



93129

# FROM VERSAILLES TO THE WAR

By H. IGNOTUS

*Topics  
of the  
Moment*

PALLAS PUBLISHING CO LTD  
12/13 HENRIETTA ST LONDON. W.C.2.

OSZK

Országos Széchényi Könyvtár

# FROM VERSAILLES TO THE WAR

by

HUGH IGNOTUS

PALLAS PUBLISHING COMPANY LIMITED  
38 GOSCHEN BUILDINGS, 12-13 HENRIETTA STREET  
LONDON, W.C.2

FROM VERSAILLES  
TO THE WAR

by  
HUGH IGNOTUS

OSZK

Országos Széchényi Könyvtár

93129



ORSZ. SZÉCHENYI-KÖNYVTÁR	
Növedéknapló	
1940. év	6845 sz.

Printed in Great Britain by SHERRATT & HUGHES, at the  
St. Ann's Press, Manchester.



# CONTENTS

PAGE

## I. THE LOST PEACE

5

Beggars in the hotel—Peace and peace treaties—  
“*Nie wieder krieg!*”

## II. “LA DOULOUREUSE”

11

Bills—From Tsar to Soviets—The Baltic—Biting  
off his own foot—Rome wants to be Rome—  
Smyrna, the “sphere of interest”—“*Mare nos-  
trum*”—From Abyssinia to Hitler—The corpse in  
the kitchen.

## III. THE PRINCIPLE OF NATIONALITIES

27

Beauty-treatment of maps—Nation and nationality  
—Artificial nations—Worse than a crime—Railway  
in a cul-de-sac—Bismarck, the British favourite—  
The buffer torn apart—“Danube Confederation”  
—Nations and humans.

## IV. “SAFE FOR DEMOCRACY”

49

## V. BREACH OF PROMISE

54

America regrets having created the world—Sheep  
in the pit—South America practises philosophy in  
Europe—Policeman without a truncheon—Demo-  
cracy on the run—Democracy and Bolshevism—  
Forsaken Weimar—Guns against workers’ flats—  
The Hradsin sleeps—Teschen was their only  
sorrow.

## VI. THINGS WHICH MIGHT HAVE BEEN DONE

71

The murdered South German—A nation  
“omitted”—Plebiscite: for Hitler—There was no  
need to shoot himself—Postponed war: forfeited  
peace—The whale submerged.



# I

## THE LOST PEACE

### BEGGARS IN THE HOTEL

IT HAPPENED in Lucerne, in the courtyard of the four-storied Hotel National, on a summer afternoon. A starving street singer had been yodelling half an hour at the top of his voice, stretching his neck towards the distinguished guests staring down from the upper floors—but there was not among them a single charitable soul who would throw even a penny to the miserable fellow.

This scene is described in one of Tolstoi's early short stories, *Lucerne*, and the hero of the story, the young Prince Nechlyndow, whom the author had made more or less autobiographical, becomes highly indignant over it. "Crimean War?" he bursts out—this war was just being fought at that time—"Napoleon the Third? Victoria? No, the *real* events of the nineteenth century are contained in *this* scene!"

Fifty or sixty years passed, new figures arose, a new century arrived. It was in January 1919 that in the lounge of another Swiss hotel, the Bernese Hotel Bellevue, a few leaders of the Second International were sitting together for the first time after the war.

It was a great occasion. The prohibition of communication with the enemy had been hardly lifted between victors and vanquished; whoever wanted to reach anyone from the opposite camp preferred to do so through intermediaries. But the Socialists had broken the ice and during the meetings or after the dinners there was a spirit of brotherhood and friendship among them. Two British delegates had the place of honour in the corner at the Hotel Bellevue—none other than Ramsay MacDonald and Arthur Henderson. And at their side two guests of a much



smaller, distant, vanquished Danubian country—one of them a Socialist Minister of State who had come as a member of the Party, the other a left-wing writer who was representing the case of his country. They listened anxiously to the news of what was being prepared at the Paris Peace Conference. They were horrified about the prospects of Central Europe if it should be cut up in the way it was planned and they were trying to explain all this to their Western comrades. "It will be a place of beggars and adventurers, the whole of Middle Europe!" they protested, perhaps with more excitement than is usual in a friendly discussion. The two gentlemen who, in spite of being Socialists, still represented one of the foremost great powers among beggarly little countries, were listening politely. They kept silent, did not utter one word. Then, with the same politeness, they turned to their other neighbours. . .

The opportunity had passed. And who knows whether this little scene did not contain the whole history of the twentieth century?

### PEACE AND PEACE TREATIES

The best conceived peace of history was the Westphalian Peace of 1648—at least the most carefully deliberated one. War, the famous Thirty Years War, had really lasted three decades, but the experiments or discussions of peace had begun twelve years before its end. Finally they could stand it no longer; the whole of Europe was panting with exhaustion, people had come to hate all war and tried to find a means to avoid it in the future. Even such a great scientist and experienced diplomat as Leibniz—the greatest philosopher of the age, who had grown up in the atmosphere of the Westphalian Treaty—took the idea of eternal peace seriously; seen through modern eyes his essay about it is doubly interesting. In that age religion was the pivot



of everything—just like the national ideas and the social questions of to-day—and Leibniz saw the key of eternal peace in the reconciliation of the Roman Catholic and the Protestant Churches. He did not consider this an impossibility, although he did not deceive himself either about the masters of the world or human beings generally. “To preach peace while inflicting on humans whatever a war can inflict on them; not to believe in right; not to know mercy; never to talk clearly; not to shoulder any obligations but at the same time not to let the other party safeguard himself by armies or alliances; to break one’s word and try to justify it in a way which would make even a simpleton ridiculous; to add shame to torture and rape, destruction to robbery; all this hurts almost more than the losses themselves!” he writes in French—and save for his somewhat antiquated French it might have been Daladier writing about Hitler. He does not even think of the way which so many have rued in our days—one-sided disarmament; he even denounces “the egoists and cowards who consider the taxes too high, shirk the duty of stemming the flood of blood which the tyrant hungering for conquest releases upon the peaceful neighbour . . .” So he is a pacifist but a militant pacifist—like Cromwell, Leibniz also trusts in God but keeps his powder dry. But even so, among armed States, he can conceive that—and the modern reader may well rub his eyes—“just as a State is formed by formerly independent individuals shouldering a common bond, independent countries can also accept—just like free individuals, in the form of laws or customs—a common bond.” Leibniz wrote this in Latin, but otherwise it might easily have been written by President Wilson—this is clearly Wilson’s League of Nations which he forced into being at the Paris Conference after the Great War. But not even a League of Nations could be created in Leibniz’s time, let alone eternal peace. In vain they toiled for twelve years on the Westphalian Peace—soon

there was war again, ending in the Pyrenean Peace, followed by the Treaty of Utrecht, then the Peace of Hubertsburg, later that of Lunéville—and so on and up to the present day. After Utrecht it was the French Abbé de St. Pierre, after the French Revolution the English utilitarian Bentham, among the devastations of the Napoleonic Wars the German idealist Kant, who all worked out plans for “eternal peace”—yet the politicians always upset what was planned by the philosophers.

There was one peace, that of Frankfurt in 1871, at the end of the Franco-Prussian War, built up so cleverly by the otherwise overbearing Bismarck, that for half a century there was on the whole peace in the world. Of course Bismarck continued to direct German policy for twenty years and who knows, if the bungling Kaiser had not pushed this master from his place, if the Great War would have been unavoidable in 1914? Half a century of peace is certainly something unparalleled in European history, and we have to go back two thousand years, to ancient Rome and the age of the Antonines, to find another example of it. After the Great War, the world was less lucky with the Versailles Treaty and the others made in Parisian suburbs. During the world war sixty-five million soldiers of five continents were under arms. Eight millions had fallen. Nine millions were maimed. Twenty-one millions were wounded. As for its cost—damages caused, profits unreaped—it was about four hundred milliard dollars. And all this was wasted money, wasted blood, life and property sacrificed in vain. It was not even an investment or a lesson. There is war again to-day, the *same* war—and in it there is nothing the world has not to learn afresh.

“NIE WIEDER KRIEG!”

It was just about twenty years ago, about Christmas 1919, that the writer happened to arrive in Berlin on his way



from Switzerland. He had already been there once during the war, at the beginning of 1916, and of course even then Berlin was no longer the brilliant city of pre-war years where homes rivalled each other in comfort, the streets in animated life, the shops in rich merchandise, men in efficiency—and even women became aware they were no less good-looking than, and could be as well-dressed as, the women of Paris or London. Although this plenty had already been straitened by the war, what was all this compared with what the wanderer found in 1919? Sometimes a night-light reveals more than the mid-day sun; and so revealing was it when in the fog and slush, under houses from which the paint was flaking, stumbling across holes, entangled in the barbed wire of recent street battles, the stranger read, in a dusty basement window, written in large clumsy letters on a torn page of a copybook: “*Ein gut erhaltener Damenhut zu verkaufen* [A well-preserved lady’s hat for sale].” A well-preserved lady’s hat—the traveller was coming from Geneva, where in the dazzling Kursaal women were dancing every night in backless and almost frontless frocks, in huge feathered hats—new ones—and here a lady’s hat was regarded as an elementary necessity which could provide a hunk of bread! Thus the women appeared in the glimmering gaslight ragged and slovenly—and their menfolk in shabby uniforms, pale with hunger and dirt. Never was there so much disillusionment as in these bloodshot eyes! Never so much doubt as in the drooping corners of these lips! And this started immediately beyond Basle at the southern frontier; it was the same in the north, right to the harbour of Warnemuende—and from south to north, from west to east, *one* feeling, *one* determination, *one* furious intention filled the German landscape, the German soul: *Nie wieder Krieg!* No more war!

