agreed in recognising that the question of Anglo-German relations is of the first importance for the two countries and for Europe.

[5] See Feiling, *op. cit.*, page 376.

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.

Hitler read this note and signed it without demur.

Closeted with his Italian confederate he must have discussed less amiable solutions. A letter written by Mussolini to Hitler in June, 1940, and lately published, is revealing:

Fuehrer, *Rome,* 26.VI.40.

Now that the time has come to thrash England, I remind you *of what I said to you at Munich about the direct participation of Italy in the assault of the Isle.* I am ready to take part in this with land and air forces, and you know how much I desire it. I pray you to reply in order that I can pass into the phase of action. Awaiting this day, I send you my salute of comradeship.

MUSSOLINI [6]

There is no record of any other meeting between Hitler and Mussolini *at Munich* in the interval.

Chamberlain returned to England. At Heston where he landed, he waved the joint declaration which he had got Hitler to sign, and read it to the crowd of notables and others who welcomed him. As his car drove through cheering crowds from the airport, he said to Halifax, sitting beside him, "All this will be over in three months"; but from the windows of Downing Street he waved his piece of paper again and used these words, "This is the second time there has come back from Germany to Downing Street peace with honour. I believe it is peace in our time."

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We have now also Marshal Keitel's answer to the specific

[6] *Les lettres secrètes échangés par Hitler et Mussolini.* Introduction de André François-Poncet.

question put to him by the Czech representative at the Nuremberg Trials:

Colonel Eger, representing Czechoslovakia, asked Marshal Keitel: "Would the Reich have attacked Czechoslovakia in 1938 if the Western Powers had stood by Prague?"

Marshal Keitel answered: "Certainly not. We were not strong enough militarily. The object of Munich [i.e., reaching an agreement at Munich] was to get Russia out of Europe, to gain time, and to complete the German armaments." [7]

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Hitler's judgment had been once more decisively vindicated. The German General Staff was utterly abashed. Once again the Fuehrer had been right, after all. He with his genius and intuition alone had truly measured all the circumstances, military and political. Once again, as in the Rhineland, the Fuehrer's leadership had triumphed over the obstruction of the German military chiefs. All these generals were patriotic men. They longed to see the Fatherland regain its position in the world. They were devoting themselves night and day to every process that could strengthen the German forces. They, therefore, felt smitten in their hearts at having been found so much below the level of the event, and in many cases their dislike and their distrust of Hitler were overpowered by admiration for his commanding gifts and miraculous luck. Surely here was a star to follow, surely here was a guide to obey. Thus did Hitler finally become the undisputed master of Germany, and the path was clear for the great design. The conspirators lay low, and were not betrayed by their military comrades.

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It may be well here to set down some principles of morals and action which may be a guide in the future. No case of this kind can be judged apart from its circumstances. The facts may be unknown at the time, and estimates of them must be largely guesswork, coloured by the general feelings and aims of

[7] Quoted in Paul Reynaud, *La France a sauvé l'Europe,* volume I, page 561, note.

whoever is trying to pronounce. Those who are prone by temperament and character to seek sharp and clear-cut solutions of difficult and obscure problems, who are ready to fight whenever some challenge comes from a foreign Power, have not always been right. On the other hand, those whose inclination is to bow their heads, to seek patiently and faithfully for peaceful compromise, are not always wrong. On the contrary, in the majority of instances they may be right, not only morally but from a practical standpoint. How many wars have been averted by patience and persisting good will! Religion and virtue alike lend their sanctions to meekness and humility, not only between men but between nations. How many wars have been precipitated by firebrands! How many misunderstandings which led to wars could have been removed by temporising! How often have countries fought cruel wars and then after a few years of peace found themselves not only friends but allies!

The Sermon on the Mount is the last word in Christian ethics. Everyone respects the Quakers. Still, it is not on these terms that Ministers assume their responsibilities of guiding states. Their duty is first so to deal with other nations as to avoid strife and war and to eschew aggression in all its forms, whether for nationalistic or ideological objects. But the safety of the State, the lives and freedom of their own fellow countrymen, to whom they owe their position, make it right and imperative in the last resort, or when a final and definite conviction has been reached, that the use of force should not be excluded. If the circumstances are such as to warrant it, force may be used. And if this be so, it should be used under the conditions which are most favourable. There is no merit in putting off a war for a year if, when it comes, it is a far worse war or one much harder to win. These are the tormenting dilemmas upon which mankind has throughout its history been so frequently impaled. Final judgment upon them can only be recorded by history in relation to the facts of the case as known to the parties at the time, and also as subsequently proved.

There is, however, one helpful guide, namely, for a nation to keep its word and to act in accordance with its treaty obliga-

tions to allies. This guide is called *honour*. It is baffling to reflect that what men call honour does not correspond always to Christian ethics. Honour is often influenced by that element of pride which plays so large a part in its inspiration. An exaggerated code of honour leading to the performance of utterly vain and unreasonable deeds could not be defended, however fine it might look. Here, however, the moment came when Honour pointed the path of Duty, and when also the right judgment of the facts at that time would have reinforced its dictates.

For the French Government to leave her faithful ally, Czechoslovakia, to her fate was a melancholy lapse from which flowed terrible consequences. Not only wise and fair policy, but chivalry, honour, and sympathy for a small threatened people made an overwhelming concentration. Great Britain, who would certainly have fought if bound by treaty obligations, was nevertheless now deeply involved, and it must be recorded with regret that the British Government not only acquiesced but encouraged the French Government in a fatal course.

THE COMPLETE WAR MEMOIRS OF

Charles de Gaulle

VOLUME I

THE CALL TO HONOUR

VOLUME II

UNITY

VOLUME III

SALVATION

SIMON AND SCHUSTER · NEW YORK

CHAPTER 1

THE SLOPE

All my life I have thought of France in a certain way. This is inspired by sentiment as much as by reason. The emotional side of me tends to imagine France, like the princess in the fairy stories or the Madonna in the frescoes, as dedicated to an exalted and exceptional destiny. Instinctively I have the feeling that Providence has created her either for complete successes or for exemplary misfortunes. If, in spite of this, mediocrity shows in her acts and deeds, it strikes me as an absurd anomaly, to be imputed to the faults of Frenchmen, not to the genius of the land. But the positive side of my mind also assures me that France is not really herself unless in the front rank; that only vast enterprises are capable of counterbalancing the ferments of dispersal which are inherent in her people; that our country, as it is, surrounded by the others, as they are, must aim high and hold itself straight, on pain of mortal danger. In short, to my mind, France cannot be France without greatness.

This faith grew as I grew, in the environment where I was born. My father was a thoughtful, cultivated, traditional man, imbued with a feeling for the dignity of France. He made me aware of her history. My mother had an uncompromising passion for her country, equal to her religious piety. To my three brothers, my sister,

and myself a certain anxious pride in our country came as second nature. As a young native of Lille living in Paris, nothing struck me more than the symbols of our glories: night falling over Notre Dame, the majesty of evening at Versailles, the Arc de Triomphe in the sun, conquered colours shuddering in the vault of the Invalides. Nothing affected me more than the evidence of our national successes: popular enthusiasm when the Tsar of Russia passed through, a review at Longchamp, the marvels of the Exhibition, the first flights of our aviators. Nothing saddened me more profoundly than our weaknesses and our mistakes, as revealed to my childhood gaze by the way people looked and by things they said: the surrender of Fashoda, the Dreyfus case, social conflicts, religious strife. Nothing moved me so much as the story of our past misfortunes: my father recalling the fruitless sortie from Le Bourget and Stains, in which he had been wounded; my mother conjuring up the despair she had felt as a girl at the sight of her parents in tears: "Bazaine has capitulated!"

As an adolescent, the fate of France, whether as the subject of history or as the stake in public life, interested me above everything. I was therefore attracted, but also severely critical, towards the play which was performed, day in, day out, in the forum; carried away as I was by the intelligence, fire, and eloquence lavished upon it by countless actors, yet saddened at seeing so many gifts wasted in political confusion and national disunity. All the more so since at the beginning of the century the premonitory symptoms of war became visible. I must say that in my first youth I pictured this unknown adventure with no horror, and magnified it in anticipation. In short, I was convinced that France would have to go through gigantic trials, that the interest of life consisted in one day rendering her some signal service, and that I would have the occasion to do so.

When I joined the Army, it was one of the greatest things in the world. Beneath all the criticisms and insults which were lavished on it, it was looking forward with serenity and even a muffled hopefulness to the approaching days when everything would depend on it. After Saint-Cyr I went through my apprenticeship as officer with the 33rd Infantry Regiment, at Arras. My first colonel, Pétain, showed me the meaning of the gift and art of command. Then, as the hurricane swept me off like a wisp of straw through the shocks of war—my baptism of fire, the calvary of the trenches, attacks, bombardments, wounds and captivity—I was privileged to see France, though deprived of part of her necessary means of defence by an insufficient birth-rate, by hollow ideologies, and by the negligence of the authorities, extract from herself an incredible effort, make up by measureless sacrifices for all she lacked, and bring the trial to an end in victory. I was privileged to see her, in the most critical days, pull herself together morally, at first under the ægis of Joffre, at the end of the drive of the "Tiger." I was privileged to see her, later, though exhausted from losses and devastation, with her social structure and moral balance overthrown, resume with tottering steps her march towards her destiny, while the regime, taking once more its former shape and repudiating Clemenceau, rejected greatness and returned to confusion.

During the years which followed, my career passed through various stages: special duty and a campaign in Poland, a professorship of history at Saint-Cyr, the Ecole de Guerre, attachment to a marshal's personal staff, command of the 19th Battalion of Chasseurs at Trèves, and General Staff service on the Rhine and in the Levant. Everywhere I noted the renewal of prestige which her recent successes had earned for France and, at the same time, the doubts about the future which were being awakened by the erratic behaviour of her rulers. In spite of everything, I found in the soldier's trade the powerful interest it has to offer to the mind and to the heart. In the Army, though a mill without grist, I saw the instrument of the great actions which were approaching.

It was clear, in fact, that the outcome of the First World War had not established peace. Germany was reverting to her ambitions, in proportion as she recovered her strength. While Russia isolated herself in her revolution; while America held aloof from Europe; while England treated Berlin gently in order that Paris

might have need of her; while the new states remained weak and disunited—it was on France alone that the burden fell of containing the Reich. She did in fact try, but disjointedly. And so it came about that our policy first applied constraint under the leadership of Poincaré, then attempted reconciliation at the instigation of Briand, and finally sought refuge in the League of Nations. But Germany was growing big with menaces. Hitler was nearing power.

At this period I was detailed to the Secrétariat Général de la Défense Nationale, a permanent body at the disposal of the Premier for preparing the state and the nation for war. From 1932 to 1937, under fourteen governments, I found myself involved, in a planning capacity, in the whole range of political, technical, and administrative activity concerning the country's defence. I had, in particular, to be familiar with the plans for security and for limitation of armaments presented by André Tardieu and Paul-Boncour, respectively, at Geneva; to supply the Doumergue Cabinet with the elements for its decisions when it chose to adopt a different course after the arrival of the Führer; to weave the Penelope-web of the bill for the wartime organization of the nation; and to go into the measures involved by the mobilization of the civil departments, of industry, and of public services. The work I had to do, the discussions at which I was present, the contacts I was obliged to make, showed me the extent of our resources, but also the feebleness of the state.

For the disjointedness of government was rife all over this field. Not—certainly—that the men who figured there lacked intelligence or patriotism; on the contrary, I saw men of incontestable value and sometimes of great talent come to the head of the ministries. But the political game consumed them and paralysed them. As a reserved but passionate witness of public affairs, I watched the constant repetition of the same scenario. Hardly had a Premier taken office when he was at grips with innumerable demands, criticisms, and bids for favour, which all his energy was absorbed in warding off without ever contriving to master them.

Parliament, far from supporting him, offered him nothing but ambushes and desertions. His Ministers were his rivals. Opinion, the press, and sectional interests regarded him as the proper target for all complaints. Everyone, indeed—and he first of all—knew that he was there for only a short time; in fact, after a few months, he had to give place to another. As regards national defence, such conditions prevented those responsible from achieving that organic whole of continuous plans, matured decisions, and measures carried to their conclusion, which we call a policy.

For these reasons the military, who received from the state no more than spasmodic and contradictory impulses, continued to defer to doctrine. The Army became stuck in a set of ideas which had had their heyday before the end of the First World War. It was all the more inclined that way because its leaders were growing old at their posts, wedded to errors that had once constituted their glory.

Hence the concept of the fixed and continuous front dominated the strategy envisaged for a future action. Organization, doctrine, training, and armament derived from it directly. It was understood that, in case of war, France would mobilize the mass of her reserves and would build up the largest possible number of divisions, designed not for manœuvring, attacking, and exploiting, but for holding sectors. They would be placed in position all along the French and Belgian frontiers—Belgium being then explicitly our ally—and would there await the enemy's offensive.

As for the means: tanks, aircraft, mobile and revolving guns—which the last battles of the First World War had already shown to be capable of effecting surprise and the breakthrough, and whose power had since been growing without cease—were to be used only for reinforcing the line and, at need, restoring it by local counterattacks. The types of weapons were established with this in mind: heavy tanks armed with light, short pieces and intended for escorting infantry, not for rapid, independent action; interceptor aircraft designed for defending areas of sky, beside which the Air Force could muster few bombers and no dive-

bombers; artillery designed to fire from fixed positions with a narrow horizontal field of action, not to push ahead through all sorts of country and fire at all angles. Besides, the front was traced in advance by the works of the Maginot Line, prolonged by the Belgian fortifications. Thus the nation in arms would hold a barrier, behind which it would wait—so it was thought—for the blockade to wear the enemy down and the pressure of the free world to drive him to collapse.

Such a conception of war suited the spirit of the regime. Condemned by governmental weakness and political cleavages to stagnation, it was bound to espouse a static system of this kind. But, in addition, this reassuring panacea corresponded too well to the country's state of mind for anyone desirous of being elected, applauded, or given space in print not to be tempted to approve it. Public opinion did not care for offensives, yielding to the illusion that by making war against war the bellicose would be prevented from making war, remembering many ruinous attacks, and failing to discern the revolution in military strength produced since then by the internal-combustion engine. In short, everything converged to make passivity the very principle of our national defence.

To my mind, such an orientation was as dangerous as could be. I considered that, from the strategic point of view, it handed the initiative over to the enemy, lock, stock, and barrel. From the political point of view, I believe that by proclaiming our intention to keep our armies at the frontier, Germany was being egged on to act against the weak, who were from that moment isolated: the Sarre, the Rhineland, Austria, Czechoslovakia, the Baltic states, Poland, and so on; that Russia was being discouraged from forming any bond with us; and that Italy was being assured that, whatever she might do, we would not impose any limit to her malevolence. Lastly, from the moral point of view, it seemed to me deplorable to make the country believe that war, if it came, ought to consist, for it, in fighting as little as possible.

To tell the truth, the philosophy of action, the inspiration and use of armies by the state, the relations between government and

High Command, had preoccupied me for a long time. I had already laid bare my thinking on these subjects by means of several publications: *La Discorde chez l'ennemi, Le Fil de l'épée,* and a certain number of articles in reviews. I had given lectures in public, at the Sorbonne, for instance, on the conduct of war. But in January 1933 Hitler became master of the Reich. From that moment, things could only move headlong. If no one proposed anything that would meet the situation, I felt myself bound to appeal to public opinion and bring forward my own plan. But as the matter was likely to have consequences, I must expect a day to come when the spotlights of public life would settle on me. It was hard for me to make up my mind to this after twenty-five years spent under military rules.

Under the title *Vers l'armée de métier,*[1] I launched my plan and my ideas. I proposed the creation, as a matter of urgency, of an army of manœuvre and attack, mechanized, armoured, composed of picked men, to be added to the large-scale units supplied by mobilization. In 1933 an article in the *Revue politique et parlementaire* served me as starting point. In the spring of 1934 I brought out the book, which set forth my reasons for and my conception of the instrument it was necessary to construct.

Why? Dealing first with the defence of France, I showed that geography (which canalizes the invasion of our territory through the north and the northeast), the nature of the German people (which inclines it to vast ambitions, attracts it westwards, and marks out as its direction Paris through Belgium), and the character of the French people (which lays it open to surprise at the start of each conflict), imposed on us the need to hold a fraction of our forces always on the alert, ready to deploy in its entirety at any moment. "We cannot," I wrote, "rely on a hasty defensive by uncertain formations to bear the first shock. The moment has come to add to the mass of our reserves and of our recruits, which is the principal element of the national resistance but is slow to

[1] English edition published in 1940 (London and Melbourne: Hutchinson) under the title *The Army of the Future.* (Translator's note.)

gather and cumbrous to set to work, an instrument of manœuvre capable of acting without delay—that is to say, permanent, coherent, and accustomed to arms."

I then argued from technical developments. Since the machine has dominated the military order, as it has everything else, the quality of those who must work the machines used in war has become an essential element in the effectiveness of the equipment. How true this was, above all, for the new weapons—tanks, aircraft, ships—which had been engendered by mechanical power, were being perfected very rapidly and were reviving mobility! I noted: "It is henceforward a fact that on land, on sea, and in the air a carefully chosen personnel, able to get the most out of extremely powerful and varied matériel, possesses a terrible superiority over more or less confused masses." I quoted Paul Valéry: "We shall see the development of enterprises carried out by chosen men, acting in crews and producing, in a few moments, at a time and place unforeseen, shattering results."

Turning to the conditions imposed by politics upon strategy, I observed that the latter could not limit itself to the strict defence of the territory since the former must extend its field of action beyond the frontiers. "Whether we like or not, we form part of a certain established order, all of whose elements are interdependent. . . . What becomes, for example, of Central and Eastern Europe, of Belgium or of the Sarre, touches us vitally. . . . With how much blood and tears did we pay for the error of the Second Empire in letting Sadowa happen without moving the army to the Rhine? . . . We must then be ready to act abroad, at any time, on any occasion. How are we to do so in practice, if in order to undertake anything whatever we have got to mobilize our reserves? . . ." Besides, in the competition which was reviving between Germany and France for military strength, we could not fail to be outdistanced as far as numbers were concerned. On the other hand, "given our gifts of initiative, adaptation, and pride, it depended entirely on us to win the upper hand in quality." I concluded this section on the "Why?" as follows: "A weapon for

preventive and repressive action—that is what we must provide for ourselves."

How? The internal-combustion engine supplied the basis of the answer—"the internal-combustion engine which is ready to carry whatever one wants, wherever it is needed, at all speeds and distances; . . . the internal-combustion engine which, if it is armoured, possesses such a fire power and shock power that the rhythm of the battle corresponds to that of its movements." Going on from there, I fixed the aim to be attained: "Six divisions of the line and one light division, motorized throughout, armoured in part, will constitute the sort of army to bring about decisions."

The way in which this army ought to be composed was laid down clearly. Each of the divisions of the line was to include an armoured brigade of two regiments, one of heavy tanks, the other of medium tanks, and a battalion of light tanks; a brigade of infantry comprising two regiments plus a battalion of chasseurs, all with caterpillared transport; a brigade of artillery, supplied with all-angle guns and formed of two regiments serving respectively short- and long-range pieces, and completed by an anti-aircraft group. To second these three brigades, the division would also have a reconnaissance regiment, a battalion of engineers; a signals battalion; a camouflage battalion, and sundry services. The light division, designed for scouting purposes and to prevent surprise, would be equipped with faster machines. In addition, the army itself would have its own general reserves: tanks and very heavy guns, engineers, signals, camouflage. Finally, a strong force of reconnaissance aircraft, interceptors, and fighters would be integrated with this large corps—a group for each division, a regiment for the whole—without prejudice to the combined operations that would be carried out by the mechanized air army in conjunction with those of the mechanized ground army.

But in order that the army of shock troops might be in a position to get the best possible results out of the complex and costly matériel with which it would be equipped, in order that it might be able to act suddenly, in any theatre, without waiting to be sup-

plemented or learning instead of doing, it would have to be composed of professionals. Total effectives: a hundred thousand men. These troops would therefore be made up of regulars. Serving for six years in the crack corps, they would be moulded in that time by technical skill, emulation, and *esprit de corps*. They would later supply cadres to the *contingents* and reserves.

After this came a description of how this strategic battering ram was to be used to break down a well-established resistance. Positions taken up without warning, in a single night, this being made possible by the motorization of all elements, by their ability to move in any sort of country, and by the use of active and passive camouflage. Attack launched by three thousand tanks, disposed in several echelons on an average front of fifty kilometres, followed and supported closely by the decentralized artillery, and rejoined at the successive objectives by the infantry, who would be transported together with their means of fire power and of ground organization, the whole being articulated in two or three *corps d'armée* and kept informed and sustained by the air force belonging to the divisions and to the army. Rate of advance of the whole system attaining normally about fifty kilometres in a day's fighting. After which, and if the enemy was still putting up a continuous resistance, a general regrouping, with a view either to enlarging the breach laterally, or to resuming the effort to advance, or to holding the ground gained.

But the wall once pierced, larger possibilities might suddenly lie open. The mechanized army would then deploy fanwise to exploit its gains. On this subject I wrote: "Often, after a success, we shall rush to gather its fruits and to thrust out into the zone of prizes. We shall see the exploitation of gains become a reality, where formerly it was only a dream. . . . Then will lie open the road to great victories, to those victories which, by their deep and rapidly extended effects, lead to a general collapse among the enemy, as the smashing of a pillar sometimes brings down a cathedral. . . . We shall see fast troops range far and wide in the enemy's rear, strike at his vital points, throw his dispositions into confusion. . . .

Thus will be restored that strategic extension of tactical results which once used to constitute the supreme end and, as it were, the nobility of the art. . . ." But the hostile people and state might, when their distress and the annihilation of their apparatus of defence reached a certain point, themselves collapse.

All the more so, and the more quickly, since "this aptitude for surprise and for the breakthrough harmonized perfectly with the properties, from now on vital, of air forces." I pictured the air army preparing and prolonging by its bombardments the operations carried out on the ground by the mechanized army and, vice versa, the latter conferring an immediate strategic utility upon the destructive actions of the air squadrons by erupting into the zones just ravaged.

So profound an evolution of the art made necessary a similar evolution of the command. After bringing out the fact that henceforward radio communications would provide the means of binding together the elements of the army of the future, I ended the work by showing what methods the Command must employ in order to handle the new instrument. It would no longer be the job of leaders to direct, by anonymous orders, from dug-in posts, a distant human matériel. On the contrary, to be there, see for oneself and set an example, would become once again essential in the midst of that shifting drama, filled with unforeseen hazards and split-second opportunities, which the warfare of mechanized forces would be. The personality of the leader would be much more important than codified recipes. "If," I asked, "evolution were destined thus to favour the rise of those who, in the tragic hours when the storm sweeps away conventions and habits, are the only ones to remain on their feet and to be, therefore, necessary, would not that be all to the good?"

In conclusion, I appealed to the state. The Army, no more than any other body, would in practice transform itself unaided. Since the specialized corps was bound to bring with it profound changes in military ways, as well as in the technique and politics of warfare, it was to the government that the burden of creating it fell.

To be sure, there would be need, once again, of a Louvois or a Carnot. At the same time such a reform could be only one part of a whole, one element in the effort towards a renovation of the country. "But in the fact that this national recasting must begin with the Army there would be nothing that would not be in harmony with the natural order of things. In that case, in the hard toil which is needed to rejuvenate France, her Army will serve her as stand-by and as ferment. For the sword is the axis of the world, and greatness is not divisible."

In working out this comprehensive project I had naturally made use of the lines of thought already set going, all over the world, by the appearance of the fighting internal-combustion engine. General Estienne, apostle and first Inspector of Tanks, envisaged, as early as 1917, bringing a good number of them into action at a great distance in advance of those escorting the infantry. That was why, at the end of 1918, enormous machines weighing sixty tons were beginning to come from the factories. But the armistice stopped their manufacture and confined the theory within the formula of the concerted action completing the escorting action. The British, who had shown themselves pioneers by engaging the Royal Tank Corps at Cambrai in 1917 in a massive action of deep penetration, continued to keep alive the idea of the autonomous operation by armoured detachments—an idea whose advocates were General Fuller and Captain Liddell Hart. In France, in 1933, the High Command brought together some scattered elements at Suippes camp and put to the test an embryo light division for preventing surprise and for scouting.

Others had even larger views. General von Seeckt, in his work *Thoughts of a Soldier,*[2] which appeared in 1929, depicted the possibilities which an army of quality (meaning the Reichswehr with a hundred thousand men on long-term service) had as opposed to masses without cohesion—he was thinking of those of the French. The Italian general Douhet, calculating the effects

[2] English version by Gilbert Waterhouse, with introduction by General Sir Ian Hamilton (London: Ernest Benn, 1930). (Translator's note.)

which bombardments from the air could produce on the centres of industry and life, estimated that an air army could win a decision unaided. Lastly, the "Maximum Plan," advocated at Geneva by M. Paul-Boncour in 1932, proposed placing under the League of Nations a professional force, which would have disposal of all the tanks and all the aircraft in Europe and would be charged with maintaining collective security. My plan aimed at building into a single whole, and for the benefit of France, these fragmentary but converging views.

My book aroused interest at first, but no deep feeling. As long as *Vers l'armée de métier* seemed to be merely a book that set going some ideas of which the hierarchy would make what use it chose, people were willing to see in it an original theory. It entered nobody's head that our military organization might be modified in consequence. If I had felt that there was no hurry, I would indeed have been content to advocate my thesis in specialist circles, sure that, with evolution on their side, my arguments would make their way. But Hitler was not the man to wait.

In October 1933 he broke with the League of Nations and automatically assumed his freedom of action in the matter of armaments. The years 1934 and 1935 saw the Reich deploy an immense effort in manufacture and in recruitment. The National-Socialist regime made no secret of its determination to smash the Treaty of Versailles by conquering its "Lebensraum." For this policy an offensive military machine was necessary. Hitler was, to be sure, preparing the *levée en masse.* Not long after gaining power he instituted labour service and, later, conscription. But in addition he needed a means of intervention in order to cut the Gordian knots at Mainz, Vienna, Prague, and Warsaw, and in order that the Germanic lance, when given a sharp point, might be capable of piercing at one stroke to the heart of France.

The well-informed, indeed, were not unaware that the Führer intended to stamp his mark upon the new German Army; that he listened gladly to the officers formerly grouped around General von Seeckt, such as Keitel, Rundstedt, and Guderian, who were

partisans of manœuvre, speed, and quality, and therefore was attracted towards mechanized forces; and finally that, adopting the theories of Göring, he wanted an air force whose action could be directly linked with the battle on the ground. I was soon told that he himself had had my book read to him, since his advisers attached importance to it. In November 1934 it was learned that the Reich was creating the first three Panzer divisions. A book published at that time by Colonel Nehring of the General Staff of the Wehrmacht specified that their composition would be, practically speaking, identical with that which I was suggesting for our armoured divisions of the future. In March 1935 Göring announced that the Reich was providing itself with a powerful air force, and that this would include, besides many interceptors, numerous bombers and a strong force of divebombers. And indeed, although these measures were so many flagrant violations of the treaties, the free world was content to oppose to them a platonic protest from the League of Nations.

I could not bear to see the enemy of tomorrow endowing himself with the means of victory while France was still without them. And yet, in the incredible apathy in which the nation was plunged, no voice in authority was lifted to demand the required action. The stake was so great that it did not seem to me permissible to maintain my reserve, slight as were my importance and my fame. Responsibility for national defence belonged to the government. I resolved to carry the debate there.

I began by allying myself with André Pironneau, news editor of the *Echo de Paris,* and then editor of *l'Epoque.* He made it his task to make known the plan for a mechanized army and to keep the authorities on the move by the goad of a great newspaper. Tying his campaign up with the news, André Pironneau published forty main articles which made the subject familiar. Every time events turned the attention of the public towards national defence, my friendly helper demonstrated in his paper the need for creating the specialized corps. Since it was known that Germany was concentrating the essential part of her armaments effort towards the

engines of attack and of follow-up, Pironneau uttered cries of alarm—but they were obstinately stifled by the general indifference. He proved, twenty times over, that the German armoured mass, supported by the air force, could quickly demolish our defences and produce among our population a panic from which it would not recover.

While André Pironneau was doing his good work, other journalists and critics were at least raising the question. Such were Rémy Roure and General Baratier in *Le Temps,* Pierre Bourget and Generals de Cugnac and Duval in the *Journal des Débats,* Emile Buré and Charles Giron in *L'Ordre,* André Lecomte in *L'Aube,* Colonel Emile Mayer, Lucien Nachin, and Jean Auburtin in various reviews, and so on. Nevertheless the established order of things and ideas was too compact to be affected merely by articles in the press. The political rulers of the country had to be made aware of the problem.

M. Paul Reynaud seemed to be pre-eminently marked out for this undertaking. His intelligence was fully capable of absorbing the arguments; his talent, of putting them effectively; his courage, of fighting them through. In addition, though already an established figure, M. Paul Reynaud gave the impression of being a man who had his future in front of him. I saw him, convinced him, and from then on worked with him.

At the tribune of the Chambre des Députés, on March 15, 1935, he made an arresting speech, showing why and how our military organization must be completed by a mechanized army of quality. Not long afterwards, when the government asked Parliament to vote the two years' service, M. Paul Reynaud, while agreeing to this, submitted a bill for "the immediate creation of a specialized corps of six divisions of the line, one light division, and general reserves and services, formed of regulars, and to be brought completely up to strength by April 15, 1940, at the latest." During the next three years M. Paul Reynaud affirmed his position in several speeches, which stirred the parliamentary dough profoundly, in a book called *Le problème militaire français,* in vigor-

ous articles and interviews, and finally by conversations on the subject with important politicians and military men. He thus took on the appearance of an innovating and resolute statesman, marked out by nature for the exercise of power in case of serious difficulties.

As I thought it good that the melody should be played on various instruments, I applied myself to drawing other public men in. M. Le Cour Grandmaison, attracted by the aspects of a professional army—which answered to our traditions—nobly made himself its apostle. Three left-wing deputies—Philippe Serre, Marcel Déat, and Léo LaGrange, whose talent was of the right kind for throwing into relief the revolutionary aspect of the new proposal—agreed to join us. The first did so in fact, and with such brilliance that he gained recognition as a great orator and shortly afterwards entered the government. The second, the one on whose gifts I counted most, was seduced into an opposite course after his failure in the 1936 election. The third was prevented, by the party of which he was a member, from stating his conviction. But soon men as considerable as M. Paul-Boncour in the Chambre and President Millerand in the Senate gave me to understand that they too were in favour of the reform.

Meanwhile, however, the official bodies and their unofficial supporters, rather than recognize obvious necessities and accept the change subject to modification of its formula and application, clung to the system in force. Unfortunately they did so in so categorical a manner that they closed against themselves the way towards learning better. To fight the idea of the mechanized army they set to work to misrepresent it. To fly in the face of technical development they busied themselves denying it. To resist events they affected to be unaware of them. I verified, on this occasion, that the clash of ideas, as soon as it involves the established errors and the men in office, assumes the uncompromising mood of theological dispute.

General Debeney, a glorious army commander in the First World War, who in 1927, in his capacity as Chief of the General

Staff, had worked out the laws dealing with military organization, condemned the project formally. In the *Revue des Deux Mondes* he explained authoritatively that any European conflict would have its decisive phase on our northeast frontier, and that the problem consisted in holding this solidly. He therefore saw nothing to change either in the laws or in practice, and merely insisted that the system resulting from them should be reinforced. General Weygand intervened in his turn, likewise in the *Revue des Deux Mondes*. Admitting, a priori, that my idea would separate the army into two portions: "Two armies—not at any price!" he protested. As for the function I assigned to the specialized corps, he did not deny its interest but stated that it could be fulfilled by elements already formed. "We have," he explained, "a mechanized, motorized, and mounted reserve. There is nothing to create, everything exists." On July 4, 1939, speaking in public at Lille, General Weygand was to proclaim yet again that we lacked nothing.

Marshal Pétain thought it right to join in. He did so in a preface to General Chauvineau's book, *Une invasion est-elle encore possible?* The Marshal there claimed that tanks and aircraft did not modify the basic factors of warfare, and that the principal element of French security was the continuous front buttressed by fortification. *Le Figaro* published, under the signature of Jean Rivière, a series of inspired and reassuring articles: "Tanks Are Not Invincible," "The Weakness of the Tanks," "When the Politicians Go Wrong," and so on. In the *Mercure de France* a French general who hid his identity under a signature consisting of three stars rejected even the principle of motorization. "The Germans," he declared, "being naturally aggressive, must naturally have Panzer divisions. But France, being pacific and defensive, is bound to be anti-motorization."

Other critics had recourse to ridicule. The critic of one of the big literary reviews wrote: "One is hard put to it to assess, with the courtesy one would wish, ideas which touch the fringe of delirium. Let us simply say that Monsieur de Gaulle was anticipated,

some years ago, by the Père Ubu, who was likewise a great tactician with modern ideas. 'When we are back from Poland,' he used to say, 'we will imagine, with the aid of our physical science, a wind machine for transporting the whole army.' "

If the conventionality of the conservative elements came out in fundamental hostility, that of the party of progress was no better disposed. In *Le Populaire,* during November and December 1934, Léon Blum expressed uncompromisingly the aversion and uneasiness inspired in him by the plan. In several articles—"Professional Soldiers and Professional Army," "Towards a Professional Army?" "Down with the Professional Army!"—he too took his stand against the specialized corps. He did so not on grounds of national defence, but in the name of an ideology which he styled democratic and republican and which was traditionally determined to see in everything military a menace to the regime. Léon Blum pronounced the anathema, therefore, against a body of professionals whose composition, spirit, and weapons would, if he was to be believed, automatically endanger the republic.

Thus buttressed to right and left, the official bodies set their faces against all change. M. Paul Reynaud's plan was rejected by the Army Committee of the Chambre. The report on this subject, presented by M. Senac and drawn up with the cooperation of the Army General Staff, concluded that the proposed reform "was useless, undesirable, and had logic and history against it." At the tribune of the Assemblée, General Maurin, Minister for War, said in answer to the orators who favoured the corps of manœuvre: "When we have devoted so many efforts to building up a fortified barrier, is it conceivable that we would be mad enough to go ahead of this barrier, into I know not what adventure?" He added: "What I have just told you is the government's view, and it, at least in my person, is perfectly familiar with the war plan." These words, which settled the fate of the specialized corps, at the same time let those in Europe who had ears to hear know in advance that, whatever happened, France would undertake nothing beyond manning the Maginot Line.

As could be foreseen, ministerial reprobation extended to me personally. Nonetheless this happened in episodic bursts, not by condemnation in due form. Thus it was that at the Elysée, at the end of a meeting of the Conseil Supérieur de la Défense Nationale, whose secretary I was, General Maurin addressed me sharply: "Good-bye, de Gaulle! Where I am there's no place for you!" In his office he would shout at visitors who mentioned me: "He has got himself a tame writer—Pironneau—and a gramophone—Paul Reynaud. I shall send him to Corsica!" While making the thunder rumble, however, General Maurin had the magnanimity not to launch the thunderbolt. Shortly afterwards M. Fabry, who replaced him at the Rue Saint-Dominique, and General Gamelin, who succeeded General Weygand as Chief of the General Staff while remaining head of the Army staff, adopted the negative policy of their predecessors towards the scheme and the same embarrassed and irritated attitude towards me.

At bottom the men in office, although they maintained the *status quo,* could not help being secretly sensitive to my arguments. They were, indeed, too well aware of what was going on to believe entirely in their own objections. When they declared exaggerated the ideas I was spreading about what a mechanized force could do, they were nevertheless uneasy about the one the Reich was forging for itself. When they pretended to supply the place of the seven shock divisions by as many large-scale ordinary units of the defensive type, and when they called these "motorized" because they would be transported in lorries, they knew, better than anyone, that that was only a play upon words. When they alleged that by adopting the specialized corps we would be cutting our army in two, they were affecting not to recognize that the two years' service, which had been voted since my book had come out, made it possible, if need be, to introduce into the *corps d'élite* a certain proportion of soldiers from the contingents; that there already existed a navy, an air force, a Colonial army, an Africa army, a police force, and a *garde mobile,* which were specialized without the cohesion of the whole having suffered damage; and,

finally, that what makes the unity of the various national forces is not the identity of their equipment and of their recruitment, but the fact of serving the same country, under the same laws, and under the same flag.

It made me sad, therefore, to see those eminent men, in virtue of a sort of upside-down loyalty, constitute themselves not exactly guides but reassuring spokesmen. Nevertheless, beneath their apparent conviction, I could feel their wistfulness for the horizons now open to them. This was the first episode in a long series of events, in which a part of the French *élite*, condemning all the ends I would be led to pursue, and yet, deep down in itself, miserable at remaining ineffective, was to grant me, beyond its strictures, the melancholy homage of its remorse.

Destiny followed its course. Hitler, knowing now what to expect from us, opened his series of *coups de force*. Already, in 1935, over the Sarre plebiscite, he had created an atmosphere so menacing that the French government threw in its hand before playing it, and then the people of the Sarre, attracted and intimidated by the Germanic fury, voted in a body for the Third Reich. Mussolini, on his side, braving the Geneva sanctions—thanks to the Laval government's support and the Baldwin Cabinet's tolerance—moved on to the conquest of Ethiopia. Suddenly, on March 7, 1936, the German army crossed the Rhine.

The Versailles treaty forbade the troops of the Reich access to the territories on the left bank, which the Locarno agreement had, in addition, neutralized. In strict law, we could reoccupy them as soon as Germany repudiated her signature. If the specialized corps had existed even in part, with its fast machines and its personnel ready to march on the instant, the natural force of things would have at once directed it to the Rhine. As our allies, Poles, Czechs, and Belgians were ready to support us and since the British were committed in advance, Hilter would certainly have drawn back. He was, in fact, at the beginning of his rearmament effort and still in no condition to face a general conflict. But such a check, inflicted by France at this period, on this ground, could have disastrous consequences for him in his own country. By such a gamble he could have, at one go, lost everything.

He won everything. Our organization, the nature of our armaments, the very spirit of our national defence, tempted to inaction an administration which had all too much tendency that way and prevented us from marching. Because we were ready only to hold our frontier and had imposed on ourselves a self-denying ordinance against crossing it in any case, there was no riposte to be expected from France. The Führer was sure of this. The whole world took note of the fact. The Reich, instead of finding itself compelled to withdraw the troops it had adventured, established them without a blow in the whole of the Rhineland territory, in direct contact with France and Belgium. After that, M. Flandin, Minister for Foreign Affairs, could indeed travel to London with bleeding heart to inform himself of England's intention; M. Sarraut, the Premier, could indeed declare that the Paris government "would not admit that Strasbourg should be within range of German guns"; French diplomacy could indeed obtain a theoretical censure of Hitler from the League of Nations: these were only gestures and words in face of the accomplished fact.

To my way of thinking, the emotion aroused by the event could be salutary. The authorities had a chance to use it with a view to filling some deadly gaps. Although people in France were absorbed by the elections and by the social crisis which followed them, everyone was agreed on the need to reinforce the country's defences. If the effort were concentrated upon the creation of the instrument we lacked, what was essential might be saved. Nothing of the kind occurred. The considerable military credits which were opened in 1936 were used to complete the existing system, not to modify it. . .

I had some hope, all the same. In the great unrest which then agitated the nation and was canalized politically in an electoral and parliamentary coalition known as the Popular Front, there was, it seemed to me, the psychological factor which made it possible to break with passivity. . .

CHAPTER 2

THE FALL

IT WAS DURING the night of June 5-6 that M. Paul Reynaud, in reshuffling his government, brought me in as Undersecretary of State for National Defence. I was told the news in the morning by General Delestraint, Inspector of Tanks, who had heard it broadcast. A few moments later an official telegram brought me confirmation of it. After saying good-bye to my division, I set off for Paris.

When I arrived at the Rue Saint-Dominique I saw the Premier. He was, as usual, assured, lively, incisive, ready to listen, quick to make up his mind. He explained to me why he had thought it necessary, some days earlier, to take Marshal Pétain into his cabinet, when neither of us had any doubt that he was the screen for those who desired an armistice. "It's better," said Paul Reynaud, using the customary formula, "to have him inside than out."

"I'm afraid," I answered, "you may be forced to change your opinion. All the more so since events are now going to move very fast, and defeatism may easily submerge everything. The disproportion between our forces and the Germans' is so great that, barring a miracle, we have no longer any chance of winning in Metropolitan France, or even of holding there. Besides, the High Command has been overwhelmed by surprise and will not pull

itself together. Lastly, you know better than anyone with what an atmosphere of abandon the government is surrounded. The Marshal and those behind him are going to have things their way from now on. At the same time, if the war of '40 is lost, we can win another. Without giving up the fight on European soil as long as it is possible, we must decide on and prepare for the continuation of the struggle in the Empire. That implies a policy to fit: the transport of resources to North Africa, the choice of leaders qualified to direct the operations, and the maintenance of close relations with the British, whatever grievances we may have against them. I propose to you that I should deal with the measures to be taken for the purpose."

M. Paul Reynaud gave me his consent. "I want you," he added, "to go to London as soon as possible. In the interviews I had on May 26 and 31 with the British government, I was able to make them realize that we were not excluding the possibility of an armistice. But now what is needed is, on the contrary, to convince the English that we will hold out, whatever happens, even overseas if necessary. You will see Mr. Churchill and you will tell him that the reshuffling of my Cabinet and your presence by my side are the signs of our resolution."

Apart from this general message, I was to do, in London, what I could, in my turn, to get the Royal Air Force—particularly the fighter aircraft—to continue to take part in the operations in France. Lastly, I was to ask, as the Premier had already done, for information about the time it would take to rearm the British units that had escaped from the Dunkerque disaster and to send them back to the Continent. The answer to these two questions involved technical data, which the staffs were competent to supply, but also decisions depending on Mr. Winston Churchill in his capacity as Minister of Defence.