And this country and this people, multiplied and strengthened, driven by men whose unworthiness com-

pared with its spiritual standards is almost a caricature—this Germany is again in arms to-day. They are sending death in front of them, they have to be met by death, and if it were not held at bay by annihilation, the life they would force on this world would be worse than death. What has made them so wild? What made them so powerful? How could they descend to such outrage? How can they again overrun the world with war after they have fallen in war and become fettered in peace? How did Germany find the opportunity again? Wherein has she the possibilities? By her own efforts? By the carelessness of others? Was her case irrefutable? Or was Justice too lazy to take care of itself? Was the Versailles Treaty bad? Or did those who were responsible for it fail to make use of it? Did Germans do more than could be expected of human beings? Or did their former opponents do less than they owed to their own signatures? The Western Powers had won the world war. If there is now war again, they have lost the peace. This proves the fault of either Versailles or the policy of the following years—or both. Human beings, on the whole, prefer death to learning. And whatever happens a second time is never the exact replica of the first occasion. And yet the flames raise their ugly heads so quickly in the same place as last time that whoever has been burning his hand draws it away quickly. How were these fires lit; what embers caused them? This book aims at answering this question.



## II

### “*LA DOULOUREUSE*”

#### BILLS

WHEN the Great War started early in August 1914 not all the Powers who later became involved in it were lined up.

On the Allied side, only Montenegro joined Great Britain, France, Russia, Serbia and Belgium a few days later. Japan, an ally of the British, entered the war only in November; Portugal only in 1916.

In the same way, on the side of the Central Powers, Germany and Austria-Hungary were strengthened by Turkey only in November and by Bulgaria a year later, in October 1915.

For the time being Rumania, although having a military alliance with Austria-Hungary, did not take part in the hostilities. Of the European great powers Italy stayed out; nevertheless she also was a partner to the Triple Alliance with Austria-Hungary and Germany. It is true that Rumania and Italy alike possessed the right, according to the letter of their agreements, to remain neutral. But this neutrality when a friend was in trouble was in itself a help to the enemy. Everybody expected it, therefore, to become an armed assistance. In the Balkans there was also Greece with its important harbour, Salonica, a strategic point of paramount significance; what would she do or what could she be persuaded or even forced to do? The earth was rumbling under immense empires. Turkey had been disintegrating for generations. Who would get her territories if she should be finally dissolved?

It was clear that if the question was who could promise more, especially of property not his own, then in this respect no side would spare the promises. It was still summer when war broke out—and the German Kaiser, with

the innocence of a child brought up by flatterers who had never yet stumbled into reality, raved to his soldiers that they could all go home to their womenfolk by the time the leaves had fallen. His generals were perhaps less optimistic; the Austrian C.-in-C., Conrad, least of all. Nor did the Allies deceive themselves about the duration of the war. Of Kitchener alone, it is known that he measured it at once in years and planned accordingly. The governments were less sure about plans. For them every passing day brought new questions, and they answered them as they could just afford or according to the new prospects. While the war spread from country to country, progressed from stage to stage, this could be projected here, that might be possible to accept as an obligation; one could be rewarded if he deferred, the other could be robbed of what he did not deserve; it was all patchwork, distribution of spoils while the right hand did not always know what the left had already given . . . By the time when, four and a half years later, under circumstances changed by the destruction of war and revolutions, the Peace Conference met at Paris, so many plans and promises, aims, pretensions and obligations had been gathered and were awaiting fulfilment or settlement that there is only one word for all that—the name given in Paris to the bill which the waiter puts on a plate in front of the guest after a big “binge”: “*la Douloureuse*.”

Constantinople and the Baltic, Czechoslovakia, Poland and Jugoslavia, Africa and Asia Minor, the Adriatic and the Dardanelles, the Banat and Kiaotsau, the Rhine, the Tisza and the Prut, Bolshevism and Democracy, the renaissance of countries and national self-determination; they were all *douloureuses*. It would have needed a god to clear a path in this maze; but even he must have had a free hand and foresight enough to see the end of the road. But around the green tables of Paris only human beings were sitting, and in the end they became so tied up



in the matter that they had only one thought: to free themselves at any price. Lloyd George tried to bring some planning into the regulations but the others, the majority, were afraid of every further moment; and the main treaty, that of Versailles, was signed by the Germans on June 28, 1919, exactly five years after the Sarajevo murder which had unchained the war. The others signed it too—General Smuts, who was well experienced in making peace treaties, with the remark that this did not mean he approved of it, but the war had to end at last! The only trouble was that it did not end. It lurked hidden for twenty years and now it has broken out again, on sea, on earth and in the air. The “ whatever price ” is paid by the same nations which have already shouldered the cost once.

Let us review the facts.

#### FROM THE TSAR TO THE SOVIETS

We might begin with Russia, as it was practically by her mobilisation the war started.

The Tsar entered the war with the intention of waiting and seeing—but anyhow he would progress to Constantinople, take the Dardanelles and break a gateway for his immense European possessions in the south, the Black Sea and Mediterranean. This had been a dream of the Tsars since Peter the Great. And the Tsar planned to add a little strip of Turko-Armenian territory as well—having taken the trouble already.

The Allies did not offer any opposition to this.

Not even Britain, although ever since the Crimean War she had fought the duel of the whale and the bear with Russia. Some years previously they had reached a more or less full agreement on Asia. Now Britain did not mind if the Bear tramped down to the sea. As late as January 1917, when the British Government prepared a list of its war aims at the request of President Wilson, there was a

point among them, stating the necessity of "the enfranchisement of populations, subject to the bloody tyranny of the Turks, the expulsion from Europe of the Ottoman Empire, decidedly alien to Western civilisation." In other words: Constantinople for the Tsar.

This was in January. But soon some things happened which shook this recently unshatterable decision.

In spring the Russian revolution came.

Tsardom failed and fell.

Ludendorff, the German Chief of the General Staff, smuggled Lenin and his associates in sealed wagons into the middle class and socialist revolution—like lice into a fur coat—smuggling in with them Bolshevism.

By November the Bolsheviks had gained the upper hand and there followed the sovietisation of Russia, after which it was no longer natural that instead of the White Tsar the Red Tsar should now have an outlet to the Mediterranean. Nor was natural the secondary consideration that the Armenian chicken should be transferred from the beak of the Turkish hawk into the claws of the Russian kite. The Turks had been enemies in the war, no doubt. But Constantinople was still safer in their hands than in those of the Soviet. Let them—at the most—destroy the fortifications of the Dardanelles by which they could block the Western fleets from the Black Sea.

This was the decision of the Paris Conference.

And at the same stage it cut off the Soviet in the north, across the Baltic, from the sea. "*Anno Versailles*" it would have been strange if the hardly checked Germany had received the Baltic Sea as a kind of *mare nostrum* for her own exclusive use—not to mention the fact that Germany had become in the meantime a republic and a democracy; and although she did this at the command of the Western Powers, the clerks and lawyers of Weimar, in their unpressed trousers, found little sympathy in the fashionable diplomacy of the great world. Luckily, side by



side with Wilson's democratic *marotte* there was another magic word: “ *the reorganisation of Europe . . . based . . . upon the principle of nationalities.* ” The Conference took it up quickly; and through it Poland, Lithuania, Latvia, Estonia and Finland—the whole Baltic—were made independent after being torn from Russia's body.

### THE BALTIC

All this was certainly wise and fine both at the Black Sea and the Baltic. And Poland had certainly to be reborn, just as she is going to find a renaissance again, sooner or later.

And yet: when the Tsar promised during the war a “ *Polonia Restituta* ” he might have planned to have Ukrainians or even White Russians as belonging to it. Because he would have been a Tsar even of this restituted Poland, and the Ukrainians or White Russians would have found it a matter of indifference whether they served the Tsar from St. Petersburg or Warsaw. But in a Poland independent of any neighbour and reborn definitely in the name of the national idea in the age of nationalism, the number of non-Polish inhabitants under Polish rule was tragically high.

It was tragic that when recently the Soviet, taking the opportunity of the Polish defeat by the Nazis, walked without any risk right to the gates of Warsaw, they could even justify their action by the “ liberation of nationalities.”

It was just as tragic as the way in which the Paris Conference carried out the promise of Wilson's Fourteen Points about the outlet of Poland to the sea by turning the German Danzig, under the supervision of the League of Nations, into a Polish port and by cutting the Polish Corridor, leading to it, through the very body of Prussia. It was tragic that when the Nazis overran Poland some

months ago, they could repeat before God and men, and especially American public opinion: "What would you, Americans, say if New York were to become a Canadian port and from Montreal to the Hudson a corridor were to be cut which you could not use?"

The tragedy is when a good deed turns against its doer. The small Baltic nations were all entitled to a life independent of Russia—but it was tragic that lately the West could come to no agreement with the Soviet alone on the account of the Baltic arrangements, and therefore was unable to draw Russia into the Peace Front; while the Nazis could win the Soviet for their wartime background at the cost of the same Baltic people.

It was tragic that as the West, being unable to disrupt the Soviet Republic from outside, was therefore hesitating whether to feed the Nazis against Russia or to come to an understanding with the Soviet against the Nazis, who had become most uncomfortable in the meantime, all this could only end in war.

### BITING OFF HIS OWN FOOT

Nor was it wise that, leaving the Turks in Constantinople—which they did *faut de mieux* and to prevent anyone else from grabbing it—they did not leave them alone. They simply embittered the Turks; not only by taking away Egypt, Palestine and all their Arabian possessions, but also by trying to mutilate them everywhere in Europe and Asia Minor for the benefit of Greece, the latter having helped the Allies with all she could during the war. The Greeks had acquired great merits by their services, but since Sparta their military valour had somewhat declined—their G.O.M., Venizelos, had signal diplomatic gifts but was no soldier, while on the other hand the Turks found in Kemal a man who was statesman and soldier alike. It is said that the fox, being caught in a trap, bites off his own leg to



get his freedom. Thus Kemal threw away everything for himself and his people: the Sultanry, the Caliphate, the Mohammedan supremacy—in order to gather all strength in taking back everything from the Greeks which was given to them of the Turkish possessions. The Treaty of Lausanne, of Montreux, of Alexandrette, loosened in ten or fifteen years most of the suffocating dispositions of the Treaty of Sèvres which was used to hog-tie the Turk at the Paris Conference. The Turks could re-fortify the Dardanelles and the Thracian shores. Up in Asia Minor they re-occupied Smyrna, the French had to yield Alexandrette—and those who had frowned upon Turkey in 1919 had now to agree to “ keep smiling ” whether they liked it or not. This would have done no harm—except for the impression here and there in the world to the effect that “ the Western Powers? No need to bother them; you only have to show a little spirit and you can do whatever you want! ”

This was certainly madness. But it was a pity that only a war could restore general sanity.