While the liaison bodies were arranging for the meetings I was to have in the British capital, I went on June 8 to make contact with General Weygand at the Château de Montry. I found the Commander-in-Chief calm and master of himself. But a few moments of conversation were enough to make me realize that he was resigned to defeat and resolved upon an armistice. Here, almost word for word, is our dialogue, whose terms have—with good reason!—remained engraved on my mind.

"You see," the Commander-in-Chief said, "I was not mistaken when I told you, a few days ago, that the Germans would attack on the Somme on June 6. They are in fact attacking. At this moment they are crossing the river. I can't stop them."

"All right! They're crossing the Somme. And then?"

"Then? The Seine and the Marne."

"Yes. And then?"

"Then? But that's the end!"

"How do you mean? The end? And the world? And the Empire?"

General Weygand gave a despairing laugh. "The Empire? But that's childish! As for the world, when I've been beaten here, England won't wait a week before negotiating with the Reich."

And, looking me in the eyes, the Commander-in-Chief added, "Ah! if only I were sure the Germans would leave me the forces necessary for maintaining order!"

Discussion would have been useless. I left, after telling General Weygand that his way of looking at things was the opposite of the government's intentions. The government would not give up the struggle even if the battles went badly. He made no fresh observation and was most courteous when I took my leave.

Before starting back to Paris I chatted for some time with acquaintances of mine among the officers from various staffs who had come that morning to a conference with General Weygand. They confirmed my impression that in the upper echelons of the Command the game was considered lost and that everyone, while carrying out his duties mechanically, was suggesting in whispers, and would soon be proposing out loud, that an end be put, somehow or other, to the Battle of France. To steer men's minds and courage towards the continuation of the war in the Empire, a categorical intervention by the government was immediately necessary.

I stated this, as soon as I got back, to M. Paul Reynaud and urged him to take away the command from General Weygand, who had given up trying to win. "It's impossible for the moment," the Premier replied. "But we must think of a successor. What's your view?"

"As regards a successor," I said, "the only one I can see now is Huntziger. Although he is not ideal, he is capable, in my opinion, of rising to the level of a world strategy."

M. Paul Reynaud approved my suggestion in principle but was not, all the same, willing to put it into practice at once.

Resolved, however, to raise the question again, and soon, I harnessed myself to work out the plan for transporting all possible units to North Africa. Already the Army General Staff, in liaison with the Navy and the Air Force, had begun preparing the evacuation of everything not engaged in the battle to the other side of the Mediterranean. This meant, in particular, the two classes of recruits who were being trained in the depots of the west and south of France and those fractions of the personnel of the mechanized forces which had managed to escape from the disaster in the north; in all, five hundred thousand men of good quality. Later, as the debris of our armies was driven back towards the coasts, many fighting elements could no doubt be embarked. In any case, the remains of the bomber air force, the range of whose machines would enable them to cross the sea, the survivors of the fighter groups, the ground staff, the men at the naval bases, and finally and above all our fleet itself, would have to stand out for Africa. The Navy, whose job it was to carry out this transportation, estimated at five hundred thousand tons the extra merchant shipping required in addition to the French vessels already at its disposal. It was England that would have to be asked for this assistance.

Early on June 9 an airplane took me to London. I had with me my aide-de-camp, Geoffroy de Courcel, and M. Roland de Margerie, the Premier's *chef du cabinet diplomatique*. It was Sunday. The English capital had a look of tranquillity, almost indifference. The streets and parks full of people peacefully out for a walk, the long queues at the entrances to the cinemas, the many cars, the impressive porters outside the clubs and hotels, belonged to another world than the one at war. Certainly the newspapers allowed the real situation to pierce through, in spite of the diluted news and puerile anecdotes with which, as in Paris, semi-official optimism filled them. Certainly the notices people were reading, the digging of shelters, the carrying of masks, suggested the great dangers in the offing. Nonetheless it was obvious that the mass of the population had no idea of the gravity of events in France, so fast had been their pace. It was plain, in any case, that to English feelings the Channel was still wide.

Mr. Churchill received me at Downing Street. It was my first contact with him. The impression he gave me confirmed me in my conviction that Great Britain, led by such a fighter, would certainly not flinch. Mr. Churchill seemed to me to be equal to the rudest task, provided it had also grandeur. The assurance of his judgment, his great culture, the knowledge he had of most of the subjects, countries, and men involved, and finally his passion for the problems proper to war, found in war their full scope. On top of everything, he was fitted by his character to act, take risks, play the part out-and-out and without scruple. In short, I found him well in the saddle as guide and chief. Such were my first impressions.

What followed only confirmed them and revealed to me, in addition, the eloquence which was Mr. Churchill's own and the use he knew how to make of it. Whatever his audience—crowd, assembly, council, even a single interlocutor—whether he was before a microphone, on the floor of the House, at table, or behind a desk, the original, poetic, stirring flow of his ideas, arguments, and feelings brought him an almost infallible ascendancy in the tragic atmosphere in which the poor world was gasping. Well tried in politics, he played upon that angelic and diabolical gift to rouse the heavy dough of the English as well as to impress the minds of foreigners. The humour, too, with which he seasoned

his acts and words, and the way in which he made use now of graciousness, now of anger, contributed to make one feel what a mastery he had of the terrible game in which he was engaged.

The harsh and painful incidents that often arose between us, because of the friction of our two characters, of the opposition of some of the interests of our two countries, and of the unfair advantage taken by England of wounded France, have influenced my attitude towards the Prime Minister, but not my judgment. Winston Churchill appeared to me, from one end of the drama to the other, as the great champion of a great enterprise and the great artist of a great history.

That day I explained to the British Prime Minister what the French Premier had instructed me to tell him as regards our government's will to continue the struggle even, if need be, in the Empire. Mr. Churchill showed the lively satisfaction which this determination gave him. But would it be carried out? He left me with the impression that he was not convinced. In any case, he no longer believed in the possibility of a re-establishment of the front in Metropolitan France, and he made this clear to me by refusing categorically the assistance of his air force.

Since the re-embarkation of the British army at Dunkerque, the Royal Air Force had no longer been cooperating in the battle, save in an episodic fashion. Indeed, with the exception of a fighter group which still followed the fortunes of our Air Force, the British squadrons, being based in Great Britain, were too far away to be of use to a front continually withdrawing southwards. To my pressing request that he should transfer at least a part of the British army cooperation air force to the airdromes south of the Loire, Mr. Churchill gave a formal refusal. As for the land forces, he promised to send to Normandy a Canadian division, which was arriving from its country, and to keep with us the 51st Scottish Division as well as the debris of the mechanized brigade which was still fighting at our side. But he stated that he could not indicate, even approximately, towards what date the expeditionary corps, which had just escaped destruction in Belgium—but had

left there its equipment—would be able to return to the battle.

So, therefore, strategic unity between London and Paris was practically broken. A reverse on the Continent had been enough to make Great Britain desire to absorb herself in her own defence. That meant the success of the Germanic plan, of which Schlieffen, beyond death, was still the inspiration and which, after the German failures in 1914 and 1918, was at last achieving its object—to separate the French and British forces and, simultaneously, to divide France and England. It was only too easy to imagine what conclusions would be drawn by defeatists at home.

Apart from this interview with Mr. Churchill, I had made contact the same day with Mr. Eden, Minister of War, Mr. Alexander, First Lord of the Admiralty, Sir Archibald Sinclair, Air Minister, and General Sir John Dill, Chief of the Imperial General Staff. I had also conferred with M. Corbin, our ambassador, M. Monnet, "chairman" of the Franco-British committee for the coordination of purchases of war matériel, and the heads of our military, naval, and air missions. It was clear that in London, if calm reigned over the crowd, the minds of the well-informed were, on the contrary, filled with forebodings of disaster and doubt as to the firmness of the French government. In the evening the airplane took me uneasily back to Le Bourget, whose airdrome had just been bombarded.

During the night of June 9-10, M. Paul Reynaud had me summoned to his home. Grave information had just reached him. The enemy had reached the Seine below Paris. In addition, everything suggested that, at any moment, the German armoured forces would pass to the decisive attack in Champagne. The capital was therefore immediately threatened from the west, east, and north. Lastly, M. François-Poncet announced that he was expecting at any moment to receive from the Italian government its declaration of war. In face of these bad tidings, I had only one suggestion to make: to take the line of maximum effort and go as soon as possible to Africa, and embrace, with all its consequences, a war of coalition.

In the few fractions of day and night which I spent at the Rue Saint-Dominique, I found only too many reasons to reinforce my conviction that there was nothing else to be done. Things were going too fast for it to be possible to regain control of them there. Every scheme at once took on a character of unreality. Recourse was had to precedents from the 1914–18 war, which no longer applied at all. The pretence was made of thinking that there was still a front, an active Command, a people ready for sacrifices; those were only dreams and memories. In fact, in the midst of a prostrate and stupefied nation, behind an Army without faith and without hope, the machine of government was turning in irremediable confusion.

Nothing made me feel this more clearly than the rapid formal visits I paid to the principal figures of the republic: first, President Lebrun, to whom I was presented together with the new Ministers, then the Presidents of the Assemblies, and finally the members of the government. All made a show of calm and dignity. But it was clear that, in the setting where custom placed them, they were now only supers. In the middle of the cyclone, the Cabinet meetings—instructions being sent down, reports being sent up—public statements, and the procession of officers, civil servants, diplomats, members of Parliament, and journalists—all with something to report on or to ask—gave the impression of a sort of phantasmagoria without aim or effect. On the assumptions and in the surroundings where we were now engaged, there was no way out except capitulation. Unless we resigned ourselves to that—as some were already doing, and those not nonentities—we must at all costs change our surroundings and assumptions. The so-called "Marne recovery" was possible, but on the Mediterranean.

June 10 was a day of agony. The government was to leave Paris that evening. The retreat of the front was accelerating. Italy was declaring war. The obvious fact of collapse was now borne in on all minds. But at the top of the state the tragedy was being played through as though in a dream. At certain moments one might even have thought that a sort of terrible humour was seasoning the fall of France, as she rolled from the crest of history down to the deepest hollow of the abyss.

So it was that, that morning, the Italian ambassador, M. Guariglia, came to the Rue Saint-Dominique on a somewhat strange visit. He was received by Baudouin, who reported what the diplomat said as follows: "You will see that the declaration of war will in the end clarify relations between our two countries! It creates a situation from which, when all is said and done, much good will come. . . ."

Shortly afterwards, when I went to see M. Paul Reynaud, I found Mr. William Bullitt there. I supposed that the United States ambassador was bringing some encouragement for the future from Washington. But no! He had come to say good-bye. The ambassador was remaining in Paris with the intention of intervening, if need be, to protect the capital. But, praiseworthy as was the motive which inspired Mr. Bullitt, the fact remained that during the supreme days of crisis there would be no American ambassador to the French government. The presence of Mr. A. J. Drexel Biddle, responsible for relations with the refugee governments, would not, whatever the qualities of this excellent diplomat, remove the impression on our officials that the United States no longer had much use for France.

However, as M. Paul Reynaud was hastily preparing a statement which he was to broadcast and on which he was consulting me, General Weygand arrived at the Rue Saint-Dominique. Hardly had he been announced when he burst into the Premier's office. When the Premier expressed some astonishment, the Commander-in-Chief answered that he had been sent for. "Not by me!" said M. Paul Reynaud. "Nor by me!" I added. "Then it's a misunderstanding!" General Weygand went on. "But the mistake is a useful one, for I have something important to say." He sat down and began to explain the situation as he saw it. His conclusion was obvious. We must, without delay, ask for an armistice. "Things have reached the point," he declared, laying a document on the table, "where everyone's responsibilities must be clearly estab-

lished. That's why I have put my opinion on paper and am handing you this note."

The Premier, though hard pressed by the necessity of very soon delivering the broadcast which had been announced, decided to dispute the generalissimo's opinion. The latter gave no ground. The battle in Metropolitan France was lost. We must capitulate.

"But there are other prospects," I said at one point.

General Weygand said mockingly, "Have you something to suggest?"

"The government," I replied, "has not suggestions to make, but orders to give. I am sure it will give them."

In the end M. Paul Reynaud showed the Commander-in-Chief out, and we separated in a most heavy atmosphere.

The last hours of the government's presence in the capital were filled with the arrangements which such an exodus involved. It was true that many things had been prepared under a withdrawal plan worked out by the Sécretariat Général de la Défense Nationale. But there remained all the unforeseen factors. At the same time the imminent arrival of the Germans beneath the walls of Paris raised cruel problems. I myself, as soon as I took up my post, had advocated that the capital should be defended and had asked the Prime Minister, as Minister of National Defence and for War, to appoint a resolute leader as governor for this purpose. I suggested General de Lattre, who had just distinguished himself at the head of a division in the fighting round about Rethel. But soon afterwards the Commander-in-Chief declared Paris an "open city," and the Cabinet approved this. Nonetheless it was necessary to organize, quite suddenly, the evacuation of a mass of things and a crowd of people. I worked at this till evening, while everywhere cases were being packed, last-minute visitors filled the building from top to bottom with rumour, and desperate telephones rang without cease.

Towards midnight M. Paul Reynaud and I got into the same car. The journey was slow, along a crammed road. At dawn we were at Orléans and went into the prefecture, where contact was

made by telephone with GHQ, now being set up at Briare. Shortly afterwards General Weygand rang up and asked to speak to the Premier. He took up the telephone and, to his great surprise, was told that Mr. Winston Churchill would be arriving that afternoon. The Commander-in-Chief, through military liaison channels, had begged him to come urgently to Briare.

"Mr. Churchill must, indeed," added General Weygand, "be directly informed about the real situation at the front."

"What?" I said to the head of the government. "Are you allowing the generalissimo to invite the British Prime Minister like this, on his own authority? Don't you see that General Weygand is pursuing, not a plan of operations at all, but a policy, and that it is not yours? Is the government going to leave him still in command?"

"You are right!" answered M. Paul Reynaud. "This situation must cease. We spoke of General Huntziger as a possible successor to General Weygand. Let's go at once and see Huntziger!"

But when the cars came up, the Premier told me, "Thinking it over, it's better that you should go alone to see Huntziger. I shall prepare for these interviews with Churchill and the English. We will meet again at Briare."

I found General Huntziger, who was in command of the centre group of armies, at Arcis-sur-Aube, his command post. At that very moment this group of armies was being attacked and broken through on the Champagne front by Guderian's armoured corps. Nonetheless I was struck by Huntziger's coolness. He informed me of the bad situation he was in. I gave him an up-to-date picture of affairs as a whole. In conclusion I said, "The government sees plainly that the Battle of France is virtually lost, but it means to continue the war by transporting itself to Africa with all the resources that can be got across. That implies a complete change in strategy and in organization. The present generalissimo is not the man to be able to carry it out. Would you be the man?"

"Yes!" answered Huntziger simply.

"Well! You will be receiving the government's instructions." . . .

As for the question of the transports, I found the British sincerely anxious to strengthen our means of getting our troops away and protecting the convoys; the machinery for carrying this out was being set up by the Admiralty in liaison with our naval mission under Admiral Odend'hal. But there was evidently little belief in London that official France would pull itself together. The contacts I made showed that the measures contemplated by our allies in the various fields were based on the assumption of our imminent renunciation of the struggle. Over and above everything the fate of our Navy literally haunted their minds. During these tragic hours every Frenchman could feel weighing on him the mute or explicit question from every Englishman he met: "What is going to become of your fleet?"

The British Prime Minister also was thinking of that when I came, with M. Corbin and M. Monnet, to lunch with him at the Carlton Club. "Whatever happens," I said to him, "the French fleet will not be willingly surrendered. Pétain himself would not consent to that. Besides, the fleet is Darlan's fief. A feudal lord does not surrender his fief. But for it to be possible to be sure that the enemy will never lay hands on our ships, it would be necessary for us to remain at war. Well, I am obliged to tell you that your attitude at Tours came as an unpleasant surprise to me. You appeared there to attach little value to our alliance. Your attitude of resignation plays into the hands of those among us who favour capitulation. 'You can see perfectly well we have no choice,' they say. 'The British themselves are giving us their consent.' No! What you have to do to encourage us in the frightful crisis in which we are is something quite different."

Mr. Churchill seemed disturbed. He conferred for a moment with Major Morton, his private secretary. I supposed that he was making, *in extremis,* the necessary arrangements to modify a decision already taken. Perhaps that was the cause of the fact that at Bordeaux, half an hour later, the British ambassador came and withdrew from M. Paul Reynaud's hands the note he had brought him in which the British government consented in principle to France's asking Germany what would be the terms of an armistice if it came to that.

I then raised with Mr. Churchill the proposal for the union of the two peoples. "Lord Halifax has spoken to me about it," he told me. "But it's an enormous mouthful." "Yes," I answered. "That means that its realization would involve a great deal of time. But the gesture can be immediate. As things are now, nothing must be neglected by you that can support France and maintain our alliance."

After some discussion the Prime Minister fell in with my view. He at once summoned the British Cabinet and went to Downing Street to preside at its meeting. I went with him and, while the Ministers were deliberating, waited with the French ambassador in an office adjoining the Cabinet Room. I had meanwhile telephoned to M. Paul Reynaud to warn him that I was hoping to send him, before the end of the afternoon and with the British government's agreement, a most important communication. He answered that he was putting off his Cabinet meeting till five p.m. on this account. "But," he added, "I shan't be able to postpone it longer."

The meeting of the British Cabinet lasted for two hours, during which, from time to time, one or another of the Ministers came out to clear some point with us. Suddenly they all came in, led by Mr. Churchill. "We are agreed," they exclaimed. And in fact, details apart, the text they produced was the same as the one we had proposed to them. I immediately telephoned to M. Paul Reynaud and dictated to him the document. "It's very important!" said the Premier. "I shall use it at the meeting that is about to start." In a few words I told him all the encouraging things I could. Mr. Churchill then took the telephone. "Hullo, Reynaud! De Gaulle is right! Our proposal may have great consequences. You must hold out!" Then, after listening to the reply, he said, "Well, see you tomorrow! At Concarneau."

I said good-bye to the Prime Minister. He lent me an airplane in which to go back at once to Bordeaux. We agreed that the

machine should remain at my disposal in case of events which might lead me to return. Mr. Churchill himself had to catch a train in order to board a destroyer for the journey to Concarneau. At nine-thirty p.m. I landed at Bordeaux. Colonel Humbert and Auburtin, from my office, were waiting for me at the airdrome. They told me that the Premier had resigned and that President Lebrun had asked Marshal Pétain to form a government. That meant certain capitulation. My decision was taken at once. I would leave as soon as morning came.

I went to see M. Paul Reynaud. I found him with no illusions about what the consequences would be of the Marshal's taking power, and, on the other hand, like one relieved of an intolerable burden. He gave me the impression of a man who had reached the limit of hope. Only those who were eyewitnesses of it can measure what the ordeal of being in power meant during that terrible period. All through days without respite and nights without sleep, the Premier could feel the entire responsibility for the fate of France weighing upon him personally. For a leader is always alone in face of ill fortune. He it was who received in their full force the reverses that marked the stages of our fall: the German breakthrough at Sedan, the Dunkerque disaster, the flight from Paris, the collapse at Bordeaux. Yet he had assumed the leadership only on the very eve of our misfortunes, with no time in which to confront them and after having, for a long time, advocated the military policy which could have averted them. He faced the storm with a steadfastness which did not waver. Never, during those days of drama, did M. Paul Reynaud cease to be master of himself. Never was he seen to lose his temper, give way to anger, or complain. The spectacle of that man's high value, ground down unjustly by a too great weight of events, was a tragic one.

At bottom, the personality of M. Paul Reynaud was the right one for conditions where it would have been possible to conduct the war within a state in running order and on the basis of traditionally established data. But everything was swept away! The head of the government saw the system collapsing all around him, the people in flight, the Allies withdrawing, and the most illustrious leaders failing. From the day when the government left the capital, the very business of exercising power became merely a sort of agony, unrolling along the roads amid the dislocation of services, disciplines, and consciences. In such conditions M. Paul Reynaud's intelligence, his courage, and the authority of his office were, so to speak, running free. He had no longer any purchase upon the fury of events.

To seize the reins once more he would have had to wrench himself out of the whirlwind, cross over to Africa, and start everything afresh from there. M. Paul Reynaud saw this. But it involved extreme measures: changing the High Command, getting rid of the Marshal and half the Ministers, breaking with certain influences, resigning himself to the total occupation of Metropolitan France—in short, striking out at all costs from the ordinary framework and procedure in a situation without precedent.

M. Paul Reynaud did not think fit to take upon himself decisions so far outside the normal and calculated orbit. He tried to attain the aim by manœuvring. That explains, in particular, the fact that he envisaged a possible examination of the enemy's armistice conditions, provided England gave her consent. No doubt he judged that even those who were pushing towards an armistice would recoil when they knew its terms, and that then there would come into play the regroupment of all men of value, to make war and save the country. But the tragedy was too harsh to be resolved. Either make war without sparing anything, or surrender at once: there was no alternative, only these two extremes. M. Paul Reynaud, through failing to identify himself wholly with the first, gave place to Pétain, who completely adopted the second.