And it was a pity that after creating in Paris an independent Armenia on the Turko-Russian border, the Russians took it back; then again Kemal took a slice; and now the Soviet can threaten a Turkey allied with Britain and France with the demand for Karso and Ardahan, the two Armenian towns which are allegedly populated with Russians.

It is a pity that after promising a “ national home ” during the war in Palestine to the Jews—which Foreign Secretary Balfour did in a letter—and letting the Zionists stake their lives on the belief that this “ home ” meant a State, at the same time an Arab chief also received a letter declaring Palestine Arabian territory. During a war such a muddle is understandable and forgivable. But even in peace a lot of Arabian, Jewish and even British blood was shed on this account, and the anti-British propagandists could take great delight in fingering this wound. And

what a testimony for the British mission it is that now when there is a war again, Arabs and Jews have joined in a truce and support Great Britain side by side—but at the same time it would be so much better if there were no Arab problem. What a pity that there ever was one.

Kemal forged his Turkey into supple steel. But it is questionable whether with all her loyalty Turkey is a sufficient bar to the Soviet if Russia's leaders decide to carry on the war along the Black Sea and in the Balkans.

### ROME WANTS TO BE ROME

After the Turkish and the Russian another *douloureuse*, a whole chain of *douloureuses*, follows: Italy.

War broke out in August 1914. But Italy deliberated till the new year whether it would be worth while to enter it and on which side.

Then she decided that it was worth while. And she entered it on the side of the Allies, as Austria-Hungary could not bring herself to pay the necessary price. Of course, Vienna would have had to give the beautiful Austrian-Italian districts which Rome fixed as a price out of her own possessions, while the Allies could make ample promises of territories which the Italians had previously to conquer themselves, and of expectations which could not come off. The Allies therefore promised everything the Italians wanted and an agreement was made in London, in April 1915. For the time being it was a secret one. But at the end of May Italy openly declared war on her former ally, Austria-Hungary. It took her more than a year before she declared war on Germany as well.

It must be remarked that when Italy made her choice she was risking her life. Of course she could hardly have stayed neutral. On three sides the sea surrounded her; coal, grain, almost all raw materials arrived in the country by sea-routes, and the British-French Fleet could have



simply starved her out—and her land frontier was open to the French Army. But the Germans, the Austrians and Hungarians from the north and the Balkans were not a pleasant prospect either. And the Austro-Hungarian Fleet also was in the Adriatic, a not altogether negligible factor.

Thus the Italians put everything into the war and hoped to get even more out of it. Not only did Italy want the territory which had remained unredeemed (*irredenta*) after Italian unity had been born in the nineteenth century—territory reaching right to the heart of the old German Tyrol, still under Habsburg rule, up to the Brenner Pass—but she also wanted the Balkan shore of the Adriatic, opposite her own Adriatic coast, with the islands in front; half of the palm-edged Dalmatia and, even further down, the harbour of Valona and its district in Albania. In the Mediterranean, from the eastern corner of which Europe, Asia Minor and Egypt could be watched at the same time, Italy wanted the Island of Rhodes and the Twelve Islands (Dodecanesos) for watch-towers—and she had a legal claim as she had owned them before. On the mainland of Asia Minor a so-called “sphere of interest,” while in Africa, if the British and French have laid hands upon the German possessions in Africa, the adequate increase of the Italian colonial empire! This was not haphazard greed. There was a plan behind it, the plan of an Italian world empire, as a third at the side of the British and the French. Rome, if she had taken up arms, wanted to become the ancient Rome. A master of her own land up to Germania. A master of the Adriatic as of her own sea (*mare nostrum*), with a free path towards the Balkans. A master of the Mediterranean, in the east opening up towards Asia Minor and Egypt, in the south renewing the traditions of Scipio Africanus.

When the Western Powers granted all this in the first crises of the war, they would have accepted everything in this situation, the more so because the promises were all

merely platonic, dividing the bear's skin before the bear was dead.

But as the war progressed and turned, the promises became highly actual—one after the other.

### SMYRNA, THE "SPHERE OF INTEREST"

First of all and very soon the "sphere of interest in Asia Minor." Turkey had become so disintegrated that her Arabian possessions were an easy prey for French and British ambitions and the two powers divided them out of hand. This happened in secret, but the Italians discovered it, protested sharply and demanded from her allies the exact definition of the "sphere of interest in Asia Minor" promised in London. As, according to an English historian, the Italians were at that time masters of the especially important sea-route of Salonica, the British and French Premiers hastened to reassure her on April 17, 1917, in St. Jean de Maurienne, and promised her Smyrna on the coast of Asia Minor. But by the time the war ended, Greece also presented the *douloureuse* after the victory and Venizelos, who was famous for his table-thumping, would not hear of any prevarication. Thus the Paris Conference ignored Italy and gave Smyrna to Venizelos. We know that Kemal, in revising the Treaty of Sèvres with bayonets, chased the Greeks out of Smyrna too, which is still Turkish. But this hardly plucked the thorn from the heart of the Italian ally, who felt badly treated.

### "MARE NOSTRUM"

Another step: the Adriatic point of the London agreement, the Balkan shore of the Adriatic and the whole Adriatic as a *mare nostrum*, Italy's own lake. . . .

At the beginning of the war nobody thought of abolishing Austria-Hungary as a power or even as an idea from



the map. They still remembered the hackneyed phrase of the nineteenth century: "If there were no Austria she would have to be invented." They only wanted to break her, perhaps even cut her up a little so that the Germans could not make much use of her support. Thereby she would retire from the Balkans, be forced out from the Adriatic and replaced everywhere by anti-German Italy. If for no other reason than because the Tsar, even if an invaluable ally and help, could he get Constantinople, would soon appear in the Mediterranean and the middle of European politics. It would be too much of a good thing if the Russians—partly helping, partly chastising their little Balkan kinsfolk, the Slavs—would march through their live or dead bodies suddenly right to the Adriatic. The Italian penetration of the Balkans would be a pleasant counter-pressure . . . and Italy, as the frontier guard of Western interests, was promised by the London agreement all the plums in the pie.

But by the beginning of 1919, when the Peace Conference met in Paris, all this was changed. Russia, the Bolshevik, did not receive anything; everything was taken away from her and she was so badly paralysed that she did not even count. Not only was Poland reborn—and now quite independently from Russia—but Serbia had bled so much in the war, Professor Masaryk, the great leader of the Czechs, had worked so brilliantly in America and London, that here and there and in Paris they were promised more and more for every new merit earned. Finally they were promised: the Serbians in the Balkans the "Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes" (the present Yugoslavia), the Czechs in the north, between Germany and Poland, "Czechoslovakia" . . . something completely new, as ethnography had never heard of a "Czechoslovak" people.

The two new States cut so deeply into Austria-Hungary's body and caused her so much loss of blood—not to speak



of Rumania, which received more than one-third of Hungary and the Austrian Bukovina—that Austria-Hungary was completely dead. Therefore the Western Powers did not need Italy any more as a counterbalance to the Austro-Hungarian monarchy. On the other hand, the two new Slav States—the Yugoslav and the Czech—were such great pets of the Western Powers, and so the Powers considered *them* as their frontier guards in the future, that the price had again to be paid by an ally which had rendered already all possible service. It was chiefly Wilson who, in the view of Jugoslavia, did not want to hear at the Peace Conference of the Adriatic becoming an Italian *mare nostrum* and Dalmatia Italian territory. From Trieste to the Albanian frontier—with the single exception of the city of Zara—the whole Balkan coast was given then to the Yugoslavs, and when the disappointed Italians demanded at least, as a compensation, the harbour of Fiume on the same coast, which was chiefly of Italian population and formerly a Hungarian port, they did not even get that. After so many humiliations the Italian statesmen hurried from Paris back to Rome for fresh instructions—and while they were absent for two weeks, the Conference fixed the Treaty of Versailles. . . . Yet Fiume's fate was not accepted: D'Annunzio, the poet, who had distinguished himself in the war with his flying adventures, losing one eye in a daring exploit, had another brain-wave; with a small group of freebooters he attacked Fiume, conquered and occupied it. Fiume is still Italian, just as Smyrna is Turkish . . . but the world again came to the conclusion at which the Turks had already arrived about Smyrna:

“There is no need to be afraid of the West; you simply have to place it in front of a *fait accompli*!” Thus the re-occupation of the Rhine became a *fait accompli*, thus the *Anschluss* followed, then Prague, after that Danzig—and finally war. . . .

# FROM ABYSSINIA TO HITLER

Events continued to unfold with the fatality of ancient tragedies also around the African point of the London agreement.

This stipulated that if France and Great Britain should receive the German possessions in Africa, then at the same time the colonial empire of Italy would also be increased.

France and Britain got their share. Even Belgium got a slice.

Only Italy did not get anything except a small adjustment of her already existing colony. This was the sole realisation of the dream of Scipio Africanus: a small frontier adjustment. *Passato pericolo, gabbato il Santo* (when the danger has passed, we throw the saint aside)! Thus runs an Italian proverb, and when the Italian Ministers hurried back from Rome to Paris and could only sign the final draft of the treaty, they were in a position to feel themselves what the “saint” must experience in such cases. That democracy collapsed in Italy was a direct consequence of this. The Italians felt themselves cheated and tricked by the Western democracies. And the door was opened to Fascism.