It has to be said that at the supreme moment the regime offered to the head of the last government of the Third Republic nothing to fall back upon. Assuredly many of the men in office looked upon capitulation with horror. But the authorities, shattered by the disaster for which they felt themselves responsible, did not react at all. At the time when they were faced by the problem on

which, for France, all the present and all the future depended, Parliament did not sit, the government showed itself incapable of adopting as a body a decisive solution, and the President of the Republic abstained from raising his voice, even within the Cabinet, to express the supreme interest of the country. In reality this annihilation of the state was at the bottom of the national tragedy. By the light of the thunderbolt the regime was revealed, in its ghastly infirmity, as having no proportion and no relation to the defence, honour, and independence of France.

Late in the evening I went to the hotel where Sir Ronald Campbell, the British ambassador, was residing, and informed him of my intention to leave for London. General Spears, who came and joined in the conversation, declared that he would accompany me. I sent word to M. Paul Reynaud. He made over to me the sum of a hundred thousand francs, on the secret funds. I begged M. de Margerie to send at once to my wife and children, who were at Carantec, the necessary passports for reaching England, which they could just do by the last boat leaving Brest. On June 17, at nine in the morning, I flew off, with General Spears and Lieutenant de Courcel, in the British airplane which had brought me the evening before. There was nothing romantic or difficult about the departure.

We flew over La Rochelle and Rochefort. Ships set on fire by German aircraft were burning in these ports. We passed over Paimpont, where my mother lay very ill. The forest was all smoking with the munition dumps which were being destroyed there. After a stop at Jersey, we reached London in the early afternoon. While I was taking rooms and Courcel was telephoning to the Embassy and the missions and finding them already reticent, I seemed to myself, alone as I was and deprived of everything, like a man on the shore of an ocean, proposing to swim across.

CHAPTER 3

FREE FRANCE

GO ON WITH THE WAR? Yes, certainly! But to what end and within what limits? Many, even among those who approved of the undertaking, wanted it to be no more than aid given by a handful of Frenchmen to the British Empire, still standing and in the fight. Not for a moment did I look at the enterprise in that way. For me, what had to be served and saved was the nation and the state.

I thought, in fact, that it would be the end of honour, unity, and independence if it were to be admitted that, in this world war, only France had capitulated and that she had let the matter rest there. For in that case, whatever might be the issue of the conflict—whether the country, after decisive defeat, would one day be rid of the invader by foreign arms, or would remain enslaved—its self-disgust and the disgust it would inspire in others would poison its soul and its life for many generations. As for the immediate future, in the name of what were some of its sons to be led out to a fight no longer its own? What was the good of supplying with auxiliaries the forces of another power? No! For the effort to be worth while, it was essential to bring back into the war not merely some Frenchmen, but France.

That was bound to involve the reappearance of our armies on

the battlefields, the return of our territories to belligerence, participation by the country itself in the effort of its fighting men, and recognition by the foreign powers of the fact that France, as such, had gone on with the struggle—in short, to bring our sovereignty out from disaster and from the policy of wait-and-see, over to the side of war and, one day, of victory.

What I knew of men and things left me with no illusions about the obstacles to be surmounted. There would be the power of the enemy, which could be broken only by a long process of wearing down and would have the help of the French official machine in opposing the belligerent recovery of France. There would be the moral and material difficulties which a long and all-out struggle would inevitably involve for those who would have to carry it on as pariahs and without means. There would be the mountain of objections, insinuations, and calumnies raised against the fighters by the sceptics and the timorous to cover their passivity. There would be the so-called "parallel" but in fact rival and opposing enterprises, to which the French passion for disputation would not fail to give rise, and of which the policy and services of the Allies would make use, in the customary way, in order to control them. There would be, on the part of those whose aim was subversion, the determination to side-track the national resistance in the direction of revolutionary chaos, to result in their dictatorship. There would be, finally, the tendency of the great powers to take advantage of our weakness in order to push their interests at the expense of France.

As for me, with a hill like that to climb, I was starting from scratch. Not the shadow of a force or of an organization at my side. In France, no following and no reputation. Abroad, neither credit nor standing. But this very destitution showed me my line of conduct. It was by adopting without compromise the cause of national recovery that I could acquire authority. It was by acting as the inflexible champion of the nation and of the state that it would be possible for me to gather the consent, even the enthusiasm, of the French and to win from foreigners respect and consideration. Those who, all through the drama, were offended by this intransigence were unwilling to see that for me, intent as I was on beating back innumerable conflicting pressures, the slightest wavering would have brought collapse. In short, limited and alone though I was, and precisely because I was so, I had to climb to the heights and never then to come down.

The first thing to do was to hoist the colours. Broadcasting was to hand for that. Already in the afternoon of June 17 I outlined my intentions to Mr. Winston Churchill. Washed up from a vast shipwreck upon the shores of England, what could I have done without his help? He gave it me at once, and to begin with put the BBC at my disposal. We agreed that I should use it after the Pétain government had asked for the armistice. That very evening the news came that it had done so. Next day, at six p.m., I read out at the microphone the well-known text:

Appeal by General de Gaulle to the French
June 18, 1940

The leaders who, for many years past, have been at the head of the French armed forces, have set up a government.

Alleging the defeat of our armies, this government has entered into negotiations with the enemy with a view to bringing about a cessation of hostilities. It is quite true that we were, and still are, overwhelmed by enemy mechanized forces, both on the ground and in the air. It was the tanks, the planes, and the tactics of the Germans, far more than the fact that we were outnumbered, that forced our armies to retreat. It was the German tanks, planes, and tactics that provided the element of surprise which brought our leaders to their present plight.

But has the last word been said? Must we abandon all hope? Is our defeat final and irremediable? To those questions I answer—No!

Speaking in full knowledge of the facts, I ask you to believe me when I say that the cause of France is not lost. The very factors that brought about our defeat may one day lead us to victory.

For, remember this, France does not stand alone. She is not isolated. Behind her is a vast Empire, and she can make common cause with the British Empire, which commands the seas and is continuing the struggle. Like England, she can draw unreservedly on the immense industrial resources of the United States.

This war is not limited to our unfortunate country. The outcome of the struggle has not been decided by the Battle of France. This is a world war. Mistakes have been made, there have been delays and untold suffering, but the fact remains that there still exists in the world everything we need to crush our enemies some day. Today we are crushed by the sheer weight of mechanized force hurled against us, but we can still look to a future in which even greater mechanized force will bring us victory. The destiny of the world is at stake.

I, General de Gaulle, now in London, call on all French officers and men who are at present on British soil, or may be in the future, with or without their arms; I call on all engineers and skilled workmen from the armaments factories who are at present on British soil, or may be in the future, to get in touch with me.

Whatever happens, the flame of French resistance must not and shall not die.

As the irrevocable words flew out upon their way, I felt within myself a life coming to an end—the life I had lived within the framework of a solid France and an indivisible army. At the age of forty-nine I was entering upon adventure, like a man thrown by fate outside all terms of reference.

It was nonetheless my duty, while taking the first steps in this unprecedented career, to make sure that no authority better qualified than mine was willing to step forward to bring France and the Empire back into the struggle. As long as the armistice was not in force it was possible to imagine, though against all probability, that the Bordeaux government would at the last moment choose war. Even if there was only the feeblest chance, it must be encouraged. ~~That is why, as soon as I reached London the after-~~

Winston Churchill

Mass Effects in Modern Life

Is the march of events ordered and guided by eminent men; or do our leaders merely fall into their places at the heads of the moving columns? Is human progress the result of the resolves and deeds of individuals, or are these resolves and deeds only the outcome of time and circumstance? Is history the chronicle of famous men and women, or only of their responses to the tides, tendencies and opportunities of their age? Do we owe the ideals and wisdom that make our world to the glorious few, or to the patient anonymous innumerable many? The question has only to be posed to be answered. We have but to let the mind's eye skim back over the story of nations, indeed to review the experience of our own small lives, to observe the decisive part which accident and chance play at every moment. If this or that had been otherwise, if this instruction had not been given, if that blow had not been struck, if that horse had not stumbled, if we had not met that woman, or missed or caught that train, the whole course of our lives would have been changed; and with our lives the lives of others, until gradually, in ever-widening circles, the movement of the world itself would have been affected. And if this be true of the daily experience of ordinary average people, how much more potent must be the deflection which the Master Teachers—Thinkers, Discoverers, Commanders—have imparted at every stage. True, they required their background, their atmosphere, their opportunity; but these were also the leverages which magni-

fied their power. I have no hesitation in ranging myself with those who view the past history of the world mainly as the tale {256} of exceptional human beings, whose thoughts, actions, qualities, virtues, triumphs, weaknesses and crimes have dominated the fortunes of the race. But we may now ask ourselves whether powerful changes are not coming to pass, are not already in progress or indeed far advanced. Is not mankind already escaping from the control of individuals? Are not our affairs increasingly being settled by mass processes? Are not modern conditions—at any rate throughout the English-speaking communities—hostile to the development of outstanding personalities, and to their influence upon events: and lastly if this be true, will it be for our greater good and glory? These questions merit some examination from thoughtful people.

Certainly we see around us to-day a marked lack of individual leadership. The late Mr. John Morley, statesman and philanthropist, man of letters and man of affairs, some years ago towards the close of his life delivered an oration in which he drew attention to the decline in the personal eminence of the leaders in almost all the important spheres of thought and art. He contrasted the heads of the great professions in the early twentieth century with those who had shone in the mid-Victorian era. He spoke of 'the vacant Thrones' in Philosophy, History, Economics, Oratory, Statecraft, Poetry, Literature, Painting, Sculpture, and Music, which stood on every side. He pointed—as far as possible without offence—to the array of blameless mediocrities, who strutted conscientiously around the seats of the mighty decked in their discarded mantles and insignia. The pith and justice of these reflections were unwelcome, but not to be denied. They are no less applicable to the United States. With every natural wish to be complimentary to our own age and generation, with every warning against 'singing the praises of former times,'[1] it is difficult to marshal to-day in any part of the English-speaking world an assembly of notables, who either in distinction or achievement can compare with those to whom our grandfathers so gladly paid attention and tribute.

1. A reference to the beginning of the Harrow School song "The Silver Arrow" (1903): "I sing the praise of the olden days. . . ."

{257} It must be admitted that in one great sphere the thrones are neither vacant nor occupied by pygmies. Science in all its forms surpasses itself every year. The body of knowledge ever accumulating is immediately interchanged and the quality and fidelity of the research never flags. But here again the mass effect largely suppresses the individual achievement. The throne is occupied; but by a throng.

In part we are conscious of the enormous processes of collectivization which are at work among us. We have long seen the old family business, where the master was in direct personal touch with his workmen, swept out of existence or absorbed by powerful companies, which in their turn are swallowed by mammoth trusts. We have found in these processes, whatever hardships they may have caused to individuals, immense economic and social advantages. The magic of mass production has carried all before it. The public have a cheaper and even better article or a superior service, the workmen have better wages and greater security.

The results upon national character and psychology are more questionable. We are witnessing a great diminution in the number of independent people who had some standing of their own, albeit a small one, and who if they conducted their affairs with reasonable prudence could 'live by no man's leave underneath the law.'[2] They may be better off as the salaried officials of great corporations; but they have lost in forethought, in initiative, in contrivance, in freedom and in effective civic status.

These instances are but typical of what is taking place in almost every sphere of modern industrial life, and of what must take place with remorseless persistency, if we are to enjoy the material blessings which scientific and organized civilization is ready to bestow in measureless abundance.

In part again these changes are unconscious. Public opinion is formed and expressed by machinery. The newspapers do an

2. From Rudyard Kipling, "The Old Issue," October 9, 1899: "All we have of freedom, all we use or know / This our fathers bought for us long and long ago. / Ancient Right unnoticed as the breath we draw / Leave to live by no man's leave, underneath the Law. / Lance and torch and tumult, steel and grey-goose wing / Wrenched it, inch and ell and all, slowly from the King. / Till our fathers 'stablished, after bloody years, / How our King is one with us, first among his peers."

immense amount of thinking for the average man and woman. In fact they supply them with such a {258} continuous stream of standardized opinion, borne along upon an equally inexhaustible flood of news and sensation, collected from every part of the world every hour of the day, that there is neither the need nor the leisure for personal reflection. All this is but a part of a tremendous educating process. But it is an education which passes in at one ear and out at the other. It is an education at once universal and superficial. It produces enormous numbers of standardized citizens, all equipped with regulation opinions, prejudices and sentiments, according to their class or party. It may eventually lead to a reasonable, urbane and highly-serviceable society. It may draw in its wake a mass culture enjoyed by countless millions, to whom such pleasures were formerly unknown. We must not forget the enormous circulations at cheap prices of the greatest books of the world, which is a feature of modern life in civilized countries, and nowhere more than in the United States. But this great diffusion of knowledge, information and light reading of all kinds may, while it opens new pleasures to humanity and appreciably raises the general level of intelligence, be destructive of those conditions of personal stress and mental effort to which the masterpieces of the human mind are due.

It is a curious fact that the Russian Bolsheviks in carrying by compulsion mass conceptions to their utmost extreme seem to have lost not only the guidance of great personalities, but even the economic fertility of the process itself. The Communist theme aims at universal standardization. The individual becomes a function: the community is alone of interest: mass thoughts dictated and propagated by the rulers are the only thoughts deemed respectable. No one is to think of himself as an immortal spirit, clothed in the flesh, but sovereign, unique, indestructible. No one is to think of himself even as that harmonious integrity of mind, soul and body, which, take it as you will, may claim to be 'the Lord of Creation.' Sub-human goals and ideals are set before these Asiatic millions. The Beehive? No, for there must be no queen and no honey, or at least no honey {259} for others. In Soviet Russia we have a society which seeks to model itself upon the Ant. There is not one single social or economic principle

or concept in the philosophy of the Russian Bolshevik which has not been realized, carried into action, and enshrined in immutable laws a million years ago by the White Ant.

But human nature is more intractable than ant-nature. The explosive variations of its phenomena disturb the smooth working out of the laws and forces which have subjugated the White Ant. It is at once the safeguard and the glory of mankind that they are easy to lead and hard to drive. So the Bolsheviks, having attempted by tyranny and by terror to establish the most complete form of mass life and collectivism of which history bears record, have not only lost the distinction of individuals, but have not even made the nationalization of life and industry pay. We have not much to learn from them, except what to avoid.

Mass effects and their reactions are of course more pronounced in the leading nations than in more backward and primitive communities. In Great Britain, the United States, Germany, and France, the decline in personal pre-eminence is much more plainly visible than in societies which have less wealth, less power, less freedom. The great emancipated nations seem to have become largely independent of famous guides and guardians. They no longer rely upon the Hero, the Commander, or the Teacher as they did in bygone rugged ages, or as the less advanced peoples do to-day. They wend their way ponderously, unthinkingly, blindly, but nevertheless surely and irresistibly towards goals which are ill-defined and yet magnetic. Is it then true that civilization and democracy, when sufficiently developed, will increasingly dispense with personal direction: that they mean to find their own way for themselves; and that they are capable of finding the right way? Or are they already going wrong? Are they off the track? Have they quitted the stern, narrow high-roads which alone lead to glorious destinies and survival? Is what we now see in the leading {260} democracies merely a diffusion and squandering of the accumulated wisdom and treasure of the past? Are we blundering on together in myriad companies, like innumerable swarms of locusts, chirping and devouring towards the salt sea, or towards some vast incinerator of shams and fallacies? Or have we for the first time reached those uplands whence all of us, even the humblest and

silliest equally with the best, can discern for ourselves the beacon lights? Surely such an inquiry deserves an idle hour.

In no field of man's activities is the tendency to mass effects and the suppression of the individual more evident than in modern war. The Armageddon through which we have recently passed displays the almost complete elimination of personal guidance. It was the largest and the latest of all wars. It was also the worst, the most destructive, and in many ways the most ruthless. Now that it is over we look back, and with minute and searching care seek to find its criminals and its heroes. Where are they? Where are the villains who made the War? Where are the deliverers who ended it? Facts without number, growing libraries, clouds of contemporary witnesses, methods of assembling and analysing evidence never before possessed or used among men are at our disposal. The quest is keen. We ought to know; we mean to know. Smarting under our wounds, enraged by our injuries, amazed by our wonderful exertions and achievements, conscious of our authority, we demand to know the truth, and to fix the responsibilities. Our halters and our laurels are ready and abundant.

But what is the answer? There is no answer. On the one hand, the accusations eagerly pressed now against this man or Government or nation, now against that, seem to dissipate themselves as the indictment proceeds. On the other, as the eager claimants for the honour of being the man, the Government, the nation THAT ACTUALLY WON THE WAR multiply and as their self-advocacy becomes more voluble, more strident, we feel less and less convinced. The Muse of History to whom we all so confidently appeal {261} has become a Sphinx.[3] A sad, half-mocking smile flickers on her stone war-scarred lineaments. While we gaze, we feel that the day will never come when we shall learn the answer for which we have clamoured. Meanwhile the halters rot and the laurels fade. Both the making and the winning of the most terrible and the most recent of earthly struggles seems to have been a co-operative affair!

3. A mythical figure with the body of a recumbent lion and a human head. The most famous example is the Great Sphinx of Giza, adjacent to the great pyramids near Cairo; it is believed to date from *c.* 2600 B.C. There was a Sphinx of Theban legend, which posed riddles and strangled those who failed to solve them.

Modern conditions do not lend themselves to the production of the heroic or super-dominant type. On the whole they are fatal to pose. The robes, the wigs, the ceremonies, the grades that fortified the public men and ruling functionaries of former centuries have fallen into disuse in every country. Even 'the Divinity that doth hedge a King'[4] is considered out of place except on purely official occasions. Sovereigns are admired for their free and easy manners, their readiness to mingle with all classes, their matter-of-fact work-a-day air, their dislike of pomp and ritual. The Minister or President at the head of some immense sphere of business, whose practical decisions from hour to hour settle so many important things, is no longer a figure of mystery and awe. On the contrary he is looked upon, and what is more important for our present purpose, looks upon himself, as quite an ordinary fellow, who happens to be charged for the time being with a peculiar kind of large-scale work. He hustles along with the crowd in the public conveyances, or attired in 'plus fours'[5] waits his turn upon the links. All this is very jolly, and a refreshing contrast to the ridiculous airs and graces of the periwigged potentates of other generations. The question is whether the sense of leadership, and the commanding attitude towards men and affairs, are likely to arise from such simple and unpretentious customs and habits of mind: and further whether our public affairs will now for the future run on quite happily without leaders who by their training and situation, no less than by their abilities, feel themselves to be uplifted above the general mass.

The intense light of war illuminates as usual this topic {262} more clearly than the comfortable humdrum glow of peace. We see the modern commander entirely divorced from the heroic aspect by the physical conditions which have overwhelmed his art. No longer will Hannibal and Cæsar, Turenne[6] and Marlborough, Frederick and Napoleon, sit their horses on the battlefield and by their words and

4. Churchill paraphrases the saying of Claudius, "There's such divinity doth hedge a king," in Shakespeare, *Hamlet*, Act IV, sc. v, line 123.

5. Knee-breeches terminating four inches below the knee, worn with long woolen stockings.

6. Henri de la Tour d'Auvergne, Vicomte de Turenne (1611–1675), marshal of France and commander of French troops during the Thirty Years' War.

gestures direct and dominate between dawn and dusk the course of a supreme event. No longer will their fame and presence cheer their struggling soldiers. No longer will they share their perils, rekindle their spirits and restore the day. They will not be there. They have been banished from the fighting scene, together with their plumes, standards and breast-plates. The lion-hearted warrior, whose keen eye detected the weakness in the foeman's line, whose resolve outlasted all the strains of battle, whose mere arrival at some critical point turned the tide of conflict, has disappeared. Instead our Generals are to be found on the day of battle at their desks in their offices fifty or sixty miles from the front, anxiously listening to the trickle of the telephone for all the world as if they were speculators with large holdings when the market is disturbed.

All very right and worthy. They are at their posts. Where else indeed should they be? The tape-machine ticks are recording in blood-red ink that railways are down or utilities up, that a bank has broken here, and a great fortune has been captured there. Calm sits the General—he is a high-souled speculator. He is experienced in finance. He has survived many market crashes. His reserves are ample and mobile. He watches for the proper moment, or proper day—for battles now last for months—and then launches them to the attack. He is a fine tactician, and knows the wiles of bull and bear,[7] of attack and defence to a nicety. His commands are uttered with decision. Sell fifty thousand of this. Buy at the market a hundred thousand of that. Ah! No, we are on the wrong track. It is not shares he is dealing in. It is the lives of scores of thousands of men. To look at him at {263} work in his office you would never have believed that he was fighting a battle in command of armies ten times as large and a hundred times as powerful as any that Napoleon led. We must praise him if he does his work well, if he sends the right messages, and spends the right troops, and buys the best positions. But it is hard to feel that he is the hero. No; he is not the hero. He is the manager of a stock-market, or a stock-yard.