In 1915 Mussolini was one of the most important figures who decided his country to join the Allied cause. Later, when in power and master of Italy, he made a last attempt for a late settlement of accounts. In 1936 he went into Abyssinia, and the great Ethiopian affair followed in which the Western democracies introduced, through the League of Nations, the economic blockade of Fascism. The only trouble was that—and this is suicide in politics—these sanctions were without adequate means of enforcement. The participants in the blockade fell out of line, one after the other, and democracy proved to be helpless. Compared to this it was a secondary point that this incidental severity was not even just, because old agreements, new share-outs



and treaties entitled if not encouraged Italy to this conquest. And even if the League of Nations could feel no enthusiasm about a Fascist adventure, the slave-trading Abyssinian empire was not a democratic ideal either. The Italian King became Emperor of Abyssinia and the former Emperor, Haile Selassie—who would certainly have come to terms with Mussolini if he had foreseen the course of events—pleaded in vain before the League of Nations. Sometimes he can be seen around Bath and Bristol, the places of his exile, in his sky-blue cloak. His face shows his conviction that Democracy is a bad horse; only a fool would bet on it.

On the other hand Mussolini became weary of the part of a jilted lover and threw himself into Hitler's arms.

This happened in 1936—a momentous year.

The war of 1939 started three years earlier and not a few months ago.

### THE CORPSE IN THE KITCHEN

The other day a newspaper story related the experience of a Paris student who lost his appetite for life when he happened to glance into the kitchen of the small restaurant where he was in the habit of taking his meals—and there, in the kitchen, saw a corpse on the table. Half an arm had already been boiled by the *patronne*.

Austria-Hungary was put like such a corpse on the table of the Paris Conference. In fact she had been boiled already.

As late as January 1918 Lloyd George, the British Premier, assured the Austro-Hungarian government that the Allies did not plan the destruction of the Habsburg Empire; only they must give self-government to their nationalities. And a few days later Wilson's Fourteen Points repeated this demand.

But both Austria and Hungary had already been divided



by promises: first to Italy and Rumania, later to the Serbs, who had combined with the Southern Slavs into a Yugoslav kingdom; still later to the Czechs, who had formed an army in Siberia composed of Austrian prisoners of war and were fighting for a “Czechoslovakia.” Poland, whose renaissance was decided, had been promised the Austrian Galicia; and a few months after Lloyd George’s solemn assurance and Wilson’s reassuring points, Lansing, American State Secretary, and the Allies bound themselves so strongly to “Czechoslovak and Yugoslav independence” that only the Last Judgment could bring about a resurrection.

The Apocalypse has already begun with the present war—let us hope the war will prove propitious and the Judgment just. . . .

At the conference Austria-Hungary was mutilated to two small rumps and the bits shared out; after this the Paris peace table could be calmly tidied up.

But of those who had received the spoils, more or less all sickened of them.

It would be an impious thing to talk about Czechoslovakia and Poland. The contemporary doffs his hat and stands silently in the face of Fate.

But anyone believing in culture—whatever continent bore him, to whatever party he belongs—and being interested with all his hopes in the war of independence of the British and French democracies, must watch with anxiety Rumania, struggling with constant crises because she had taken an over-generous slice of her neighbours’ bodies in the Peace Treaties.

First of all not even the art of Titulescu could attain the Russo-Rumanian accord—and this was on account of Bessarabia—and the probable peace front which could have prevented the present war.

Now it is Hungary’s Transylvania and Bulgaria’s Dobrudja, which explain why Rumania has toiled in vain

till now to create the Balkan Bloc. And yet how much could depend on such a bloc in the present war?

The Paris Peace Conference, bound by contradictory promises, created order in a way which could only lead to anarchy. The peacemakers certainly desired peace honestly, and they believed that they had sown the seeds of peace.

But these seeds were dragon's teeth and their harvest was war.



### III

## THE PRINCIPLE OF NATIONALITIES

### BEAUTY-TREATMENT OF MAPS

THE main task of the Peace Conference was the reorganisation of Europe, based on the principle of nationalities. The Allies declared this as one of their peace aims; Wilson had bound himself to it in his Fourteen Points when, for instance, he demanded "a readjustment of the frontiers of Europe . . . along clearly recognisable lines of nationality." And although during the war it had been the German generals who agreed with their new friends (already at that time the Bolsheviks) that the small nations along the Russian Baltic should emancipate themselves from Russia "on the basis of the self-determination of peoples," the Peace Conference accepted this German-Bolshevik formula and thus Lithuania, Latvia and the other small Baltic countries were born. War had broken out around the ultimatum which the great Austro-Hungarian Empire had sent to little Serbia; and yet this great empire had been composed of small nations, hating and fighting each other.

Henceforth a new order was needed in which small nations and great empires alike could live in peace and get along with one another. The Conference talked a good deal about "nations" and "nationalities." They also mentioned "peoples" and "the right of self-determination." It would have been splendid if one could have been certain of the precise meaning of each of these expressions. Lloyd George was witty and supercilious at the same time when during the war and the peace negotiations he confessed in the House of Commons that he had no idea of the existence of Teschen until he had to decide "the Teschen question." This would have been no trouble—officials and experts are created to help politicians. And

by a coincidence President Wilson and Dr. Benes, the Czech delegate, were both professors of political sciences; all the likely problems of the Conference were in their spiritual domain. But this did not change the fact that the easier it was to speak of all these things, the more difficult it proved to state clearly what they meant, and that when professors and statesmen undertake to reorganise a continent "according to the principle of nationalities," it is just the same as if surgeons were to guarantee that all human beings should have perfectly symmetrical faces. Of course human features do show a certain symmetry, and surgeons are able to straighten curving noses and put eyebrows higher. But a humanity composed of individuals with perfectly symmetrical faces is nevertheless a Utopia—just as is the idea of a perfect national order of the world.

### NATION AND NATIONALITY

The national idea is not very old. One could say that it was invented by Napoleon. Anyhow, it was a sort of vanguard of the great French Revolution wherever it planned to destroy feudalism. So the Oxford Dictionary in one sense defines "national" as "of, or belonging to, the French Government, during the time of the First Republic 1793." Feudalism, especially in the West, had no knowledge of nations. Countries as entities did not belong to their inhabitants, but to their kings. Poitou was one day the French King's, the next it belonged to the King of England; one week Flanders was a possession of the Duke of Burgundy, the next that of the King of Spain; there were certain Frenchmen or Spaniards, but hardly a French or Spanish nation. It was later when the peoples and possessions of the French King were so closely welded by Richelieu that by the time revolution eliminated the King, the French nation remained a unity. But not only French-



men belonged to this French nation—Italians in Corsica and Germans in Alsace were also components of it, and still are. What are these French-Italians and French-Germans whose brothers live beyond the frontiers, in an independent Italian State, in their own German Reich, respectively? What are the Bretons, brothers of the English, what the Southern French Provençals, who are more akin to Italians or Spaniards than to the French? Are they nations? Are they nationalities? What would be their allegiance now if, in 1919, Europe had really been reorganised according to the principle of nationalities?

The Oxford Dictionary does not help here, as it does not differentiate between “nation” and “nationality”; after defining “nation” as “a race of people, characterised by common descent, language or history, usually organised as a separate political state and occupying a definite territory,” for “nationality” it has different definitions, such as “the fact of belonging to a particular nation” or “separate existence as a nation; national independence or consolidation,” and finally, simply “a nation.” As for Great Britain, the recent national registration in this country represented the list of those who were residing at midnight on September 29, 1939, in the United Kingdom and who could be either Spanish refugees, Polish Jews or German Nazis. As for America, they talk there of a “national cash register,” a counting machine which has nothing to do with the American nation or the United States. There is, of course, a British nation as there is also an American nation, and an Australian, and South African nation too. But neither in Great Britain, in the Dominions, nor throughout the British Commonwealth, nor in America, are the expressions “nation” or “nationality” terms of Common Law, nor are they connected constitutionally with the entity of the State or its party. On the other hand, for instance, in Hungary, which at the Paris Conference had been dismembered according to the

nationality principle, the "National Theatre" is even to-day a State theatre and the "National Bank" the State bank of issue. In these neighbourhoods "nation" is not only a conception in general currency but besides this it is also a politico-juridical and constitutional one, relating to the ethnical colour of the State, of the Commonwealth. And "nationality," as will be shown further on, means a different thing from "nation". Austria-Hungary—at that time simply "Austria"—had broken in 1804 from the Holy Roman German Empire when the Emperor Francis tired of Napoleon's constant attempts at the disintegration of his imperial domains. With the hereditary Austrian possessions and the Hungarian kingdom he set himself up independently as "Emperor of Austria". This was not a nominal difference: the Austrian hereditary possessions were the properties of the dynasty which obeyed the Emperor, but Hungary—although this was often lost in practice and constantly fought over by Hungarian revolutions—has been always a separate State, a sovereign kingdom; and the Habsburg Emperors were separately crowned as Hungarian Kings, in the manner of the Kings of England.