The obliteration of the personal factor in war, the stripping from

7. Can be meant literally, or as a parallel with the stock market, in which bull markets rise and bear markets fall.

high commanders of all the drama of the battlefield, the reducing of their highest function to pure office work, will have profound effects upon sentiment and opinion. Hitherto the great captain has been rightly revered as the genius who by the firmness of his character, and by the mysterious harmonies and inspirations of his nature, could rule the storm. He did it himself: and no one else could do it so well. He conquered there and then. Often he fell beneath the bolts and the balls, saviour of his native land. Now, however illogical it may seem and even unjust, his glamour and honours will not readily descend upon our calculating friend at the telephone. This worthy must assuredly be rewarded as a useful citizen, and a faithful perspicacious public servant; but not as a hero. The heroes of modern war lie out in the cratered fields, mangled, stifled, scarred; and there are too many of them for exceptional honours. It is mass suffering, mass sacrifice, mass victory. The glory which plays upon the immense scenes of carnage is diffused. No more the blaze of triumph irradiates the helmets of the chiefs. There is only the pale light of a rainy dawn by which forty miles of batteries recommence their fire, and another score of divisions flounder to their death in mud and poison gas.

That was the last war. The wars of the future will be even less romantic and picturesque. They will apparently be the wars not of armies but of whole populations. Men, women and children, old and feeble, soldiers and civilians, sick and wounded—all will be exposed—so we are told—to aerial {264} bombardment, that is to say to mass destruction by lethal vapour. There will not be much glory for the general in this process. My gardener last spring exterminated seven wasp's nests. He did his work most efficiently. He chose the right poison. He measured the exact amount. He put it stealthily in the right place, at the right time. The entire communities were destroyed. Not even one wasp got near enough to sting him. It was his duty and he performed it well. But I am not going to regard him as a hero.

So when some spectacled 'brass hat' of a future world-agony has extinguished some London or Paris, some Tokio or San Francisco, by pressing a button, or putting his initials neatly at the bottom of

a piece of foolscap, he will have to wait a long time for fame and glory. Even the flashlights of the photographers in the national Ministry of Propaganda will be only a partial compensation. Still our Commander-in-Chief may be a man of exemplary character, most painstaking and thorough in his profession. He may only be doing what in all the circumstances some one or other would have to do. It seems rather hard that he should receive none of the glory which in former ages would have been the attribute of his office and the consequence of his success. But this is one of the mass effects of modern life and science. He will have to put up with it.

From this will follow blessed reactions. The idea of war will become loathsome to humanity. The military leader will cease to be a figure of romance and fame. Youth will no longer be attracted to such careers. Poets will not sing nor sculptors chisel the deeds of conquerors. It may well be that the chemists will carry off what credit can be found. The budding Napoleons will go into business, and the civilization of the world will stand on a surer basis. We need not waste our tears on the mass effects in war. Let us return to those of peace.

Can modern communities do without great men? Can they dispense with hero-worship? Can they provide a {265} larger wisdom, a nobler sentiment, a more vigorous action, by collective processes, than were ever got from the Titans?[8] Can nations remain healthy, can all nations draw together, in a world whose brightest stars are film stars and whose gods are sitting in the gallery? Can the spirit of man emit the vital spark by machinery? Will the new problems of successive generations be solved successfully by 'the common sense of most'; by party caucuses; by Assemblies whose babble is no longer heeded? Or will there be some big hitch in the forward march of mankind, some intolerable block in the traffic, some vain wandering into the wilderness; and will not then the need for a personal chief become the mass desire?

We see a restlessness around us already. The cry of 'Measures, not Men'[9] no longer commands universal sympathy. There is a sense

8. In Greek mythology the Titans were any of the older gods who preceded the Olympians and were the children of Uranus (Heaven) and Gaia (Earth).

9. This phrase, penned by Philip Stanhope (1694–1773), Fourth Earl of Chesterfield,

of vacancy and of fatuity, of incompleteness. We miss our giants. We are sorry that their age is past. The general levels of intelligence and of knowledge have risen. We are upon a high plateau. A peak of 10,000 feet above the old sea-level is scarcely noticeable. There are so many such eminences that we hardly bother about them. The region seems healthy; but the scenery is unimpressive. We mourn the towering grandeur which surrounded and cheered our long painful ascent. Ah! if we could only find some new enormous berg rising towards the heavens as high above our plateau as those old mountains down below rose above the plains and marshes! We want a monarch peak, with base enormous, whose summit is for ever hidden from our eyes by clouds, and down whose precipices cataracts of sparkling waters thunder. Unhappily the democratic plateau or platform does not keep that article in stock. Perhaps something like it might be worked up by playing spot-lights upon pillars of smoke or gas, and using the loud-speaker apparatus. But we soon see through these pretences.

No, we must take the loss with the gain. On the uplands there are no fine peaks. We must do without them while {266} we stay there. Of course we could always if we wished go down again into the plains and valleys out of which we have climbed.

We may even wander thither unwittingly. We may slide there. We may be pushed there. There are still many powerful nations dwelling at these lower levels—some contentedly—some even proudly. They often declare that life in the valleys is preferable. There is, they say, more variety, more beauty, more grace, more dignity—more true health and fertility than upon the arid highlands. They say this middle situation is better suited to human nature. The arts flourish there, and science need not be absent. Moreover, it is pleasing to look back over the plains and morasses through which our path has lain in the past, and remember in tradition the great years of pilgrimage. Then they point to the frowning crag, their venerated 'El Capitan'

1726, in a letter of March 6, 1742, refers to the modern insistence on laws rather than discretion for rulers, from suspicion of the use they might make of it; the phrase was quoted approvingly by Oliver Goldsmith and Edmund Burke, but attacked by the future prime minister George Canning in the House of Commons in 1801.

or 'Il Duce,'[10] casting its majestic shadow in the evening light; and ask whether we have anything like that up there. We certainly have not.

10. Churchill visited California's Yosemite Valley in September 1929, where he saw the sheer granite cliff called El Capitan, which means "the captain" in Spanish. The name was applied in Britain to various Turkish leaders, and later in Spain to Francisco Franco. Benito Mussolini styled himself "Il Duce," which means "the leader" in Italian.

CHARLES DE GAULLE

WAR MEMOIRS

VOLUME ONE

THE CALL TO HONOUR

1940-1942

DOCUMENTS

Translated by
Jonathan Griffin

COLLINS
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376. Speech made by General de Gaulle to the Oxford French Club.†

Oxford, 25th November, 1941

Barrès has spoken of "places where breathes the spirit." He could scarcely, I think, have imagined a more typical example than Oxford. Nor do I believe the character of your famous University could be better expressed than by this significant phrase. I am therefore all the more deeply conscious of the honour done me to-day by the Oxford French Club and, at the same time, encouraged to broach a somewhat difficult subject—that of collaboration between the British and French peoples to ensure that victory will bear fruit. The study of such a subject requires a certain intellectual and emotional objectivity, and I have no hesitation in discussing the matter here, since the atmosphere of your University is the product of a long tradition of disinterested thought.

Whenever the question of Franco-British relations was mentioned

to M. Thiers, he was wont to listen in silence. When his interlocutor had had his say, he would peer over his spectacles and remark: " That is most interesting! But would it not suffice to say that Britain is an island? " M. Thiers believed this simple geographical aphorism entirely explained all past, present and future relations between the two countries.

M. Thiers may have been right in his day. After all, it is merely banal to develop the theory that her insular position has led Britain to regard the sea as her principal safeguard, her only neighbour, the necessary highway of her trade and, consequently, to consider mastery of the seas her main object as a nation or, as it were, her second nature. It follows that her people have been compelled by their destiny as a sea-going and, therefore, commercial race to found an Empire and ensure control of the sea-routes leading to it. For the same reasons, she could not permit any form of hegemony to be established on the European continent, for the State exercising such supremacy would immediately become a pretender to the empire of the sea. Hence the frequent periods of political tension between London and Paris throughout the seventeenth, eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Hence their repeated conflicts. Hence, too, at the beginning of the present century, the complete reversal of their mutual relations brought about by the influence of your King Edward VII. The *Entente Cordiale* came into being almost overnight when Germany, led by the Prussians, raised the standard of Pan-Germanism, threatening the balance of power by her mounting victories, and crying from the lips of Kaiser Wilhelm II: " Our future is on the seas! "

It was in the nature of things human that this improved relationship between the peoples of Britain and France, following so suddenly on long years of rivalry and distrust, should be jeopardised as soon as the threat which brought it about was temporarily removed. On the other hand, it was inevitable that the relaxing of the *Entente* should encourage a renewal of that threat. The future historian of our Thirty Years' War (and he is perhaps among my audience to-day), studying the second act of the drama—the present conflict—will find it easy, I think, to show that the unleashing of German ambitions under the Nazi régime was greatly facilitated by the political divergence between Paris and London. I can well imagine how he will stress the disastrous consequences of such an estrangement: for although the student of tactics can plainly see that the separation of our armies in the spring of 1940 was the outcome of the breach forced by enemy mechanised units in the Maginot Line between Mézières and Sedan, the philosopher is equally aware that the gap through which

the German aggression really made its way was that between our divergent policies.

But the wine has been drawn, and now we must drink it. Admittedly, the taste is bitter. But no greater mistake could be made, no graver responsibility incurred, than to turn in disgust from the draught and abandon all further efforts at reaching that same good understanding for lack of which the wine is unpalatable. For then, indeed, the future might be gravely compromised; and great countries such as ours have a solemn duty to the future.

Our common enemies are, quite naturally, doing all they can to separate us. Germany's policy towards Anglo-French relations can best be defined by saying that Berlin seeks to open wounds and then constantly rub in salt to irritate and inflame. For this purpose, the present situation in France is greatly to the enemy's advantage. Given his policy of oppression, the régime of treason he has set up, and the propaganda and blackmail he is bringing to bear, it is only too easy for him to sow the seeds of corruption. That is why nothing is overlooked which could possibly revive old quarrels. Memories of Joan of Arc, Jean Bart, Marlborough, Maurice de Saxe, Nelson, Wellington, l'Aiglon and Commandant Marchand are constantly evoked. As for France's misfortunes in the present war, it is incessantly pointed out that Britain alone is responsible since, by favouring a German recovery after 1918, she cheated France of the fruits of victory, while refusing to permit any improvement in relations between Teuton and Gaul. Such a policy, it is stressed, was bound to end in conflict, since it allowed the Reich to build up her strength and, at the same time, fanned the flames of hate. Nevertheless, the British Empire failed to prepare for war, with the result that England was powerless to give substantial help to France in her hour of danger. Turning to the present, Britain is accused of exploiting the martyrdom of France to annex whatever parts of our Empire come within her grasp. Meanwhile, the Reich loses no opportunity of forcing her collaborators to assume responsibility for as many hostile and malicious acts as possible towards Britain, in the hope that the latter may become exasperated and turn against a nation which, in reality, is still bound to her by ties of sincere friendship.

To my mind, one of the most remarkable facts of these tragic times is that such repeated attempts at estrangement have in no wise altered the confidence and affection felt in France for the people of Britain. I will go further and say that the British are now far more popular in France than they have ever been. There is complete opposition between the apparent attitude of what is still considered " official "

France and the real feelings of all classes of the population. I doubt whether any single instance could be quoted in contradiction of this statement. On the other hand, I can offer numerous direct proofs in support of it. Let me give you three typical examples.

Last July, a number of French workmen were killed during a raid carried out by the R.A.F. on a factory in Lens. A British plane was shot down. The Frenchmen were buried first, and the whole population turned out for the funeral. Next day, the British airmen were interred. The same crowd followed the coffins of the Allied aviators to the cemetery, and the procession was led by the widows of the French workmen.

On November 2nd, families in all parts of France observed All Souls' Day, as is their custom, by going to pray at the graveside of deceased relatives. I should like you to know that not a single British soldier's grave on French soil was left unvisited, and that of all the graves in the cemeteries of France, none showed such a profusion of flowers as those of our fallen British comrades.

The third fact, on which it is not for me to insist, is nevertheless perhaps worthy of mention. Not a single day passes but young Frenchmen from all over the country, drawn from every class of society, come to England to fight shoulder to shoulder with your troops. In order to reach these shores, they perform prodigies of courage and ingenuity. When men once more have time for the writing of books, the world will marvel at the tale of these adventures.

There can be no doubt that the French people, in the depths of the abyss into which they have temporarily fallen, have never better realised the true worth of the British, never more clearly seen that "liberation" is synonymous with "British victory," never felt more certain that their future independence cannot be achieved unless there is a friendly union between our two countries. I am convinced that, for their part, the British people recognise as never before the vital necessity for such collaboration. This springs, in the first place, from the same generous instinct that inspires a man to go to the rescue of his friend. Shakespeare has well expressed the British attitude:

I am not of that feather, to shake off
My friend when he most needs me . . .

But it is certain, too, that the events of this war have shown how the security of France depends on that of your country. At a time when the essential activity of war, by which I mean destruction, has passed to the air, it would be hard to imagine Britain's future if France, only

a few minutes away by plane, ceased to be her ally. M. Thiers, who refused for a long time to believe in the possibility of railways, never foresaw the Germany of the twentieth century and can have had no inkling of the advent of aeroplanes and tanks. Otherwise, he would not have concluded that the mere fact of Britain's being an island was sufficient to cut short all discussion concerning the relationship between our countries.

That is why I am convinced that, notwithstanding a few regrettable outward appearances and some deplorable incidents fomented by treachery and propaganda, the first result of this war will be the establishment of stronger and more sincere Anglo-French collaboration than has ever yet existed. Such a union is rendered imperative by excellent reasons of practical policy and the most valid arguments of sentiment, but it is above all made necessary by a duty common to both our great and ancient nations—the need to preserve our civilisation.

This is indeed the issue at stake in the present war, and it will be the chief problem to be solved in peace-time. Such gigantic efforts as those now made by the aggressor nations to overthrow the existing world order and substitute a so-called New Order have serious, deep-rooted origins, and victory will be nothing but a word inscribed on medals and tombstones if it fails to provide a remedy for these ills.

Some people find it convenient to attribute the revolution through which the world is passing to the ambition of a single individual, not unknown to his fellow-men under the name of Adolf Hitler. They see the causes of the war embodied in the person of a hateful tyrant who, having written *Mein Kampf*, is forcing one half of the world to attack the other in order to impose his creed on the entire planet. Such a theory enables them to devise a solution in accordance with the principle of minimum effort. To ensure just and lasting peace, they argue, it is only necessary to drive the dictator out of Berchtesgaden. Now, I do not deny that the German Führer played an important part in the origins of the conflict, but I do ask whether we can be satisfied with so summary a verdict?

Others, raising the debate to a higher level, contend that, once again, the catastrophe must be attributed to the German people's eternal lust for domination. If, therefore, Germany were subjected to a system of sound and lasting guarantees as regards her armaments and frontiers, the problem would be solved for all time. I agree it is only too obvious that during the past hundred years the conflagration in Europe has always started in the country which has been said to regard war as its "prime industry"; nor do I think anyone can

deny that adequate precautions should be taken in dealing with such a nation. But it remains to be seen whether the combination of the Nazi system and the dynamic force of the German race was due to mere chance, or whether this fusion was not itself the upshot of a more particular evil. To put the matter bluntly, it may have been the result of a crisis in civilisation.

It would be presumptuous of me to try to tell you how, during the past two thousand years, various conceptions, customs and laws have spread throughout the world, altering the spirit of the peoples and even the very face of the globe. No one knows better than you how, thanks to such conceptions, customs and laws, despite differences of language, religion and nationality, despite the clash of armies, political rivalry, and industrial competition, a sort of common ideal, a like recognition of what society owes to the individual and of what the individual owes to the community, together with respect for freedom and justice, asserted themselves among the nations according to their stage of evolution. The fundamental principle on which our civilisation is based is that each man should be free to think and believe as he chooses; that he have liberty to determine his opinions, his form of work and his use of leisure.

This civilisation, born in Western Europe, has weathered many storms. It has been seriously threatened by barbarian invasions, partitions brought about by the feudal system, discord inside Christendom, the upheaval of the French Revolution, the rise of the nationalist spirit, social strife, and the advent of great industrial undertakings. But, so far, it has always managed to retain sufficient internal vitality, sufficient power of attraction, to enable it finally to carry the day. More than that, it has moved like a conqueror through the world, gaining vast regions, much to their advantage. So saturated has America become with this civilisation of ours that it may truthfully be said to have reached its fullest expression beyond the Atlantic. It has penetrated Asia, Africa, and Oceania. As a result, first of colonisation and then of the gradual emancipation of innumerable peoples, the moment was fast approaching when all the inhabitants of the earth would have recognised the same high principles and been clothed in the same dignity.

Yet this civilisation, which tends essentially towards the freedom and development of the individual, is now at grips with a diametrically opposite movement, a movement which admits no rights save those of racial or national collectivity; a movement which denies the individual the right to think, judge, or act as he sees fit, depriving him of the possibility of so doing and giving the dictators inordinate

power to define good and evil, to decree what is true and what is false, to kill or let live as best suits the interests of the group they represent. This has given rise to the fanatical systems which, by their power of attraction and the dynamic force behind them, have acted as a lodestone for the eternal ambitions of the German and the spasmodic pretensions of the Italian.

This is the foundation on which the temporary conquerors of the European continent are trying to build what they call their New Order. This is why the present war will decide the life or death of Western civilisation. And this movement is all the more formidable because it, too, is part of the general evolution.

It must be admitted that in recent times the change in our mode of life due to machinery, the growing aggregation of humanity and the widespread uniformity imposed on society have all combined to strike hard at individual liberty. In a world where human beings are herded together for work and pleasure, and where even their thoughts and interests are determined for them; in a world where housing conditions, clothing, and food are gradually standardised; where everyone reads the same things in the same papers at the same time; where, from one end of the earth to the other, they see the same films, and hear the same news, ideas, and music broadcast; in a world where, at the same hours, similar means of transport take people to the same workshops and offices, restaurants and canteens, sports-grounds and theatres, to the same buildings, blocks or courts for work, food, recreation, and rest; where men and women are similarly educated and informed, and all lead the same busy life and share the same worries, it is only too obvious that freedom of choice tends to disappear, and individuality—the "essential I"—finds it increasingly difficult to survive. The result is a kind of general mechanisation in which only a tremendous effort can preserve the individual as such.

This is all the more true since the masses, far from reacting against such standardisation, are actually developing a taste for it and encouraging the process. Men of my age have lived long enough to see how this communal existence has spread, how it was first imposed on the people and then gradually won their support. To wear the same uniform, march in step, sing in chorus, salute in the same way, and share the same emotion at the sight of a crowd of which they themselves form part is fast becoming almost a necessity for our contemporaries. And it is precisely in this modern tendency that the dictators have sought and found success for their doctrines and ritual. To start with, they undoubtedly achieved their aims among the

peoples who, in the hope of dominating others, enthusiastically adopted the organisation of termite ants. But we must face the fact that evolution itself offers extraordinary facilities to the so-called New Order, and is full of temptations for its champions.

However complete the future victory of the armies, navies and air squadrons of democracy, however able and far-seeing our post-war policy towards the conquered nations, nothing can prevent a renewal of the threat in an even more deadly form, nothing can guarantee peace, nothing can preserve world order, if the party of freedom fails, in the full tide of an evolution imposed on mankind by modern mechanical progress, to create a system in which the liberty, security and dignity of the individual can be safeguarded and elevated to such a degree as to seem more desirable than any possible advantages to be obtained by their abolition. There is no other way to ensure the final triumph of mind over matter; and, when all is said and done, that is the problem we have to face.

How is it possible to imagine such an effort of spiritual regeneration in the social and moral spheres, as well as in the field of politics, if our two peoples are divided? For centuries past, France and Britain have been the homes of freedom, champions of the liberties of man. Unless our countries unite their endeavours, freedom will perish from the earth. Since the opponents of our ideal have united for its overthrow, surely we, in our turn, must pool those mental qualities and that dogged resolution which have so long been common to both your country and mine and been placed in the service of the same cause—the cause of civilisation. Such frank and enthusiastic collaboration of the minds and efforts of all men, both in Britain and France, who are marching towards the same goal, is henceforward inconceivable unless we are at one.

I must apologise for having put these considerations before you at such length. But you, the *élite* of our modern youth, who have been kind enough to give me your attention, realise it is mental conceptions that lead the world. That is why I decided to submit these ideas to you. On studying them, you may perhaps agree with me that we must not lose sight of fundamental issues if we are to grasp the full significance of the terrible occurrences of this conflict—the greatest in history—and learn the lessons without which the war would still be lost even if we won it twenty times over on the battlefield. The poet has portrayed a ploughman toiling up a steep slope: "Man of the plains, why are you climbing the hill?" "To get a better view of the plain. I never understood it properly until I saw it from the heights."

Winston Churchill

Shall We All Commit Suicide?*

The story of the human race is War. Except for brief and precarious interludes, there has never been peace in the world; and before history began, murderous strife was universal and unending. But up to the present time the means of destruction at the disposal of man have not kept pace with his ferocity. Reciprocal extermination was impossible in the Stone Age. One cannot do much with a clumsy club. Besides, men were so scarce and hid so well that they were hard to find. They fled so fast that they were hard to catch. Human legs could only cover a certain distance each day. With the best will in the world to destroy his species, each man was restricted to a very limited area of activity. It was impossible to make any effective progress on these lines. Meanwhile one had to live and hunt and sleep. So on the balance the life-forces kept a steady lead over the forces of death, and gradually tribes, villages, and governments were evolved.

The effort at destruction then entered upon a new phase. War became a collective enterprise. Roads were made which facilitated the movement of large numbers of men. Armies were organized. Many improvements in the apparatus of slaughter were devised. In particular the use of metal, and above all steel, for piercing and cutting human flesh, opened out a promising field. Bows and arrows,

* *Published in 1925.*

slings, chariots, horses, and elephants lent valuable assistance. But here again another set of checks began to operate. The governments were not sufficiently secure. The armies were liable to violent internal disagreements. It was extremely difficult to feed large numbers of men {246} once they were concentrated, and consequently the efficiency of the efforts at destruction became fitful and was tremendously hampered by defective organization. Thus again there was a balance on the credit side of life. The world rolled forward, and human society entered upon a vaster and more complex age.

It was not until the dawn of the twentieth century of the Christian era that War really began to enter into its kingdom as the potential destroyer of the human race. The organization of mankind into great States and Empires and the rise of nations to full collective consciousness enabled enterprises of slaughter to be planned and executed upon a scale and with a perseverance never before imagined. All the noblest virtues of individuals were gathered together to strengthen the destructive capacity of the mass. Good finances, the resources of world-wide credit and trade, the accumulation of large capital reserves, made it possible to divert for considerable periods the energies of whole peoples to the task of Devastation. Democratic institutions gave expression to the will-power of millions. Education not only brought the course of the conflict within the comprehension of everyone, but rendered each person serviceable in a high degree for the purpose in hand. The Press afforded a means of unification and of mutual encouragement; Religion, having discreetly avoided conflict on the fundamental issues, offered its encouragements and consolations, through all its forms, impartially to all the combatants. Lastly, Science unfolded her treasures and her secrets to the desperate demands of men, and placed in their hands agencies and apparatus almost decisive in their character.

In consequence many novel features presented themselves. Instead of merely starving fortified towns, whole nations were methodically subjected to the process of reduction by famine. The entire population in one capacity or another took part in the War; all were equally the object of attack. The Air opened paths along which death and terror could be carried far behind the lines of the actual {247} armies,

to women, children, the aged, the sick, who in earlier struggles would perforce have been left untouched. Marvellous organizations of railroads, steamships, and motor vehicles placed and maintained tens of millions of men continuously in action. Healing and surgery in their exquisite developments returned them again and again to the shambles. Nothing was wasted that could contribute to the process of waste. The last dying kick was brought into military utility.

But all that happened in the four years of the Great War was only a prelude to what was preparing for the fifth year. The campaign of the year 1919[1] would have witnessed an immense accession to the power of destruction. Had the Germans retained the morale to make good their retreat to the Rhine, they would have been assaulted in the summer of 1919 with forces and by methods incomparably more prodigious than any yet employed. Thousands of aeroplanes would have shattered their cities. Scores of thousands of cannon would have blasted their front. Arrangements were being made to carry simultaneously a quarter of a million men, together with all their requirements, continuously forward across country in mechanical vehicles moving ten or fifteen miles each day. Poison gases of incredible malignity, against which only a secret mask (which the Germans could not obtain in time) was proof, would have stifled all resistance and paralysed all life on the hostile front subjected to attack. No doubt the Germans too had their plans. But the hour of wrath had passed. The signal of relief was given, and the horrors of 1919 remain buried in the archives of the great antagonists.

The War stopped as suddenly and as universally as it had begun. The world lifted its head, surveyed the scene of ruin, and victors and vanquished alike drew breath. In a hundred laboratories, in a thousand arsenals, factories, and bureaus, men pulled themselves up with a jerk, turned from the task in which they had been absorbed. Their projects were put aside unfinished, unexecuted; but their {248} knowledge was preserved; their data, calculations, and discoveries were hastily bundled together and docketed 'for future reference' by the War Offices in every country. The campaign of 1919 was

1. The continuation of the war on the western front, which never had to take place.

never fought; but its ideas go marching along. In every Army they are being explored, elaborated, refined under the surface of peace, and should war come again to the world it is not with the weapons and agencies prepared for 1919 that it will be fought, but with developments and extensions of these which will be incomparably more formidable and fatal.

It is in these circumstances that we have entered upon that period of Exhaustion which has been described as Peace. It gives us at any rate an opportunity to consider the general situation. Certain sombre facts emerge solid, inexorable, like the shapes of mountains from drifting mist. It is established that henceforward whole populations will take part in war, all doing their utmost, all subjected to the fury of the enemy. It is established that nations who believe their life is at stake will not be restrained from using any means to secure their existence. It is probable—nay, certain—that among the means which will next time be at their disposal will be agencies and processes of destruction wholesale, unlimited, and perhaps, once launched, uncontrollable.

Mankind has never been in this position before. Without having improved appreciably in virtue or enjoying wiser guidance, it has got into its hands for the first time the tools by which it can unfailingly accomplish its own extermination. That is the point in human destinies to which all the glories and toils of men have at last led them. They would do well to pause and ponder upon their new responsibilities. Death stands at attention, obedient, expectant, ready to serve, ready to shear away the peoples *en masse;* ready, if called on, to pulverize, without hope of repair, what is left of civilization. He awaits only the word of command. He awaits it from a frail, bewildered being, long his victim, now—for one occasion only—his Master.

{249} Let it not be thought for a moment that the danger of another explosion in Europe is passed. For the time being the stupor and the collapse which followed the World War ensure a sullen passivity, and the horror of war, its carnage and its tyrannies, has sunk into the soul, has dominated the mind, of every class in every race. But the causes of war have been in no way removed; indeed they are in some respects aggravated by the so-called Peace Treaties and the reactions

following thereupon. Two mighty branches of the European family will never rest content with their existing situation. Russia, stripped of her Baltic Provinces,[2] will, as the years pass by, brood incessantly upon the wars of Peter the Great.[3] From one end of Germany to the other an intense hatred of France unites the whole population. The enormous contingents of German youth growing to military manhood year by year are inspired by the fiercest sentiments, and the soul of Germany smoulders with dreams of a War of Liberation or Revenge. These ideas are restrained at the present moment only by physical impotence. France is armed to the teeth. Germany has been to a great extent disarmed and her military system broken up. The French hope to preserve this situation by their technical military apparatus, by their shield of fortresses, by their black troops,[4] and by a system of alliances with the smaller States of Europe;[5] and for the present at any rate overwhelming force is on their side. But physical force alone, unsustained by world opinion, affords no durable foundation for security. Germany is a far stronger entity than France, and cannot be kept in permanent subjugation.

'Wars,' said a distinguished American to me some years ago, 'are fought with Steel; weapons may change, but Steel remains the core of all modern warfare. France has got the Steel of Europe, and Germany has lost it. Here, at any rate, is an element of permanency.' 'Are you sure,' I asked, 'that the wars of the future will be fought with Steel?' A few weeks later I talked with a German. 'What {250} about Aluminium?' he replied. 'Some think,' he said, 'that the next war will be fought with Electricity.' And on this a vista opens out of electrical rays which could paralyse the engines of a motor-car, could claw down aeroplanes from the sky, and conceivably be made

2. Under the Treaty of Brest-Litovsk in March 1918, Russia withdrew from the First World War and was obliged to give up the Baltic states of Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania, among other territories.

3. Peter I (1672–1725), czar of Russia, 1682–1725. His policy of westernizing his country transformed it into the Russian Empire, which took its place as a major European power. He founded St. Petersburg in 1703.

4. From the territories of the French Empire in north Africa, such as Morocco, Algeria, and Tunisia, and in west Africa, such as Senegal, Ivory Coast, and many others.

5. For example, Belgium, Luxemburg, Czechoslovakia, and Poland.

destructive of human life or human vision. Then there are Explosives. Have we reached the end? Has Science turned its last page on them? May there not be methods of using explosive energy incomparably more intense than anything heretofore discovered? Might not a bomb no bigger than an orange be found to possess a secret power to destroy a whole block of buildings—nay, to concentrate the force of a thousand tons of cordite and blast a township at a stroke? Could not explosives even of the existing type be guided automatically in flying machines by wireless or other rays, without a human pilot, in ceaseless procession upon a hostile city, arsenal, camp, or dockyard?

As for Poison Gas and Chemical Warfare in all its forms, only the first chapter has been written of a terrible book. Certainly every one of these new avenues to destruction is being studied on both sides of the Rhine, with all the science and patience of which man is capable. And why should it be supposed that these resources will be limited to Inorganic Chemistry? A study of Disease—of Pestilences methodically prepared and deliberately launched upon man and beast—is certainly being pursued in the laboratories of more than one great country. Blight to destroy crops, Anthrax to slay horses and cattle, Plague to poison not armies only but whole districts, such are the lines along which military science is remorselessly advancing.

It is evident that whereas an equally-contested war under such conditions might work the ruin of the world and cause an immeasurable diminution of the human race, the possession by one side of some overwhelming scientific advantage would lead to the complete enslavement of the unwary party. Not only are the powers now in the hands of man capable of destroying the life of nations, but for the {251} first time they afford to one group of civilized men the opportunity of reducing their opponents to absolute helplessness.

In barbarous times superior martial virtues—physical strength, courage, skill, discipline—were required to secure such a supremacy: and in the hard evolution of mankind the best and fittest stocks came to the fore. But no such saving guarantee exists to-day. There is no reason why a base, degenerate, immoral race should not make an enemy far above them in quality, the prostrate subject of their caprice or tyranny, simply because they happened to be possessed at a given

moment of some new death-dealing or terror-working process and were ruthless in its employment. The liberties of men are no longer to be guarded by their natural qualities, but by their dodges; and superior virtue and valour may fall an easy prey to the latest diabolical trick.

In the sombre paths of destructive science there was one new turning-point which seemed to promise a corrective to these mortal tendencies. It might have been hoped that the electro-magnetic waves would in certain scales be found capable of detonating explosives of all kinds from a great distance. Were such a process discovered in time to become common property, War would in important respects return again to the crude but healthy limits of the barbarous ages. The sword, the spear, the bludgeon, and above all *the fighting man*, would regain at a bound their old sovereignty. But it is depressing to learn that the categories into which these rays are divided are now so fully explored that there is not much expectation of this. All the hideousness of the Explosive era will continue; and to it will surely be added the gruesome complications of Poison and of Pestilence scientifically applied.

Such, then, is the peril with which mankind menaces itself. Means of destruction incalculable in their effects, wholesale and frightful in their character, and unrelated to any form of human merit: the march of Science unfolding ever more appalling possibilities; and the fires of hatred {252} burning deep in the hearts of some of the greatest peoples of the world, fanned by continual provocation and unceasing fear, and fed by the deepest sense of national wrong or national danger! On the other hand, there is the blessed respite of Exhaustion, offering to the nations a final chance to control their destinies and avert what may well be a general doom. Surely if a sense of self-preservation still exists among men, if the will to live resides not merely in individuals or nations but in humanity as a whole, the prevention of the supreme catastrophe ought to be the paramount object of all endeavour.

Against the gathering but still distant tempest the League of Nations,[6] deserted by the United States, scorned by Soviet Russia,

6. A supranational body—a forerunner of the United Nations—created after the First World War that stood for disarmament, prevention of war through collective security,

flouted by Italy, distrusted equally by France and Germany, raises feebly but faithfully its standards of sanity and hope. Its structure, airy and unsubstantial, framed of shining but too often visionary idealism, is in its present form incapable of guarding the world from its dangers and of protecting mankind from itself. Yet it is through the League of Nations alone that the path to safety and salvation can be found. To sustain and aid the League of Nations is the duty of all. To reinforce it and bring it into vital and practical relation with actual world-politics by sincere agreements and understanding between the great Powers, between the leading races, should be the first aim of all who wish to spare their children torments and disasters compared with which those we have suffered will be but a pale preliminary.

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and settlement of disputes by negotiation. Although President Woodrow Wilson was one of the originators of the idea of the League and urged his country to join it, the U.S. Senate refused to ratify the Treaty of Versailles, which included creation of the League of Nations; the United States therefore never became a member of the League.

Winston Churchill
from <u>Thoughts and Adventures</u>

Fifty Years Hence

The great mass of human beings, absorbed in the toils, cares and activities of life, are only dimly conscious of the pace at which mankind has begun to travel. We look back a hundred years, and see that great changes have taken place. We look back fifty years, and see that the speed is constantly quickening. This present century has witnessed an enormous revolution in material things, in scientific appliances, in political institutions, in manners and customs. The greatest change of all is the least perceptible by individuals: it is the far greater numbers which in every civilized country participate in the fuller life of man. 'In those days,' said Disraeli, writing at the beginning of the nineteenth century, 'England was for the few and for the very few.' 'The twice two thousand for whom,' wrote Byron, 'the world is made'[1] have given place to many millions for whom existence has become larger, safer, more varied, more full of hope and choice. In the United States scores of millions have lifted themselves above primary necessities and comforts, and aspire to culture—at least for their children. Europe, though stunned and lacerated by Armageddon, presents a similar if less general advance. We all take the modern conveniences and facilities as they are offered to us without being grateful or consciously happier. But we simply

1. George Gordon Byron (1788–1824), Sixth Baron Byron, 1798, Romantic poet. Byron wrote, "The twice two thousand for whom earth was made," rather than "for whom the world is made": see *Don Juan*, Canto 13, stanza xlix.

could not live, if they were taken away. We assume that progress will be constant. 'This 'ere progress,' Mr. Wells[2] makes one of his characters remark, 'keeps going on. It's wonderful 'ow it keeps going on.' It is also very fortunate, for if it stopped or were reversed, there would be the catastrophe of unimaginable horror. Mankind {270} has gone too far to go back, and is moving too fast to stop. There are too many people maintained not merely in comfort but in existence by processes unknown a century ago, for us to afford even a temporary check, still less a general setback, without experiencing calamity in its most frightful form.

When we look back beyond a hundred years over the long trails of history, we see immediately why the age we live in differs from all other ages in human annals. Mankind has sometimes travelled forwards and sometimes backwards, or has stood still even for hundreds of years. It remained stationary in India and in China for thousands of years. What is it that has produced this new prodigious speed of man? Science is the cause. Her once feeble vanguards, often trampled down, often perishing in isolation, have now become a vast organized united class-conscious army marching forward upon all the fronts towards objectives none may measure or define. It is a proud, ambitious army which cares nothing for all the laws that men have made; nothing for their most time-honoured customs, or most dearly-cherished beliefs, or deepest instincts. It is this power called Science which has laid hold of us, conscripted us into its regiments and batteries, set us to work upon its highways and in its arsenals; rewarded us for our services, healed us when we were wounded, trained us when we were young, pensioned us when we were worn out. None of the generations of men before the last two or three were ever gripped for good or ill and handled like this.

Man in the earliest stages lived alone and avoided his neighbours with as much anxiety and probably as much reason as he avoided

2. H. G. Wells (1866–1946), novelist; his works include *The Time Machine* (1895) and *The War of the Worlds* (1898). These words, which Churchill quotes only approximately (probably from memory), are from *The War in the Air* (1908), which begins, "'This here Progress,' said Mr. Tom Smallways, 'it keeps on.' 'You'd hardly think it could keep on,' said Mr. Tom Smallways."

the fierce flesh-eating beasts that shared his forests. With the introduction of domestic animals the advantages of co-operation and the division of labour became manifest. In the neolithic times when cereals were produced and agriculture developed, the bleak hungry period whilst the seeds were germinating beneath the soil involved some form of capitalism, and the recognition of those special rights of landed proprietors the traces of which {271} are still visible in our legislation. Each stage involved new problems legal, sociological and moral. But progress only crawled, and often rested for a thousand years or so.

The two ribbon States in the valleys of the Nile and the Euphrates[3] produced civilizations as full of pomp and circumstance and more stable than any the world has ever known. Their autocracies and hierarchies were founded upon the control and distribution of water and corn. The rulers held the people in an efficiency of despotism never equalled till Soviet Russia was born. They had only to cut off or stint the water in the canals to starve or subjugate rebellious provinces. This, apart from their granaries, gave them powers at once as irresistible and as capable of intimate regulation as the control of all food supplies gives to the Bolshevik commissars. Safe from internal trouble, they were vulnerable only to external attack. But in these states man had not learnt to catalyse the forces of nature. The maximum power available was the sum of the muscular efforts of all the inhabitants. Later empires, scarcely less imposing but far less stable, rose and fell. In the methods of production and communication, in the modes of getting food and exchanging goods, there was less change between the time of Sargon[4] and the time of Louis XIV[5] than there has been between the accession of Queen Victoria[6] and the present day. Darius[7] could probably send a message

3. Egypt and Mesopotamia, respectively.

4. Sargon of Akkad, an ancient Mesopotamian ruler who reigned *c.* 2334–2279 B.C.

5. Louis XIV (1638–1715), king of France, 1643–1715—a reign of more than seventy-two years.

6. Alexandrina Victoria (1819–1901), queen of Great Britain and Ireland, 1837–1901.

7. Darius I (*c.* 549–486 B.C), king of Persia, *c.* 522–486 B.C.

from Susa[8] to Sardis[9] faster than Philip II[10] could transmit an order from Madrid to Brussels. Sir Robert Peel, summoned in 1841 from Rome to form a government in London, took the same time as the Emperor Vespasian[11] when he had to hasten to his province of Britain. The bathrooms of the palaces of Minos[12] were superior to those of Versailles.[13] A priest from Thebes[14] would probably have felt more at home at the Council of Trent[15] two thousand years after Thebes had vanished than Sir Isaac Newton[16] at a modern undergraduate physical society, or George Stephenson[17] in the Institute of Electrical Engineers.[18] The changes have been so sudden and so gigantic that no period {272} in history can be compared with the last century. The past no longer enables us even dimly to measure the future.

The most wonderful of all modern prophecies is found in Tennyson's 'Locksley Hall':[19]

'For I dipt into the future, far as human eye could see,
Saw the Vision of the world, and all the wonder that would be;

8. One of the oldest known settlements in the world, in present-day southwest Iran: it was possibly founded in *c.* 4200 B.C., with traces of an inhabited village dating from *c.* 7000 B.C.
9. Capital of the ancient kingdom of Lydia, in present-day southwest Turkey.
10. Philip II (1527–1598), king of Spain, 1556–98.
11. Vespasianus Titus Flavius (9–79), Roman emperor, 69–79.
12. A mythical king of Crete; he was the son of Zeus and Europa.
13. Close to Paris, it is the site of the immense palace of King Louis XIV.
14. A city of ancient Greece.
15. Ecumenical council of the Roman Catholic Church, 1545–63, centered on Trento (in present-day Italy).
16. Sir Isaac Newton (1642–1727), the foremost scientist of his day, whose major achievements included introduction of the concept of gravity, development of differential calculus, and separation of white light into all the colors of the spectrum by refraction through a prism.
17. George Stephenson (1781–1848), engineer and pioneer of railways.
18. Eponymous British professional body, founded in 1871.
19. Poem by Lord Tennyson, 1835; it includes predictions about a future world government.

Saw the heavens fill with commerce, argosies of magic sails,
Pilots of the purple twilight, dropping down with costly bales;

Heard the heavens fill with shouting, and there rain'd a ghastly dew
From the nations' airy navies grappling in the central blue;

Far along the world-wide whisper of the south-wind rushing warm
With the standards of the peoples plunging thro' the thunder-storm;

Till the war-drum throbb'd no longer, and the battle-flags were furl'd
In the Parliament of man, the Federation of the world.

. . . . . .

Slowly comes a hungry people, as a lion creeping nigher,
Glares at one that nods and winks behind a slowly-dying fire.'

These six couplets of prediction, written eighty years ago, have already been fulfilled. The conquest of the air for commerce and war, the League of Nations, the Communist movement—all divined in their true sequence by the great Victorian—all now already in the history-books and stirring the world around us to-day! We may search the Scriptures in vain for such precise and swiftly-vindicated forecasts of the future. Jeremiah and Isaiah[20] dealt in dark and cryptic parables pointing to remote events and capable of many varied interpretations from time to time. A Judge, a Prophet, a Redeemer would arise to save his chosen People; and from {273} age to age the Jews asked, disputing, 'Art thou he that should come or do we look for another?' But 'Locksley Hall' contains an exact foretelling of stupendous events, which many of those who knew the writer lived to see and endure! The dawn of the Victorian era opened the new period of man; and the genius of the poet pierced the veil of the future.

20. Jeremiah was an Old Testament prophet of the seventh century B.C. noted for true prophecies that went largely unheeded by the people of Israel; Isaiah was an Old Testament prophet of the eighth century B.C.

There are two processes which we adopt consciously or unconsciously when we try to prophesy. We can seek a period in the past whose conditions resemble as closely as possible those of our day, and presume that the sequel to that period will, save for some minor alterations, be repeated. Secondly, we can survey the general course of development in our immediate past, and endeavour to prolong it into the near future. The first is the method of the historian; the second that of the scientist. Only the second is open to us now, and this only in a partial sphere. By observing all that Science has achieved in modern times, and the knowledge and power now in her possession, we can predict with some assurance the inventions and discoveries which will govern our future. We can but guess, peering through a glass darkly, what reactions these discoveries and their applications will produce upon the habits, the outlook and the spirit of men.