Now this Hungary was the country of the "Hungarian nation". Although originally, and especially after making settlements of foreign peoples, others than Magyars also lived there—for instance, the South Slav Croatian kingdom belonged to it since the early Middle Ages—its magnates and landed gentry, which, according to the conceptions of the age, counted alone as a "nation", were Hungarians. The deserving or the cunning of other races usually rose by becoming, in very large numbers, Hungarian magnates and nobles—somewhat as the Scottish and Irish become peers. It is a different question whether this was right or wrong and whether the Hungarians were good or bad brothers of the races living with them. Anyhow it would be wrong to answer this question



in connection with the *past* according to *present* standards. About eight-tenths of all that the *present* conception considers as a reproach of "oppression of other people" by the Hungarians was simply in accordance with the general social system of those days, and the Hungarian lower classes or commoners were just as badly off, in so far as they were badly off, as the non-Magyars. The peasant revolts were Hungarian and non-Hungarian alike. On the other hand, the Slovak or German artisan, merchant, lawyer, engineer, or civil servant living in Hungary was for a long time proud if he could call himself a Magyar. The general conception was probably best expressed by the words of a great Hungarian poet and general of the seventeenth century, Count Nicholas Zrinyi, who said: "I am a Croat and therefore a good Hungarian!" It was only at the beginning of the nineteenth century in Hungary, when the middle class and the "intelligentsia" had increased and become conscious, no longer wanting to endure the rule of the aristocrats, that the non-Magyars constructed in addition special nationalistic grievances and started nationalistic movements. This was also the time when the custom was introduced identifying the Hungarian State with the Hungarian "nation". Within this "nation" lived non-Hungarian "nationalities" which, while sharing with the Hungarians the private rights as well as the rights of subjects of the State, were also accorded peculiar rights regarding the use of their language, their churches, schools, and so on. Up to modern times, as long as the nobles alone possessed full citizenship the distinction between Hungarians and non-Hungarians could not come to the fore, if only because, right up to the middle of the nineteenth century, the language of Hungarian public life (as formerly in the case of the Poles) was Latin; and not all the Magyar nobles spoke Hungarian. Only in more recent times, when questions of equality of rights became a matter for legislation, was the distinction

between "nations" and "nationalities", as well as the custom of their expression as political terms, adopted in the wording of the laws.

### ARTIFICIAL NATIONS

It is not an unnecessary detour to tell all this; otherwise the reader would be faced with the same haziness about these matters as was the case with the members of the Paris Conference, while the representatives of pushing and upstart small nations used this ignorance with great cunning but much too skilfully in order to attain more for their people than the peace could stand, and thereby these nations had to fall. When Napoleon wanted to disrupt Austria, he turned to the Hungarians as to a "nation", calling them to remember their ancient freedom and to liberate their country from foreign oppression. On the same historical basis the Polish "nation" expected from Napoleon the liberation of Poland even if other nationalities lived there side by side with the Poles. If after the world war, for instance, the Czechs had wanted to resurrect the old historical Bohemia which the Habsburgs in their time had incorporated in Austria, everybody along the Danube would have understood this, just as much as the fact that this Bohemia, even if there were Germans living in it, would have been the country of the "Czech nation". But when the great Czech patriot, Professor Masaryk, and his colleague, Dr. Benes, attained in Washington, London and Paris a separate State for the "Czechoslovak nation", the Hungarians, whose thousand-year-old country had to lose to this "Czechoslovak State" the Slovaks and the Ruthenians, could hardly acquiesce in it, especially as there had never been a "Czechoslovak" people or nation in the world. The Slovaks, just like the Ruthenians, although their language is akin to Czech, had never anything to do with the Czechs or Bohemia. But



they had never possessed their own country; for a thousand years they had belonged to the Hungarian kingdom. Just as little convincing this as the procedure of the Paris Conference in giving the Rumanian kingdom millions of Hungarians from the ancient Hungary, and also Germans; even Rumanians who had never lived under Rumanian rule. And this "Great Rumania" established itself at once as a "Rumanian national State", which meant in practice that she began to treat her Hungarians, Germans and to a certain extent even the Rumanians of the newly-acquired Transylvania as secondary citizens.

It was a very fine theory, followed by the Paris Conference, that the frontiers of the States should correspond to the ethnical frontiers of nations or nationalities, and that every people should decide on the basis of practical self-determination where to belong or whether even to stand alone. But where are the limits of such a theory? After the war and up to the signing of the treaties there were everywhere little ethnical islands, even little cities, which hoisted their "national" flags on their steeples or town halls and declared that they would be a separate country and State. Respect, honour and affection are due to every people which stands firm for its rights—working in peace, fighting in war. But how could it be imagined, for instance, that Lithuania or Latvia—none of them even as populous as Hamburg or Birmingham—could really remain independent when behind their backs the gigantic Russian Empire was fighting for breath, barred by them from the sea; while at the opposite shores they aroused covetousness in sixty, eighty, a hundred million Germans? With the same right Marseilles could become a "Greek" or "Provençal" national State. For all the highest admiration one may feel for the heroic resistance of the gallant Finns to Russian brutality, and for all the hopes with which one follows this miracle, it cannot be concealed that there must exist overwhelming reasons why such coastal

countries could seldom remain their own masters; they must be swallowed up—peacefully or by force—by their hinterland. Such reasons may well be strategical and, much more, economical necessities. In the latter case a territory being economically (*i.e.*, as to production and consumption and commercial traffic) a unity, inevitably requires also to become a political unity. It was sheer lunacy how, after 1919, the newborn or remoulded Danubian and other States which succeeded the late Habsburgian monarchy, having been created chiefly according to political considerations, also separated themselves economically. It was lunacy how, with the slogans of sovereignty and self-sufficiency, they encircled their artificially improvised or forced-up agrarian or industrial (or agrarian *and* industrial) production with insurmountable tariff-walls . . . and how, by this, centuries-old commercial markets were torn apart in lifeless and incapable pieces. The economic reasons, then, had been appreciated by Wilson when, among his Fourteen Points, he demanded “the removal, as far as possible, of all economic barriers . . . among all the nations contributing to the peace . . .” These barriers could most easily be destroyed if the boundaries of States were identical not only with the ethnical frontiers but also with the frontiers of their economic interests. The only trouble is that these economic interests are usually much wider than the sphere of population.

There is no bias intended towards the Czech people, who have such a great past and certainly a great mission, nor indifference towards its tragedy, if we take Czechoslovakia for an example. If the Czechs, so experienced in economy, strove in vain to force the national idea without noting economical necessities, other examples are superfluous. Czechoslovakia had acquired the “Czechoslovaks” and her other population to the extent of about fifty per cent without any historical traditions and by separating them from their past connections. Dr. Benes had a very witty theory



to explain all this: just as in France—he inferred—Franks, Bretons, Normans, Burgundians, Provençals, had merged into one French nation, it was Czechoslovakia's mission to weld the Northern Slavs into one nation in the furnace of its national life. This is a striking idea at first glance, but it overlooks the fact that France had merged into one nation in an age when there had been no national idea in the world; while now, for instance, the Poles became indignant expressly in the name of the national idea when the Paris Conference had given over the mostly Polish Teschen to be included in the witty Northern Slavic furnace of Dr. Benes. By the same right, whether it is called "nation" or "smelting furnace", Germany might also find an historic mission in annexing, for instance, the Dutch and the Flemish. And yet these were educated by history not to feel any affinity with the Germans even if their language is fundamentally the same. And did not Hitler make capital of an "historic mission" when he forced into his furnace the German-speaking Czech Sudetens, the Austrians who spoke a German dialect? Either there is a national idea or there is not; but in the former case the national Czech republic had already laid itself open to reproach and revenge by acquiring pure Hungarian territories for "strategic reasons" and in order to have an outlet to the Danube; Ruthenian territory to have a common frontier with Rumania . . . and at the same time cutting off the industry of Slovakia from its Hungarian hinterland, itself from Hungarian wheat, and its starving poor Ruthenians from going every year to harvest the corn of the Great Hungarian Plain which had been their livelihood for centuries. And the irony came when the "furnace" erupted from within; when the Sudeten Germans left the republic, the Slovaks also did not want to remain "Czechoslovaks", and their desertion destroyed the whole State. After this, and even before the time of Hitler and Stalin, one had to think with deep anxiety of Poland, where, even on the

basis of history, less than nine million Poles had formed a Polish national State out of almost four million Ukrainians and Ruthenians, more than a million White Russians, a million Germans and more than two million Jews—who, by the way, were not only treated as a separate nationality but were more and more degraded to and classified as secondary citizens. And it is impossible to-day, among the necessities and hopes of the new war, not to comment on one of the chief difficulties of the Balkan situation in the fact that less than twelve million Rumanians considered more than a million and a half Hungarians, 700,000 Germans, almost 800,000 Ukrainians, almost 300,000 Bulgarians, 400,000 other Slavs, 170,000 Turks and 900,000 Jews—who were not accepted as Rumanians in spite of international agreements—absolutely necessary to have for themselves a national State. The charge against Austria-Hungary was that she had made a mockery of the national idea and forced a chaotic multitude of nationalities under a foreign rule, an uncoordinated mass who constantly threatened the peace with their bickering. In order to remedy this the Paris Conference put into Austria-Hungary's place—apart from Italy and Jugoslavia, where the national idea proved really a living force—three different "Austria-Hungarys": and not one of them so justified by history, recommended by geography, demanded by economy, as the much-abused Austria-Hungary which had been thrown at the mercy of all perversions.

### WORSE THAN A CRIME

Talleyrand was the first man who said that if there were no Austria-Hungary she ought to be invented. The great French diplomat said this when after Napoleon's defeat a Congress met at Vienna, also with the purpose of reorganising Europe.

When Napoleon had the innocent Duke of Enghien



executed—perhaps on suspicion, perhaps to set an example—it was Talleyrand again who said: “This was worse than a crime, it was a blunder.”

When the Paris Conference had destroyed Austria-Hungary many opinions were voiced at once saying what a crime this had been.

Well, perhaps not a crime.

But worse than that: a blunder.

When the old Austria—the ancestor of the later Austro-Hungarian monarchy—had left Germany in the Napoleonic times, this was a natural, almost inevitable process. In these separate Habsburg possessions the Danubian Valley was contained, the eastern half of Central Europe with the mission of regaining and reorganising the Balkans, penetrating southwards and eastwards, forcing back the Turkish rule already in dissolution.

This does not only seem to be like this in retrospect. It is not a prophecy after the event.

When Bismarck settled the century-old Austro-Prussian rivalry for German hegemony in 1866; when old Moltke beat Austria decisively at Koeniggraetz or, as it is sometimes called, at Sadowa, he cut off the Western relations of the Austrians with a sword. But he consoled or encouraged the Habsburgs with their Eastern mission. Of course, this might have been self-interest or merely an excuse.

But the Habsburgs themselves had a great statesman and general, one of the greatest, the contemporary of Marlborough—Prince Eugène of Savoy. When at the beginning of the eighteenth century he chased the last Turk from the empire and began to make it hot for them in the Balkans, he also discovered a special and independent capacity for survival in the Habsburg heritage and advised the last member of the Habsburg male line, the Emperor Charles VI—who was the father of Maria Theresa—that he should transfer the momentum of his possessions to

Hungary, in order to fulfil better the Austrian mission in the Balkans.

“Congeries lapidum, multis congesta rapinis!” (A heap of stones piled up by many rapes.) This epigram was found one morning on the walls of his new palace by a *nouveau riche* of Maria Theresa’s reign, Duke Graskovich, who had become a Hungarian magnate after being born a humble Slovak student. It is true that the Habsburgs acquired their empire, if not by marriage, then by robbery. Nor had the British Empire been built up by using kid gloves, and yet an English statesman was fully entitled to say of it: “This is the real League of Nations!” The old Austria—especially after becoming in 1867 the Austro-Hungary monarchy—was such a miniature League of Nations. In whatever way it had been gathered together, as a relic of robbery and by the whims of history, this had not been a chance turn of history, but was guided by an inescapable force—geography—and commanded by an invincible principle: economic necessity. From the Polish plains to the Dalmatian bays, from the Italian lakes to the forests of Bukovina, from the Czech metal mountains (Erzgebirge) to the snowy crags of Transylvania, whatever direction one followed, you found in this empire mountains and plains, winter, eternal summer, ocean and lakes, iron and coal, wine and wheat, timber and cattle, oil and oysters, salt, mineral springs; it was straddled by a river, surrounded by a chain of mountains; it was so very much united, created as a unity by God Himself, that even to-day, when it has vanished from the map and the new frontiers form a criss-cross pattern, underneath them you can discover the old outlines. Just as on the walls of the St. Sophia Church in Constantinople, which has been turned into a Turkish mosque, underneath the verses of the Koran you can still detect the holy pictures of Byzantium. (Although lately this has also changed—Kemal turned the Hagia Sophia into a museum, the whitewash



has been carefully removed, and the old Christian murals gleam in new glory.) This was so in the nineteenth century; it has not changed in the twentieth, and when, after the beginning of the Great War, the Austro-Hungarian monarchy was sentenced to death, it was a capital crime.

#### RAILWAY IN A CUL-DE-SAC

It is true, of course, that Austria-Hungary, while certainly alive, did not fulfil her Eastern mission. She stretched uselessly inert in the middle of Europe much as through Austria herself runs a railway line, the "*Tauerbahn*", which is more or less superfluous as it lies parallel with another main line and ends at Vienna in a cul-de-sac. But when it was built under Francis Joseph, in those happier times, it had a good reason for being: it was destined as the line leading down to Salonica.

But it never reached Salonica, and nothing came of the plan.

And the Austro-Hungarian monarchy had paid only one visit in a hundred years to the Balkans: sixty years ago in Bosnia.

There must have been many inner reasons—among others the Hungarian reluctance of admitting more Slavs to the monarchy—for the fact that Austria-Hungary did not appear as an organiser in the Balkans but at the best as an obstacle; wasting all authority in preventing Serbia from getting an outlet to the sea, in avoiding taking over Serbian pigs. But the main reason was an outside one: Austria-Hungary had never found a real support in the Western Powers. Alone she did not feel strong enough some day to face Russia, who had her designs in the Balkans. Deserted by the Western Powers, she was more and more thrown into the arms of her German neighbour. Now Germany, apart from wishing to monopolise the Balkans for economic reasons, professed in regard to them

the same opinion as Bismarck: the whole of the Balkans were not worth the bones of a Pomeranian grenadier.

If Austria-Hungary had been courageous or aware of her duties, if she had known that life was action and one had to dare to act—when the Turks became weaker and weaker in the nineteenth century but the Balkan people freed from their rule had not yet become strong—Austria-Hungary possessed every possibility, every bridge in her own Rumanians and Southern Slavs to organise the Balkan Rumanians and Southern Slavs in her own framework and to represent really the organised Danube Basin and Balkans. But Napoleon was right in saying that “Austria is always late with an idea”. As long as it was possible she did not dare. But when she decided to move at last in 1908 and her Foreign Minister, Count Aehrenthal, “annexed” Bosnia, which till then had only been “occupied”, it was too late. By that time the Balkan people had all awakened—they had their own ambitions and, if they had no temporary quarrel with her, Russia was also behind them. The Balkans were already tinder, explosive material, and the “annexation” was not an action but a rash flurry, as if a spirit lamp were to be lit at the moment when a new supply of fuel is just being poured into it. When, in August 1914, Austria-Hungary attacked Serbia and thereby released the world war, she did not want to penetrate the Balkans; she only took defence against herself being penetrated by the Balkans and through them by Russia. Hartwig, Russia’s Minister in Belgrade, did not hide the fact but rather made a show of it that he was behind every private Serbian conspiracy and government intrigue which aimed at Austria-Hungary’s heart. It was a preventive war which could be rashness, even stupidity. But in 1914 even the blind had to see that Austria-Hungary, if she did not declare war, would have a harder fate than she was made to face in 1919; the advisers of old Francis Joseph may have been lightheaded and stupid, but not



blind. No wonder that they tried to prevent the fate of their empire as long as the turn of the European situation brought the Germans to their support. And they had some reason to be surprised when they suddenly found Great Britain in the camp of their opponents, and now Britain was also punishing Austria-Hungary for helping the Germans or for letting them grow powerful.

### BISMARCK, THE BRITISH FAVOURITE

For two generations and almost up to the Great War Britain herself had done the same. And thereby she forced Austria-Hungary to serve the Germans. When, at Sadowa, Bismarck chased Austria from the German Confederation, she turned in vain to London, for there they were full of understanding for Bismarck. Four years later, when in 1870 Bismarck engineered the Franco-Prussian War, Austria would have had an opportunity to "revenge Sadowa". The Archduke Albrecht, Francis Joseph's chief military adviser, prepared and sent plans of campaign to Paris against the trapped Prussian. But Britain remained neutral, let France collapse under Bismarck's mailed fist—and without Britain Francis Joseph also changed his mind. He only drew the logical consequences from Britain's attitude by swallowing his chagrin and permitting his Foreign Minister, Count Julius Andrassy, senr., to strike up a friendship with Bismarck; and seeing how well Disraeli and Bismarck understood each other at the 1878 Berlin Conference, he did not oppose the agreement made by Andrassy senr. with Bismarck. Of course it was a pity that while Bismarck had been a genius able to bring profit even to an opponent, his successor, the Kaiser, was a diletant who ruined even his friends. But this was chiefly a trouble of these friends. And Britain could not feel hurt when the amiable Edward VII visited Francis Joseph and was unable to persuade the much-experienced old gentle-

man, with all his kindness, to join the alliance then in the making against the Kaiser. Just as in November 1937 Lord Halifax and as late as September 1938 Prime Minister Chamberlain himself visited Hitler to save the peace, Lord Haldane was sent by the British Government in 1912 to the Kaiser. His task was to make William II understand what a dangerous game he was playing in trying to compete with Britain for the mastery of the world. Haldane tried to reach an agreement about a bi-lateral "naval disarmament" or a "naval holiday" . . . and in London Winston Churchill, First Lord of the Admiralty already then, supported this endeavour with full sympathy. Perhaps if the Kaiser had seen an alliance without a breach, a threat of encirclement around himself, this would have sobered him. But it might easily have happened that Francis Joseph would have fallen between two stools if he joined Britain against the Kaiser and Britain had come to an agreement with Germany. It was Austria-Hungary's inevitable fate to join Germany. And just as in our days Neville Chamberlain could say with quiet self-assurance that wherever matters of world interest were at stake Great Britain had her say, it was natural that Great Britain also had a share in Austria-Hungary's destiny; at least to the extent that if she considered a different way as the right one she could have checked this destiny. But she arrived at this standpoint only when Austria-Hungary had entered the war on Germany's side, so that her destiny could only be checked by war. And just as now, even then arms had to be used to rectify after the event matters which by political means could have been prevented.

### THE BUFFER TORN APART

But even if Austria-Hungary were guilty, deserving every death, even—as the custom was in the Middle Ages—of being quartered and her body nailed on to the gates of



Europe, the question still persists whether it was wise to end her existence.

Not only have Czechoslovakia and Poland, the States placed in her stead, collapsed, but the Allies have to shoulder a war for their resurrection. The States themselves do not believe that they will be reborn with their frontiers of 1919. We have spoken about Rumania's troubles; they would not exist if Austria-Hungary were alive. Most of the successor States had or have to be kept alive artificially. As for Austria-Hungary, the only necessary thing was not to kill her. In order to keep the successor States in existence, the consent of others would have been also needed. For Austria-Hungary the interests of the Allies alone would have sufficed.

These interests had centred in the past—and are centred to-day—in the desire of having a buffer in the middle of Europe dividing the Russians and the Germans from each other; for if these two clash, it is an earthquake; if they join forces, it is black death whether the Tsar allies himself with the Junkers or the Soviet with the Nazis.

Austria-Hungary, with all her shortcomings, was able to fulfil this mission of a buffer, as during the centuries she had become a national unity. The German Empire was created only by Bismarck, but Austria-Hungary seemed to be created by God. That she had many quarrels with her nationalities does not prove anything; just as the difficulties of Britain with Ireland do not constitute proofs against her. And just as the greed of Russia for India, of Germany for South Africa, of the Japanese for Australia, does not prove anything against the British Commonwealth.

According to a story, when Francis Joseph was a young man he found it very difficult to reign. He is said to have asked a friend what he should do and received the answer: "To get up earlier and to make better politics."

And this is what the West ought to have done.

To get up early and not to wake only when they

had driven Austria-Hungary already into Bismarck's arms.