Whereas formerly the utmost power that man could guide and control was a team of horses, or a galleyful of slaves; or possibly, if they could be sufficiently drilled and harnessed, a gang of labourers like the Israelites in Egypt[21]: it is to-day already possible to control accurately from the bridge of a battle cruiser all the power of hundreds of thousands of men: or to set off with one finger a mine capable in an instant of destroying the work of thousands of man-years. These changes are due to the substitution of molecular energy for muscular energy, and its direction and control by an elaborate, beautifully-perfected apparatus. These immense new sources of power, and the fact that they can be wielded by a single individual, have made possible novel methods of mining and metallurgy, new modes of transport and {274} undreamed-of machinery. These in their turn enable the molecular sources of power to be extended and used more efficiently. They facilitate also the improvement of ancient methods. They substitute the hundred-thousand-kilowatt turbo-generators at Niagara[22] for the mill-wheel of our forefathers.

21. Having left their own lands because of famine, the Israelites entered Egypt, where, in due course, they were seen as a threat and enslaved for many years before being able to leave.

22. Massive waterfalls on the Niagara River, straddling the border between Canada and the United States.

Each invention acted and reacted on other inventions, and with ever-growing rapidity that vast structure of technical achievement was raised which separates the civilization of to-day from all that the past has known.

There is no doubt that this evolution will continue at an increasing rate. We know enough to be sure that the scientific achievements of the next fifty years will be far greater, more rapid and more surprising, than those we have already experienced. The slide-lathe enabled machines of precision to be made, and the power of steam rushed out upon the world. And through the steam-clouds flashed the dazzling lightning of electricity. But this is only a beginning. High authorities tell us that new sources of power, vastly more important than any we yet know, will surely be discovered. Nuclear energy is incomparably greater than the molecular energy which we use to-day. The coal a man can get in a day can easily do five hundred times as much work as the man himself. Nuclear energy is at least one million times more powerful still. If the hydrogen atoms in a pound of water could be prevailed upon to combine together and form helium, they would suffice to drive a thousand horse-power engine for a whole year. If the electrons—those tiny planets of the atomic systems—were induced to combine with the nuclei in the hydrogen the horse-power liberated would be 120 times greater still. There is no question among scientists that this gigantic source of energy exists. What is lacking is the match to set the bonfire alight, or it may be the detonator to cause the dynamite to explode. The Scientists are looking for this.

The discovery and control of such sources of power would cause changes in human affairs incomparably greater than those produced by the steam-engine four generations ago. {275} Schemes of cosmic magnitude would become feasible. Geography and climate would obey our orders. Fifty thousand tons of water, the amount displaced by the *Berengaria*,[23] would, if exploited as described, suffice to shift

23. Launched in 1912 as the German-owned *Imperator* (52,226 gross tons), the ship was acquired by the British after the First World War as a reparation for the sinking of *Lusitania* in 1915; she then sailed under the Cunard flag as *Berengaria* until being retired in 1938.

Ireland to the middle of the Atlantic. The amount of rain falling yearly upon the Epsom race-course would be enough to thaw all the ice at the Arctic and Antarctic poles. The changing of one element into another by means of temperatures and pressures would be far beyond our present reach, would transform beyond all description our standards of values. Materials thirty times stronger than the best steel would create engines fit to bridle the new forms of power. Communications and transport by land, water and air would take unimaginable forms, if, as is in principle possible, we could make an engine of 600 horse-power, weighing 20 lb. and carrying fuel for a thousand hours in a tank the size of a fountain-pen. Wireless telephones and television, following naturally upon their present path of development, would enable their owner to connect up with any room similarly installed, and hear and take part in the conversation as well as if he put his head in through the window. The congregation of men in cities would become superfluous. It would rarely be necessary to call in person on any but the most intimate friends, but if so, excessively rapid means of communication would be at hand. There would be no more object in living in the same city with one's neighbour than there is to-day in living with him in the same house. The cities and the countryside would become indistinguishable. Every home would have its garden and its glade.

Up till recent times the production of food has been the prime struggle of man. That war is won. There is no doubt that the civilized races can produce or procure all the food they require. Indeed some of the problems which vex us to-day are due to the production of wheat by white men having exceeded their own needs, before yellow men, brown men and black men have learnt to demand and become able to purchase a diet superior to rice. But food is at present {276} obtained almost entirely from the energy of the sunlight. The radiation from the sun produces from the carbonic acid in the air more or less complicated carbon compounds which give us our plants and vegetables. We use the latent chemical energy of these to keep our bodies warm, we convert it into muscular effort. We employ it in the complicated processes of digestion to repair and replace the wasted cells of our bodies. Many people of course prefer

food in what the vegetarians call 'the second-hand form,' i.e. after it has been digested and converted into meat for us by domestic animals kept for this purpose. In all these processes however ninety-nine parts of the solar energy are wasted for every part used.

Even without the new sources of power great improvements are probable here. Microbes which at present convert the nitrogen of the air into the proteins by which animals live, will be fostered and made to work under controlled conditions, just as yeast is now. New strains of microbes will be developed and made to do a great deal of our chemistry for us. With a greater knowledge of what are called hormones, i.e. the chemical messengers in our blood, it will be possible to control growth. We shall escape the absurdity of growing a whole chicken in order to eat the breast or wing, by growing these parts separately under a suitable medium. Synthetic food will, of course, also be used in the future. Nor need the pleasures of the table be banished. That gloomy Utopia[24] of tabloid meals need never be invaded. The new foods will from the outset be practically indistinguishable from the natural products, and any changes will be so gradual as to escape observation.

If the gigantic new sources of power become available, food will be produced without recourse to sunlight. Vast cellars in which artificial radiation is generated may replace the cornfields or potato-patches of the world. Parks and gardens will cover our pastures and ploughed fields. When the time comes there will be plenty of room for the cities to spread themselves again.

{277} But equally startling developments lie already just beyond our finger-tips in the breeding of human beings, and the shaping of human nature. It used to be said, 'Though you have taught the dog more tricks, you cannot alter the breed of the dog.' But that is no longer true. A few years ago London was surprised by a play called *Roosum's*

24. A name for an imagined community, taken from the title of a book by Sir Thomas More (1478–1535) written in 1516, which was set in a fictitious island with the best regime.

Universal Robots.[25] The production of such beings may well be possible within fifty years. They will not be made, but grown under glass. There seems little doubt that it will be possible to carry out in artificial surroundings the entire cycle which now leads to the birth of a child. Interference with the mental development of such beings, expert suggestion and treatment in the earlier years, would produce beings specialized to thought or toil. The production of creatures, for instance, which have admirable physical development with their mental endowment stunted in particular directions, is almost within the range of human power. A being might be produced capable of tending a machine but without other ambitions. Our minds recoil from such fearful eventualities, and the laws of a Christian civilization will prevent them. But might not lop-sided creatures of this type fit in well with the Communist doctrines of Russia? Might not the Union of Soviet Republics armed with all the power of science find it in harmony with all their aims to produce a race adapted to mechanical tasks and with no other ideas but to obey the Communist State? The present nature of man is tough and resilient. It casts up its sparks of genius in the darkest and most unexpected places. But Robots could be made to fit the grisly theories of Communism. There is nothing in the philosophy of Communists to prevent their creation.

I have touched upon this sphere only lightly, but with the purpose of pointing out that in a future which our children may live to see, powers will be in the hands of men altogether different from any by which human nature has been moulded. Explosive forces, energy, materials, machinery will be available upon a scale which can annihilate {278} whole nations. Despotisms and tyrannies will be able to prescribe the lives and even the wishes of their subjects in a manner never known since time began. If to these tremendous and awful powers is added the pitiless sub-human wickedness which we now see embodied in one of the most powerful reigning governments, who shall say that the world itself will not be wrecked, or indeed that

25. *Rossum's Universal Robots* (Churchill misspells the name) was a play written by Karel Čapek (1890–1938), a Czech playwright, and first produced in Prague in 1921. It contained the first use of the word "robot."

it ought not to be wrecked? There are nightmares of the future from which a fortunate collision with some wandering star, reducing the earth to incandescent gas, might be a merciful deliverance.

It is indeed a descent almost to the ridiculous to contemplate the impact of the tremendous and terrifying discoveries which are approaching upon the structure of Parliamentary institutions. How can we imagine the whole mass of the people being capable of deciding by votes at elections upon the right course to adopt amid these cataclysmic changes? Even now the Parliaments of every country have shown themselves quite inadequate to deal with the economic problems which dominate the affairs of every nation and of the world. Before these problems the claptrap of the hustings and the stunts of the newspapers wither and vanish away. Democracy as a guide or motive to progress has long been known to be incompetent. None of the legislative assemblies of the great modern states represents in universal suffrage even a fraction of the strength or wisdom of the community. Great nations are no longer led by their ablest men, or by those who know most about their immediate affairs, or even by those who have a coherent doctrine. Democratic governments drift along the line of least resistance, taking short views, paying their way with sops and doles and smoothing their path with pleasant-sounding platitudes. Never was there less continuity or design in their affairs, and yet towards them are coming swiftly changes which will revolutionize for good or ill not only the whole economic structure of the world but the social habits and moral outlook of every family. Only the {279} Communists have a plan and a gospel. It is a plan fatal to personal freedom and a gospel founded upon Hate.

Certain it is that while men are gathering knowledge and power with

ever-increasing and measureless speed, their virtues and their wisdom have not shown any notable improvement as the centuries have rolled. The brain of a modern man does not differ in essentials from that of the human beings who fought and loved here millions of years ago. The nature of man has remained hitherto practically unchanged. Under sufficient stress,—starvation, terror, warlike passion, or even cold intellectual frenzy, the modern man we know so well will do the most terrible deeds, and his modern woman will back him up. At the present moment the civilizations of many different ages co-exist together in the world, and their representatives meet and converse. Englishmen, Frenchmen, or Americans with ideas abreast of the twentieth century do business with Indians or Chinese whose civilizations were crystallized several thousands of years ago. We have the spectacle of the powers and weapons of man far outstripping the march of his intelligence; we have the march of his intelligence proceeding far more rapidly than the development of his nobility. We may well find ourselves in the presence of 'the strength of civilization without its mercy.'[26]

It is therefore above all things important that the moral philosophy and spiritual conceptions of men and nations should hold their own amid these formidable scientific evolutions. It would be much better to call a halt in material progress and discovery rather than to be mastered by our own apparatus and the forces which it directs. There are secrets too mysterious for man in his present state to know; secrets which once penetrated may be fatal to human happiness and glory. But the busy hands of the scientists are already fumbling with the keys of all the chambers hitherto forbidden to mankind. Without an equal growth of Mercy, Pity, Peace and Love, Science herself may {280} destroy all that makes human life majestic and tolerable. There never was a time when the inherent virtue of human beings required more strong and confident expression in daily life; there never was a time when the hope of immortality and the disdain of

26. "The most frightful of all spectacles is the strength of civilization without its mercy." From an essay on Warren Hastings (1732–1818), governor general of India, 1773–85, published in 1841 by politician and historian Thomas Babington Macaulay (1800–1859), First Baron Macaulay, 1857, author of *Lays of Ancient Rome* (1842) and *The History of England*, 4 vols. (1849–55). Churchill read his essay on Warren Hastings as a young officer in India.

earthly power and achievement were more necessary for the safety of the children of men.

After all, this material progress, in itself so splendid, does not meet any of the real needs of the human race. I read a book the other day[27] which traced the history of mankind from the birth of the solar system to its extinction. There were fifteen or sixteen races of men which in succession rose and fell over periods measured by tens of millions of years. In the end a race of beings was evolved which had mastered nature. A state was created whose citizens lived as long as they chose, enjoyed pleasures and sympathies incomparably wider than our own, navigated the inter-planetary spaces, could recall the panorama of the past and foresee the future. But what was the good of all that to them? What did they know more than we know about the answers to the simple questions which man has asked since the earliest dawn of reason—'Why are we here? What is the purpose of life? Whither are we going?' No material progress, even though it takes shapes we cannot now conceive, or however it may expand the faculties of man, can bring comfort to his soul. It is this fact, more wonderful than any that Science can reveal, which gives the best hope that all will be well. Projects undreamed of by past generations will absorb our immediate descendants; forces terrific and devastating will be in their hands; comforts, activities, amenities, pleasures will crowd upon them, but their hearts will ache, their lives will be barren, if they have not a vision above material things. And with the hopes and powers will come dangers out of all proportion to the growth of man's intellect, to the strength of his character or to the efficacy of his institutions. Once more the choice is offered between Blessing and Cursing.[28] Never was the answer that will be given harder to foretell.

27. Olaf Stapledon, *Last and First Men: A Story of the Near and Far Future* (London: Methuen & Co. Ltd., 1930).

28. Moses says, "I call heaven and earth to record this day against you, that I have set before you life and death, blessing and cursing: therefore choose life, that both thou and thy seed may live" (*Deuteronomy* 30:19).

Winston Chruchill

Painting as a Pastime

To have reached the age of forty without ever handling a brush or fiddling with a pencil, to have regarded with mature eye the painting of pictures of any kind as a mystery, to have stood agape before the chalk of the pavement artist, and then suddenly to find oneself plunged in the middle of a new and intense form of interest and action with paints and palettes and canvases, and not to be discouraged by results, is an astonishing and enriching experience. I hope it may be shared by others. I should be glad if these lines induced others to try the experiment which I have tried, and if some at least were to find themselves dowered with an absorbing new amusement delightful to themselves, and at any rate not violently harmful to man or beast.

I hope this is modest enough: because there is no subject on which I feel more humble or yet at the same time more natural. I do not presume to explain how to paint, but only how to get enjoyment. Do not turn the superior eye of critical passivity upon these efforts. Buy a paint-box and have a try. If you need something to occupy your leisure, to divert your mind from the daily round, to illuminate your holidays, do not be too ready to believe that you cannot find what you want here. Even at the advanced age of forty! It would be a sad pity to shuffle or scramble along through one's playtime with golf and bridge, pottering, loitering, shifting from one heel to the other, wondering what on earth to do—as perhaps is the fate of

some unhappy beings—when all the while, if you only knew, there is close at hand a wonderful new world {306} of thought and craft, a sunlit garden gleaming with light and colour of which you have the key in your waistcoat-pocket. Inexpensive independence, a mobile and perennial pleasure apparatus, new mental food and exercise, the old harmonies and symmetries in an entirely different language, an added interest to every common scene, an occupation for every idle hour, an unceasing voyage of entrancing discovery—these are high prizes. Make quite sure they are not yours. After all, if you try, and fail, there is not much harm done. The nursery will grab what the studio has rejected. And then you can always go out and kill some animal, humiliate some rival on the links, or despoil some friend across the green table. You will not be worse off in any way. In fact you will be better off. You will know 'beyond a peradventure,' to quote a phrase disagreeably reminiscent,[1] that that is really what you were meant to do in your hours of relaxation.

But if, on the contrary, you are inclined—late in life though it be—to reconnoitre a foreign sphere of limitless extent, then be persuaded that the first quality that is needed is Audacity. There really is no time for the deliberate approach. Two years of drawing-lessons, three years of copying woodcuts, five years of plaster casts—these are for the young. They have enough to bear. And this thorough grounding is for those who, hearing the call in the morning of their days, are able to make painting their paramount lifelong vocation. The truth and beauty of line and form which by the slightest touch or twist of the brush a real artist imparts to every feature of his design must be founded on long, hard, persevering apprenticeship and a practice so habitual that it has become instinctive. We must not be too ambitious. We cannot aspire to masterpieces. We may content ourselves with a joy ride in a paint-box. And for this Audacity is the only ticket.

1. Churchill may be thinking of President Woodrow Wilson's remark, in his address to Congress on January 8, 1918, setting out his Fourteen Points, that "No statesman who has the least conception of his responsibility ought for a moment to permit himself to continue this tragical and appalling outpouring of blood and treasure unless he is sure beyond a peradventure that the objects of the vital sacrifice are part and parcel of the very life of Society and that the people for whom he speaks think them right and imperative as he does."

I shall now relate my personal experience. When I left the Admiralty at the end of May, 1915,[2] I still remained a {307} member of the Cabinet and of the War Council.[3] In this position I knew everything and could do nothing. The change from the intense executive activities of each day's work at the Admiralty to the narrowly-measured duties of a counsellor left me gasping. Like a sea-beast fished up from the depths, or a diver too suddenly hoisted, my veins threatened to burst from the fall in pressure. I had great anxiety and no means of relieving it; I had vehement convictions and small power to give effect to them. I had to watch the unhappy casting-away of great opportunities, and the feeble execution of plans which I had launched and in which I heartily believed. I had long hours of utterly unwonted leisure in which to contemplate the frightful unfolding of the War. At a moment when every fibre of my being was inflamed to action, I was forced to remain a spectator of the tragedy, placed cruelly in a front seat. And then it was that the Muse of Painting came to my rescue—out of charity and out of chivalry, because after all she had nothing to do with me—and said, 'Are these toys any good to you? They amuse some people.'

Some experiments one Sunday in the country with the children's paint-box led me to procure the next morning a complete outfit for painting in oils.

Having bought the colours, an easel, and a canvas, the next step was *to begin*. But what a step to take! The palette gleamed with beads of colour; fair and white rose the canvas; the empty brush hung poised, heavy with destiny, irresolute in the air. My hand seemed arrested by a silent veto. But after all the sky on this occasion was

2. In the wake of the Dardanelles disaster (then still in progress), Prime Minister Herbert Henry Asquith decided that it was no longer appropriate for the government to be formed solely by his Liberal Party. The Conservatives agreed to join the coalition that Asquith proposed, but only if Churchill were to leave the Admiralty. Churchill was therefore obliged to place his post at the prime minister's disposal.

3. On leaving the Admiralty, Churchill accepted a sinecure cabinet office as chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster but retained his seat on the War Council—a small group of senior cabinet ministers responsible for the direction of the war. But in November 1915 he was excluded from a reconstituted War Council, which he judged was now contemplating the evacuation of Gallipoli. This situation prompted him to resign from the government and to report for full-time military duty at the front.

unquestionably blue, and a pale blue at that. There could be no doubt that blue paint mixed with white should be put on the top part of the canvas. One really does not need to have had an artist's training to see that. It is a starting-point open to all. So very gingerly I mixed a little blue paint on the palette with a very small brush, and then with infinite precaution made a mark about as big as a bean upon the affronted snow-white shield. It was a chal{308}lenge, a deliberate challenge; but so subdued, so halting, indeed so cataleptic, that it deserved no response. At that moment the loud approaching sound of a motor-car was heard in the drive. From this chariot there stepped swiftly and lightly none other than the gifted wife of Sir John Lavery.[4] 'Painting! But what are you hesitating about? Let me have a brush—the big one.' Splash into the turpentine, wallop into the blue and the white, frantic flourish on the palette—clean no longer—and then several large, fierce strokes and slashes of blue on the absolutely cowering canvas. Anyone could see that it could not hit back. No evil fate avenged the jaunty violence. The canvas grinned in helplessness before me. The spell was broken. The sickly inhibitions rolled away. I seized the largest brush and fell upon my victim with Berserk fury. I have never felt any awe of a canvas since.

Everyone knows the feelings with which one stands shivering on a spring-board, the shock when a friendly foe steals up behind and hurls you into the flood, and the ardent glow which thrills you as you emerge breathless from the plunge.

This beginning with Audacity, or being thrown into the middle of it, is already a very great part of the art of painting. But there is more in it than that.

La peinture à l'huile
Est bien difficile,
Mais c'est beaucoup plus beau

4. Lady Lavery (1880–1935). Born Hazel Martyn in Chicago of Irish-American parentage, in 1909 she married the future Sir John Lavery (1856–1941), the celebrated British portrait artist, and she was depicted in more than four hundred of his paintings. She was herself an artist who worked in pastels.

Que la peinture à l'eau.[5]

I write no word in disparagement of water-colours. But there really is nothing like oils. You have a medium at your disposal which offers real power, if you only can find out how to use it. Moreover, it is easier to get a certain distance along the road by its means than by water-colour. First of all, you can correct mistakes much more easily. One sweep of the palette-knife 'lifts' the blood and tears of a morning from the canvas and enables a fresh start to be made; indeed the canvas is all the better for past impres{309}sions. Secondly, you can approach your problem from any direction. You need not build downwards awkwardly from white paper to your darkest dark. You may strike where you please, beginning if you will with a moderate central arrangement of middle tones, and then hurling in the extremes when the psychological moment comes. Lastly, the pigment itself is such nice stuff to handle (if it does not retaliate). You can build it on layer after layer if you like. You can keep on experimenting. You can change your plan to meet the exigencies of time or weather. And always remember you can scrape it all away.