And to make better politics; at least from the moment when Bismarck threw Austria out from the German Confederacy, not to waste a second before keeping her friendship and helping her in every way, so that in the Balkans she could take the place of the Turk instead of Russia. To recognise and to throw back Russian penetration even in the disguise of pan-Slavism when it tried to kindle separatist consciousness in the Northern Slavs of the Habsburg monarchy, the Czechs, and in the Southern Slavs, the Croats and Slovenes.

These Slavs, whether they were Northern or Southern, could have had a good enough time even with Austria-Hungary, especially in the last years of Francis Joseph. (Not to speak of the Rumanians. Those of them who lived in Transylvania and have now become subjects of Greater Rumania are saying now: "We were a thousand times better off oppressed by Budapest"—the Hungarian capital—"than now saved by Bucharest!"—the Rumanian capital.) Now had the Czechs any justifiable complaints? They were getting on very well, there was no financial support and no right which they did not receive, there was no office which they could not attain. The Poles could have been no greater lords at their own former *liberum veto* Diets than in the Vienna Reichsrat and the Vienna governments. In 1867, when Hungary had become again independent within the Monarchy, the Hungarians had given the Croats an immediate *carte blanche*; they could write on it whatever they wanted. Croatia too became independent, with a separate parliament and government. She did not depend more in any way on the Austro-Hungarian Emperor-King than Canada to-day on the British Emperor-King. Thus Serbian nationalism did not prepare the assassination of the Austrian Crown Prince in 1914 because of any impossibility of solving the



Southern Slav problem within the framework of Austria-Hungary. On the contrary, she felt it very possible, very imminent, and was afraid that this determined young man, who had detailed plans for his reign, would solve it by creating a separate Southern Slav kingdom within the Austro-Hungarian monarchy of which he would have crowned himself king. And by that the door to the dream of Great Serbia would have been locked and barred.

### “DANUBE CONFEDERATION”

This, again, is not a prophecy after the event. There is historical proof both for the possibility of the Slavs accepting a solution of their problems within the Austrian Empire and for their conception of their independence which did not involve their breaking away from Austria-Hungary. The Czechs had their leaders even before Masaryk; in the eighteen-forties it was the great historian Palacky. He could be said to have been the first to discover the Czechs after their being swallowed up by the Habsburgs. And he believed also, with Talleyrand, if there were no Austria one should be invented. He demanded a strong Austria in which Slavs would live in alliance with the Southern Germans. But, moreover, at the same time as Masaryk and during the war, Karel Kramarz, who led the Czechs at home while Masaryk fought for them in America, and who had stood already in the shadow of the gallows, saved only by amnesty; Karel Kramarz also wanted his Czech country to stay within the framework of Austria in the final analysis. It could be said that Kramarz was a great industrialist, a capitalist, and clung out of his reactionary interests to the Monarchy. But even the Czech Socialists, when they attended the Stockholm Socialist Congress during the war, although they demanded an independent State, wanted it in an empire reorganised as a “Danube Confederation”. They were workers,

but the Czech intellectuals and parliamentarians did not have different ideas and proclaimed their aim in a declaration as the reorganisation of Austria-Hungary into a "federal State". And if the Czechs could have stayed within Austria—probably not for the sake of the Habsburgs but because they thought it wiser—at the beginning of the war the Greek Orthodox Serbians did not dream of incorporating the Roman Catholic Croats and Slovenes. They would have been satisfied with Bosnia, or at the most with the addition of Montenegro, giving them an outlet to the sea. Only beyond the middle of the war, when terrible storms had ravaged the heroic country and its ragged army had fought its way with a courage unparalleled since Xenophon to the haven of Corfu—the sick old King Peter was carried along on an ox-cart—only then did they unfurl with mortal hate the flag of South Slav liberty and make an agreement with the Croats and Slovenes about a separate kingdom under the Serbian Karagiorgievich Dynasty. Even a long time after this, in London and Washington, they demanded only self-government for the peoples of Austria-Hungary. The romantic politicians of the Paris Conference succeeded in attaining more, much more, for the small nations. But this "more" was really less—the smaller buffers put in the place of the big buffer could not withstand the German and the Russian pressure.

### NATIONS AND HUMANS

Austria-Hungary was annihilated in the name of the national idea in order that in Austria German hegemony, in Hungary Magyar rule, should not be able to help the German Reich. Well, they did not help. The Monarchy was carved up, killed; in truth she was punished instead of Germany, spared for conservative interests. In old times princes had a peasant companion and if the royal pupils



did not learn their lessons the peasant boys were caned. But you could not say about the Germans that they did not learn their lessons—they learned the lessons of Versailles and those of the years after Versailles, and their learning led to the Third Reich and the Nazis.

Thus they showed what the real national idea was. National idea? All right, then, give us the German Austria, give us the Sudeten Germans! And give us at the same time the splendid little Austrian army and the Sudeten fortifications, ores, forests and industries, another ten million Germans to the sixty-five! What is the use of the national idea without strategy? Therefore give us the strategic centre of Middle Europe: Czechoslovakia . . . and, so that it should not feel lost, the Czech gold reserve, the second armament factory of the Continent, the world-famous Skoda armament works, the Moravian wheat, the iron forges of Witkovitz, the coal of Oderberg, the most perfect artillery and aircraft. Only Danzig and the Corridor were refused because their demand would have been a clear challenge to war. As it happened this did in fact lead to war. The Reich had been forced into a tight corner—but the Third Reich was spoiled and petted in order to act as a bulwark against Bolshevism. It is only a fitting denouement that this Third Reich, loaded with all good things, given all strategic positions, should open the door wide to Bolshevism which has adopted, according to Tsarist tradition, the guise of pan-Slavism.

Austria-Hungary certainly presented no simple problem either to her peoples or to Europe. In the last century the Hungarian hero of freedom, Kossuth, who dethroned the Habsburgs, thought of a "Danube Confederation" as a solution. And the Habsburg Archduke Francis Ferdinand, who was shot in Sarajevo before the war and who prepared to break down the Hungarians, had a similar idea. Around the turn of the century an Austro-Rumanian scientist, Popovici, and the Austro-German Socialist,

Renner, met on the common platform of a planned "Austrian United States". They were on the right trail—witness the British Commonwealth and especially the U.S.A.

There exists only one example of what they tried at the Paris Conference by the creation of tiny States—San Marino. And when, on the other hand, in a number of multi-lingual countries they forced millions under foreign rule, this did not cure the Austro-Hungarian malady, only divided it.

In the war of independence of 1848–49 the Croats helped Francis Joseph to conquer the Hungarians; afterwards the Monarchy received a uniform reactionary constitution. Then it was said: "The Croats received as a reward the same thing which was given to the Hungarians as a punishment!" Thus Central Europe received from Paris a scheme of liberation which in the hands of the Habsburgs had been counted as oppression!

A "nation"—just like the "race" and all the other fine collective vanities—is like a soap bubble. It exists, it can be seen, but if someone wants to fix it, it bursts. If it is taken for a sacrament, it is a dream; if it is used as an excuse, it becomes injustice. It has stood many trials in Italy; it has destroyed Austria-Hungary; it can be in some places an expedient, but never a general rule.

The peace of Paris did not succeed because it only dealt with nations.

The new peace must deal with human beings.



## IV

### SAFE FOR DEMOCRACY

#### AN HISTORICAL OMISSION

IN THE thirty-second month of the Great War a surprise awaited the peoples of the Central Powers. Not America's entrance; they were prepared for that. But at the same time they learned that peace had really one condition: Democracy. This was something new. And if it had not been natural with such great democracies, one might have suspected that it was a war stratagem.

Not as if the Central Powers would have been all bloody tyrannies. Of course the Sultan was a tyrant, a bloody one—but Mohammedans had never been used to a form of government in which the subjects could say what they wanted, while the Caliph put his hand on his heart, bowed, and did it. But, for instance, in Germany the general vote had been introduced fifty years before. If the people had disliked their treatment so much, they would have sent at least once an oppositional majority into the Reichstag. In Austria-Hungary Francis Joseph loyally kept whatever constitutions there were, and it was not his fault that whenever trouble cropped up his advisers did not give him any advice but expected advice from him. And yet democracy in itself was a temptation—the more so as a magical slogan which you had only to pronounce to end the war! While this war was dragging on, its trials becoming more and more exasperating, its outlook more and more uncertain, people were filled with doubt. Why and for whom were they really suffering and bleeding? They had only to “depose their military masters and monarchical autocrats” and they had nothing more to fear: nobody would punish, nobody would accuse them, they had nothing to fear for their countries, their nations, because peace would be

achieved in that very moment, a peace without victory. And there would be no annexations, no contributions, no punishments; the world "will be made safe for democracy, its peace will be planted upon the tested foundations of political liberty, and the rights of nations great or small, and the privilege of men everywhere to choose their way of life and of obedience, shall be secured". Thus it was told in Wilson's messages to Congress, in his peace points and their additions; and when the Central Powers, having arrived at the end of their tether, offered to lay down their arms on these terms, the Allies themselves accepted them—with only two modifications which did not change their essence.<sup>1</sup> The vanquished would have been suicidal and lunatic if they had hesitated at the gates of this heaven come to earth whether to enter or not. They entered.

It is still in the bones of a whole generation, the disillusionment which swept through half Europe when the Central Powers had fulfilled all the conditions, chased away their autocrats, sent their generals to beg—the Austrian C.-in-C., Conrad von Hoetzendorf, received as a great favour a tobacco stand of the State monopoly—and proclaimed the republic from the Rhine to the Danube. But the peace treaties, which did not brook any bargaining and which had to be signed—as otherwise there was only death or more than death—were like ordeals which know only innocent or guilty and did not know any mercy towards the guilty. Of course, perhaps even this disillusionment was a crime. And this crime was possibly made even bigger by the hope of the criminal of buying forgiveness.