Just to paint is great fun. The colours are lovely to look at and delicious to squeeze out. Matching them, however crudely, with what you see is fascinating and absolutely absorbing. Try it if you have not done so—before you die. As one slowly begins to escape from the difficulties of choosing the right colours and laying them on in the right places and in the right way, wider considerations come into view. One begins to see, for instance, that painting a picture is like fighting a battle; and trying to paint a picture is, I suppose, like trying to fight a battle. It is, if anything, more exciting than fighting it successfully. But the principle is the same. It is the same kind of problem, as unfolding a long, sustained, interlocked argument. It is a proposition which, whether of few or numberless parts, is commanded by a single unity of conception. And we think—though I cannot tell—that painting a great picture must require an intellect on the grand scale. There must be that all-embracing view which

5. "Painting in oil / Is quite difficult, / But it's much more beautiful / Than water-color painting."

presents the beginning and the end, the whole and each part, as one instantaneous impression retentively and untiringly held in the mind. When we look at the larger Turners[6]—canvases yards wide and tall—and observe that they are all done in one piece and represent one single second of time, and that every innumerable detail, however small, however distant, however subordinate, is set forth naturally and in its true proportion and relation, without effort, without failure, we must feel in presence of {310} an intellectual manifestation the equal in quality and intensity of the finest achievements of warlike action, of forensic argument, or of scientific or philosophical adjudication.

In all battles two things are usually required of the Commander-in-Chief: to make a good plan for his army and, secondly, to keep a strong reserve. Both these are also obligatory upon the painter. To make a plan, thorough reconnaissance of the country where the battle is to be fought is needed. Its fields, its mountains, its rivers, its bridges, its trees, its flowers, its atmosphere—all require and repay attentive observation from a special point of view. One is quite astonished to find how many things there are in the landscape, and in every object in it, one never noticed before. And this is a tremendous new pleasure and interest which invests every walk or drive with an added object. So many colours on the hillside, each different in shadow and in sunlight; such brilliant reflections in the pool, each a key lower than what they repeat; such lovely lights gilding or silvering surface or outline, all tinted exquisitely with pale colour, rose, orange, green, or violet. I found myself instinctively as I walked noting the tint and character of a leaf, the dreamy purple shades of mountains, the exquisite lacery of winter branches, the dim pale silhouettes of far horizons. And I had lived for over forty years without ever noticing any of them except in a general way, as one might look at a crowd and say, 'What a lot of people!'

I think this heightened sense of observation of Nature is one of the chief delights that have come to me through trying to paint. No

6. Paintings by the preeminent English artist J. M. W. Turner (1775–1851), whose best-known works are probably *The Fighting Téméraire* (1838), *Slave Ship* (1840), and *Rain, Steam, and Speed* (1844), and whose treatment of light influenced the Impressionists.

doubt many people who are lovers of art have acquired it in a high degree without actually practising. But I expect that nothing will make one observe more quickly or more thoroughly than having to face the difficulty of representing the thing observed. And mind you, if you do observe accurately and with refinement, and if you do record what you have seen with tolerable correspondence, the result follows on the canvas with startling obedience. Even if only four or five main features are {311} seized and truly recorded, these by themselves will carry a lot of ill-success or half-success. Answer five big questions out of all the hundreds in the examination paper correctly and well, and though you may not win a prize, at any rate you will not be absolutely ploughed.

But in order to make his plan, the General must not only reconnoitre the battle-ground, he must also study the achievements of the great Captains of the past. He must bring the observations he has collected in the field into comparison with the treatment of similar incidents by famous chiefs. Then the galleries of Europe take on a new—and to me at least a severely practical—interest. 'This, then, is how —— painted a cataract. Exactly, and there is that same light I noticed last week in the waterfall at ——.' And so on. You see the difficulty that baffled you yesterday; and you see how easily it has been overcome by a great or even by a skilful painter. Not only is your observation of Nature sensibly improved and developed, but you look at the masterpieces of art with an analysing and a comprehending eye.

The whole world is open with all its treasures. The simplest objects have their beauty. Every garden presents innumerable fascinating problems. Every land, every parish, has its own tale to tell. And there are many lands differing from each other in countless ways, and each presenting delicious variants of colour, light, form, and definition. Obviously, then, armed with a paint-box, one cannot be bored, one cannot be left at a loose end, one cannot 'have several days on one's hands.' Good gracious! what there is to admire and how little time there is to see it in! For the first time one begins to

envy Methuselah.[7] No doubt he made a very indifferent use of his opportunities.

But it is in the use and withholding of their reserves that the great commanders have generally excelled. After all, when once the last reserve has been thrown in, the commander's part is played. If that does not win the battle, he has nothing else to give. The event must be left to luck {312} and to the fighting troops. But these last, in the absence of high direction, are apt to get into sad confusion, all mixed together in a nasty mess, without order or plan—and consequently without effect. Mere masses count no more. The largest brush, the brightest colours cannot even make an impression. The pictorial battlefield becomes a sea of mud mercifully veiled by the fog of war. It is evident there has been a serious defeat. Even though the General plunges in himself and emerges bespattered, as he sometimes does, he will not retrieve the day.

In painting, the reserves consist in Proportion or Relation. And it is here that the art of the painter marches along the road which is traversed by all the greatest harmonies in thought. At one side of the palette there is white, at the other black; and neither is ever used 'neat.' Between these two rigid limits all the action must lie, all the power required must be generated. Black and white themselves placed in juxtaposition make no great impression; and yet they are the most that you can do in pure contrast. It is wonderful—after one has tried and failed often—to see how easily and surely the true artist is able to produce every effect of light and shade, of sunshine and shadow, of distance or nearness, simply by expressing justly the relations between the different planes and surfaces with which he is dealing. We think that this is founded upon a sense of proportion, trained no doubt by practice, but which in its essence is a frigid manifestation of mental power and size. We think that the same mind's eye that can justly survey and appraise and prescribe beforehand the values of a truly great picture in one all-embracing regard, in one flash of simultaneous and homogeneous comprehension, would also with a certain acquaintance with the special technique be able to

7. According to *Genesis* 5:27, he lived for 969 years; he was the grandfather of Noah.

pronounce with sureness upon any other high activity of the human intellect. This was certainly true of the great Italians.

I have written in this way to show how varied are the delights which may be gained by those who enter hope{313}fully and thoughtfully upon the pathway of painting; how enriched they will be in their daily vision, how fortified in their independence, how happy in their leisure. Whether you feel that your soul is pleased by the conception or contemplation of harmonies, or that your mind is stimulated by the aspect of magnificent problems, or whether you are content to find fun in trying to observe and depict the jolly things you see, the vistas of possibility are limited only by the shortness of life. Every day you may make progress. Every step may be fruitful. Yet there will stretch out before you an ever-lengthening, ever-ascending, ever-improving path. You know you will never get to the end of the journey. But this, so far from discouraging, only adds to the joy and glory of the climb.

Try it, then, before it is too late and before you mock at me. Try it while there is time to overcome the preliminary difficulties. Learn enough of the language in your prime to open this new literature to your age. Plant a garden in which you can sit when digging days are done. It may be only a small garden, but you will see it grow. Year by year it will bloom and ripen. Year by year it will be better cultivated. The weeds will be cast out. The fruit-trees will be pruned and trained. The flowers will bloom in more beautiful combinations. There will be sunshine there even in the winter-time, and cool shade and the play of shadow on the pathway in the shining days of June.

I must say I like bright colours. I agree with Ruskin[8] in his denunciation of that school of painting who 'eat slate-pencil and chalk, and assure everybody that they are nicer and purer than strawberries and plums.'[9] I cannot pretend to feel impartial about the colours. I rejoice with the brilliant ones, and am genuinely sorry for the poor

8. John Ruskin (1819–1900), the foremost art critic of the nineteenth century; he was himself an artist, author, and poet. He was a staunch defender of J. M. W. Turner in the face of hostile traditionalists.

9. From John Ruskin, *The Elements of Drawing—Three Letters to Beginners* (1857), letter III, "On Colour and Composition."

browns. When I get to heaven I mean to spend a considerable portion of my first million years in painting, and so get to the bottom of the subject. But then I shall require a still gayer palette than I get here below. I expect orange and vermilion will be the darkest, dullest {314} colours upon it, and beyond them there will be a whole range of wonderful new colours which will delight the celestial eye.

Chance led me one autumn to a secluded nook on the Côte d'Azur,[10] between Marseilles[11] and Toulon,[12] and there I fell in with one or two painters who revelled in the methods of the modern French school. These were disciples of Cézanne.[13] They view Nature as a mass of shimmering light in which forms and surfaces are comparatively unimportant, indeed hardly visible, but which gleams and glows with beautiful harmonies and contrasts of colour. Certainly it was of great interest to me to come suddenly in contact with this entirely different way of looking at things. I had hitherto painted the sea flat, with long, smooth strokes of mixed pigment in which the tints varied only by gradations. Now I must try to represent it by innumerable small separate lozenge-shaped points and patches of colour—often pure colour—so that it looked more like a tessellated pavement than a marine picture. It sounds curious. All the same, do not be in a hurry to reject the method. Go back a few yards and survey the result. Each of these little points of colour is now playing his part in the general effect. Individually invisible, he sets up a strong radiation, of which the eye is conscious without detecting the cause. Look also at the blue of the Mediterranean. How can you depict and record it? Certainly not by any single colour that was ever manufactured. The only way in which that luminous intensity of blue can be simulated is by this multitude of tiny points of varied colour all in true relation to the rest of the scheme. Difficult? Fascinating!

Nature presents itself to the eye through the agency of these individual points of light, each of which sets up the vibrations pecu-

10. The French Riviera on the Mediterranean coast, running from the Italian border west to Hyères.

11. On the south coast, it is France's largest commercial port.

12. A large naval base on France's south coast.

13. Paul Cézanne (1839–1906), French post-Impressionist painter.

liar to its colour. The brilliancy of a picture must therefore depend partly upon the frequency with which these points are found on any given area of the canvas, and partly on their just relation to one another. Ruskin says in his *Elements of Drawing*,[14] from which I have {315} already quoted, 'You will not, in Turner's largest oil pictures, perhaps six or seven feet long by four or five high, find one spot of colour as large as a grain of wheat ungradated.' But the gradations of Turner differ from those of the modern French school by being gently and almost imperceptibly evolved one from another instead of being bodily and even roughly separated; and the brush of Turner followed the form of the objects he depicted, while our French friends often seem to take a pride in directly opposing it. For instance, they would prefer to paint a sea with up and down strokes rather than with horizontal; or a tree-trunk from right to left rather than up and down. This, I expect, is due to falling in love with one's theories, and making sacrifices of truth to them in order to demonstrate fidelity and admiration.

But surely we owe a debt to those who have so wonderfully vivified, brightened, and illuminated modern landscape painting. Have not Manet[15] and Monet,[16] Cézanne and Matisse,[17] rendered to painting something of the same service which Keats[18] and Shelley[19] gave to poetry after the solemn and ceremonious literary perfections of the eighteenth century? They have brought back to the pictorial art a new draught of *joie de vivre*; and the beauty of their work is instinct with gaiety, and floats in sparkling air.

I do not expect these masters would particularly appreciate my defence, but I must avow an increasing attraction to their work. Lucid and exact expression is one of the characteristics of the French mind. The French language has been made the instrument of the admirable gift. Frenchmen talk and write just as well about painting as they have done about love, about war, about diplomacy, or cook-

14. In the same letter.

15. Edouard Manet (1832–1883), French Impressionist painter.

16. Claude Oscar Monet (1840–1926), a founder of French Impressionist painting.

17. Henri Matisse (1869–1954), French painter known for his use of color.

18. John Keats (1795–1821), one of the principal poets of the English Romantic movement.

19. Percy Bysshe Shelley (1792–1822), one of the major English Romantic poets.

ing. Their terminology is precise and complete. They are therefore admirably equipped to be teachers in the theory of any of these arts. Their critical faculty is so powerfully developed that it is perhaps some restraint upon achievement. But it is a wonderful corrective to others as well as to themselves.

{316} My French friend,[20] for instance, after looking at some of my daubs, took me round the galleries of Paris, pausing here and there. Wherever he paused, I found myself before a picture which I particularly admired. He then explained that it was quite easy to tell, from the kind of things I had been trying to do, what were the things I liked. Never having taken any interest in pictures till I tried to paint, I had no preconceived opinions. I just felt, for reasons I could not fathom, that I liked some much more than others. I was astonished that anyone else should, on the most cursory observation of my work, be able so surely to divine a taste which I had never consciously formed. My friend said that it is not a bad thing to know nothing at all about pictures, but to have a matured mind trained in other things and a new strong interest for painting. The elements are there from which a true taste in art can be formed with time and guidance, and there are no obstacles or imperfect conceptions in the way. I hope this is true. Certainly the last part is true.

Once you begin to study it, all Nature is equally interesting and equally charged with beauty. I was shown a picture by Cézanne of a blank wall of a house, which he had made instinct with the most delicate lights and colours. Now I often amuse myself when I am looking at a wall or a flat surface of any kind by trying to distinguish all the different colours and tints which can be discerned upon it, and considering whether these arise from reflections or from natural hue. You would be astonished the first time you tried this to see how many and what beautiful colours there are even in the most commonplace objects, and the more carefully and frequently you look the more variations do you perceive.

20. David Coombs and Minnie Churchill argue in *Sir Winston Churchill's Life Through His Paintings* (116 note 8) that "This is almost certainly Charles Montag who[m] Churchill met in 1915, who arranged his exhibition at the Galerie Druet in Paris in 1921 and, until his death in 1956, was to be a constant painting companion of Churchill's."

But these are no reasons for limiting oneself to the plainest and most ordinary objects and scenes. Mere prettiness of scene, to be sure, is not needed for a beautiful picture. In fact, artificially-made pretty places are very often a hindrance to a good picture. Nature will hardly stand a double process of beautification: one layer of {317} idealism on top of another is too much of a good thing. But a vivid scene, a brilliant atmosphere, novel and charming lights, impressive contrasts, if they strike the eye all at once, arouse an interest and an ardour which will certainly be reflected in the work which you try to do, and will make it seem easier.

It would be interesting if some real authority investigated carefully the part which memory plays in painting. We look at the object with an intent regard, then at the palette, and thirdly at the canvas. The canvas receives a message dispatched usually a few seconds before from the natural object. But it has come through a post-office *en route*. It has been transmitted in code. It has been turned from light into paint. It reaches the canvas a cryptogram. Not until it has been placed in its correct relation to everything else that is on the canvas can it be deciphered, is its meaning apparent, is it translated once again from mere pigment into light. And the light this time is not of Nature but of Art. The whole of this considerable process is carried through on the wings or the wheels of memory. In most cases we think it is the wings—airy and quick like a butterfly from flower to flower. But all heavy traffic and all that has to go a long journey must travel on wheels.

In painting in the open air the sequence of actions is so rapid that the process of translation into and out of pigment may seem to be unconscious. But all the greatest landscapes have been painted indoors, and often long after the first impressions were gathered. In a dim cellar the Dutch or Italian master recreated the gleaming ice of a Netherlands carnival or the lustrous sunshine of Venice or the Campagna. Here, then, is required a formidable memory of the visual kind. Not only do we develop our powers of observation, but also those of carrying the record—of carrying it through an extraneous medium and of reproducing it, hours, days, or even months after the scene has vanished or the sunlight died.

{318} I was told by a friend that when Whistler[21] guided a school in Paris he made his pupils observe their model on the ground floor, and then run upstairs and paint their picture piece by piece on the floor above. As they became more proficient he put their easels up a storey higher, till at last the *élite* were scampering with their decision up six flights into the attic—praying it would not evaporate on the way. This is, perhaps, only a tale. But it shows effectively of what enormous importance a trained, accurate, retentive memory must be to an artist; and conversely what a useful exercise painting may be for the development of an accurate and retentive memory.

There is no better exercise for the would-be artist than to study and devour a picture, and then, without looking at it again, to attempt the next day to reproduce it. Nothing can more exactly measure the progress both of observation and memory. It is still harder to compose out of many separate, well-retained impressions, aided though they be by sketches and colour notes, a new complete conception. But this is the only way in which great landscapes have been painted—or can be painted. The size of the canvas alone precludes its being handled out of doors. The fleeting light imposes a rigid time-limit. The same light never returns. One cannot go back day after day without the picture getting stale. The painter must choose between a rapid impression, fresh and warm and living, but probably deserving only of a short life, and the cold, profound, intense effort of memory, knowledge, and will-power, prolonged perhaps for weeks, from which a masterpiece can alone result. It is much better not to fret too much about the latter. Leave to the masters of art trained by a lifetime of devotion the wonderful process of picture-building and picture-creation. Go out into the sunlight and be happy with what you see.

Painting is complete as a distraction. I know of nothing which, without exhausting the body, more entirely absorbs the mind. Whatever the worries of the hour or the threats {319} of the future, once the picture has begun to flow along, there is no room for them in the mental screen. They pass out into shadow and darkness. All

21. James McNeill Whistler (1834–1903), an American-born, British-based artist.

one's mental light, such as it is, becomes concentrated on the task. Time stands respectfully aside, and it is only after many hesitations that luncheon knocks gruffly at the door. When I have had to stand up on parade, or even, I regret to say, in church, for half an hour at a time, I have always felt that the erect position is not natural to man, has only been painfully acquired, and is only with fatigue and difficulty maintained. But no one who is fond of painting finds the slightest inconvenience, as long as the interest holds, in standing to paint for three or four hours at a stretch.

Lastly, let me say a word on painting as a spur to travel. There is really nothing like it. Every day and all day is provided with its expedition and its occupation—cheap, attainable, innocent, absorbing, recuperative. The vain racket of the tourist gives place to the calm enjoyment of the philosopher, intensified by an enthralling sense of action and endeavour. Every country where the sun shines and every district in it has a theme of its own. The lights, the atmosphere, the aspect, the spirit, are all different; but each has its native charm. Even if you are only a poor painter you can feel the influence of the scene, guiding your brush, selecting the tubes you squeeze on to the palette. Even if you cannot portray it as you see it, you feel it, you know it, and you admire it for ever. When people rush about Europe in the train from one glittering centre of work or pleasure to another, passing—at enormous expense—through a series of mammoth hotels and blatant carnivals, they little know what they are missing, and how cheaply priceless things can be obtained. The painter wanders and loiters contentedly from place to place, always on the look out for some brilliant butterfly of a picture which can be caught and set up and carried safely home.

Now I am learning to like painting even on dull days. {320} But in my hot youth I demanded sunshine. Sir William Orpen[22] advised me to visit Avignon[23] on account of its wonderful light, and certainly

22. Sir William Newenham Montague Orpen (1878–1931), Irish portrait painter. In 1916, when Churchill returned from his military service in France, Orpen painted his portrait. In 1949, Churchill said of the painting to Sir John Rothenstein, director of the Tate Gallery, "Yes, it's good . . . in fact when he painted it I'd lost pretty well everything."
23. A town on the River Rhône in Provence, southern France, noted for its fourteenth-century Palace of the Popes, built when there were rival pontiffs in Rome and Avignon.

there is no more delightful centre for a would-be painter's activities: then Egypt, fierce and brilliant, presenting in infinite variety the single triplex theme of the Nile, the desert, and the sun; or Palestine, a land of rare beauty—the beauty of the turquoise and the opal—which well deserves the attention of some real artist, and has never been portrayed to the extent that is its due. And what of India? Who has ever interpreted its lurid splendours? But after all, if only the sun will shine, one does not need to go beyond one's own country. There is nothing more intense than the burnished steel and gold of a Highland stream; and at the beginning and close of almost every day the Thames[24] displays to the citizens of London glories and delights which one must travel far to rival.

Churchill visited Avignon in 1931, and several of his paintings, one of them in the collection of the sultan of Brunei, depict the palace.

24. The river flowing through the center of London.

Directions to Nichols Camp Rd, Eaton, NY 13334
24.0 mi – about **35 mins**

Clinton, NY

Step	Distance
1. Head **west** on **S Park Row** toward **Williams St**	go 102 ft total 102 ft
2. Continue onto **College St**	go 0.1 mi total 0.2 mi
3. Turn left onto **Franklin Ave**	go 0.1 mi total 0.3 mi

Step	Distance
4. Slight right onto **NY-12B S/Meadow St** Continue to follow NY-12B S About 12 mins	go 9.0 mi total 9.2 mi
5. Turn left onto **NY-12B S/NY-26 S/Madison St** Continue to follow NY-12B S/NY-26 S About 5 mins	go 2.5 mi total 11.7 mi

Step	Distance
6. Slight right toward **US-20 W**	go 0.2 mi total 11.9 mi

Step	Distance
7. Continue straight onto **US-20 W** About 6 mins	go 4.5 mi total 16.4 mi

Step	Distance
8. Turn left onto **NY-26 S** About 11 mins	go 7.6 mi total 23.9 mi

Step	Distance
9. Turn left onto **Nichols Camp Rd** About 1 min	go 479 ft total 24.0 mi

Nichols Camp Rd, Eaton, NY 13334

These directions are for planning purposes only. You may find that construction projects, traffic, weather, or other events may cause conditions to differ from the map results, and you should plan your route accordingly. You must obey all signs or notices regarding your route.

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Directions weren't right? Please find your route on maps.google.com and click "Report a problem" at the bottom left.