<sup>1</sup> The fact of the Central Powers having laid down their arms on the basis of the Wilsonian Fourteen Points has lately been discussed by many illustrious Englishmen. In the course of the discussion this fact was confirmed in relation to Germany. As for Austria-Hungary, I am in the position to corroborate it, because on the very day he made this proposition to the Western Powers, Count Julius Andrássy, junr., the last Foreign Minister of the Austro-Hungarian monarchy, communicated it to me by telephone from the Ballplatz, in Vienna, to Budapest where I was living at that time.





Also, politics is the science of possibilities, and the victors were simply unable to fulfil their obligations and at the same time redeem their promises. The peace treaties were not bad because they were not "cricket" but because they did not bring satisfaction. The disappointment they caused did not become a burden for consciences but a worry for politics. There was an excellent excuse for their breach—the argument that they had been "breach of promises" themselves. As for the cutting-up of Europe, whatever misfortune it was and whatever ill luck it caused, the Versailles and the other Paris suburb treaties could well gather dust in the archives side by side with those other treaties which could not be kept, the other treaties which all led to war. Whatever its clumsiness or impossibility in history, history itself rights, if by no other means that, as Bismarck said, by blood and iron. This is, of course, a great price, but mankind has always been a spendthrift in this currency and was always solvent in it. But the thing which happened when the great democracies first demanded democracy and then did not give it any attention was an historical omission, an omission which could never again be rectified, an opportunity which would never return; and as it had been missed, it would be for ever a deficiency in Europe's health.

Because, democracy is not a form of government but an education. It is like Christianity; the kernel of democracy is Christianity itself. What a fortunate thing that the war had made its proselytes—there was no need, as in the Middle Ages, to kill and to burn! It was possible that no bitterness should cling to it, but gratitude; even if it was a by-product of war, it could have been the main guarantee of peace. Worthy, efficient nations and individuals, being largely equal to the great democracies in talents and culture, were now on the point of adapting themselves to them also in tolerance and understanding. The "United States of Europe" could have been formed in the heart

and in the mind, and politics would have been only needed to give all this a technical form. When the Western democracies, as soon as they had created democracies in Eastern Europe, forsook them at once, humiliated them, endured reactions against them, nurtured perversions—whatever reason or objection guided them, they taught human beings to forget humanity. A generation grew up in the experience that there was nothing to believe in, and only a step divided this attitude from the belief that everything could be dared. There is no homogeneous human being in the world—men are good and bad at the same time; and in the atmosphere which sat at a premium to the scum of the gutter, many became criminals who, in different circumstances, would have been decent enough. It is told about animals living in caves that in the second generation they lose the sense they do not need, their eyesight, yet they live, feed and mate just like those that can see. Similarly, fairness and decency not being exercised, immorality and shamelessness become the regular thing, and the young take their places in governments, courts, offices, newspapers, as if they could not even imagine a different world.

There is no stopping on such a road, and rot corrupts the healthy too. Left wings are the prints of right wings; they exude talent and character. Cynicism, opportunism and boundless ambition also gain the upper hand among them. Whoever has self-respect becomes an exile, and if he has found a refuge in the merciful West he can see that epidemics are no respecters of frontiers. There can be no cholera in Shanghai's native hovels which would not also endanger the gardens of the clubs in the Western concessions; similarly in the West, up to the far Pacific, it is to be felt that in Central Europe adventurers are lording it over beggars. Democracy has no credit even in the democracies. In the process of evolution there is a missing link: the transition from inequity tempered by patience to



equality where there is no longer need of being patient. Did the Western democracies, in dealing with Central Europe, not put their trust in democracy but in violence, because they feared Bolshevism? But what is Bolshevism if not a system of violence, and if the good as well as the bad can be achieved only by violence, why should not people be Bolsheviks? They say democracy did not prove useful against Bolshevism in Central Europe. How could it prove so when never put wholeheartedly into practice?

No peace can be entrusted to a nihilist generation. By pacificism such people mean at the most the keeping of themselves out of war. The world was ready for democracy and now the flames of war are showing clearly what the democracies had omitted when they allowed democracy to drop from history.

## V

### BREACH OF PROMISE

#### AMERICA REGRETS HAVING CREATED THE WORLD

IT WAS Wilson who dominated the Peace Conference. Germany and Austria-Hungary had laid down their arms on the basis of his Fourteen Points. It was he who emphasised the necessity of the League of Nations. It was he who reassured France, who was reluctant to accept this plan, by a special treaty that he would take up arms in France's defence should she be attacked by Germany.

It is true that in the end America did not accept any of these fine things. The agreements were not ratified by the U.S.A. They did not enter the League of Nations, and gave the lie to their own President in a way for which there is hardly an example in the history of the world. And it is also true that Congress had full constitutional right to do so—Wilson could lose his health over it, but could not take his case to the Supreme Court of Washington. But it is not less true that both victors and vanquished did everything in the belief that America, after interfering with an armed force with Europe's affairs, was also responsible for Europe's fate. When the Senate turned down everything that Wilson signed, at that time—in November 1919, a year after the laying down of arms—most of the events could no longer be changed. It was not only as if a very great business firm—which would be certainly surprising in commercial life—were with some excuse to refuse to accept the signature of its chairman. The Anglo-Saxon conception is extremely strict and gives a very generous interpretation to the idea of a breach of promise. It is not frivolity, but a question raised by the gory hurricane of a new war: was it not a breach of promise of this otherwise so strait-laced America when



she showed complete indifference towards Europe, groaning for twenty years on the account of Versailles and its consequences? And is it not a breach of promise now too, when again, chiefly for the same reasons, war is upon us; and yet in that greatest democracy it was difficult even to achieve the fact that she should not hinder the great democracies from arming in their life and death struggle.

It is said that America did not want to enter the Great War—and it is true that Wilson, who engineered her entrance, had been elected four weeks previously with the slogan: “He kept us out of war!” At the very beginning of the war, when American intervention was a far-away dream, old Karl Kautsky, the senior of the Socialist International, wrote an article, saying: “You’ll see, this war will have one victor: America, because all the gold in the world will pour into the United States!” It looked like this at the start, but the stream of gold was stopped suddenly and America took up arms, not so much for the new order of the world, but rather running after her money. The Allies were so deeply in debt to her for armaments and other goods that she had to help them to victory also by fighting, otherwise they could not have paid. So it is at least alleged, and it would be a base slander if the Senate’s Committee of Enquiry had not ascertained since then the part that Morgan, the chief creditor, had played in the engineering of America’s intervention. The creditor is interested in the fate of the debtor, the seller in that of the buyer, and if someone wants to make a living in wartime he cannot live in peace. It is also said that America slipped out of everything Wilson had shouldered in order to continue undisturbed business with Germany at the point where she had stopped on account of the war. Indeed, the ink of Wilson’s signature was not yet dry when, with the slogan of “isolationism”, of “not meddling in European affairs”, American loans enabled the vanquished Germany to build and rebuild innumerable cities, highways, motor-

roads, workers' suburbs, and factories. "Isolationism" was a camouflage for business, and it is an irony of history that it has turned out a bad business: because the ingenious new financial policy which then made the President of the German Reichsbank, Dr. Schacht, so justly famous in economic history was nothing else but the decision, well known since the days of Mr. Micawber, "As for paying, we won't pay!" God might well feel regret for having created the world, for He is all-powerful and consequences do not touch him. But mortal men cannot provoke fate without being overtaken by it. America interfered in Europe's fate in the Great War and it was in vain that she stood aside afterwards. If America had stood up for all that Wilson signed and had stayed in European politics, her gigantic power could have saved the peace. Without this, as the U.S.A. dropped out of it, the whole machinery of peace collapsed, and European war stands in front of America's gates with the same menaces to-day as it did twenty-five years ago.

### SHEEP IN THE PIT

Not that on this side of the Atlantic the democracies could justly reproach America. The more powerful one is the more duties he has, not only in connection with his promises but with the expectations of others about him. It is a "breach of promise" if treaties when made are different from those forecast. It is a "breach of promise" if treaties can be broken and are broken by those too who are obliged to enforce them.

The treaties clashed with their own principles and their creators wanted to remedy this by padding the points of friction with preventives. For instance: the new division of Europe was done "according to the principle of nationalities". But by this division thirty or forty million Europeans were brought under other masters or left under



foreign rule. The "padding" was planned in the form of ensuring rights for the minorities. And very handsomely, too. These rights, component parts of the peace treaties, were included in international treaties and guaranteed by the League of Nations. This would have been really one fold and one shepherd if at the same time all trap-doors had not been ready to drop the new sheep into the pit when they were following the old ones.

Greater Rumania, for instance, began the new world order by the resignation of her Prime Minister, Johel Bratianu. He had represented his country at the Paris Conference, but he preferred resignation to the signing of the agreement which he called an "outside interference" with the "most sovereign rights of a State how to treat its subjects". On the other hand, two years later he became Premier again and consequently did not feel himself bound by the agreement "which he had not signed"!

It was likewise an amusing joke when Rumania wanted to improve the statistics of Hungarians in Transylvania in favour of the Rumanians. As there, as everywhere, the Hungarian Jews were Magyar patriots, the Rumanian authorities declared simply: they are not of Hungarian race, therefore they do not count as Magyars and are not entitled to send their children to Magyar schools. They can send them to Rumanian or Jewish schools; but as the language of the latter was Hebrew, it demanded a knowledge of a language which these Jews had not spoken for two thousand years! Century-old landed families became homeless because they had no "citizenship". The agrarian reform, which otherwise would have been most beneficent, served only to the impoverishment of minorities. But there is no reason to cite so many examples—it is the whole matter which is discussed here. Hungary has been cut up into five parts because she wanted to stand as a Hungarian national state above the different races within her borders. Those who became her successors signed

agreements that they on their own behalf would treat their peoples as equals. But if a neighbour, or rather the League of Nations, wanted to enquire to what extent this was realised, they protested "against the violation of the State's sovereignty". And if a minority dared to glance beyond the frontier at its relatives or to turn with its complaint to the League of Nations, it was *irredenta*, in any case, guilty of high treason. Thus the League of Nations took good care not to mingle in such a malefice; and so it happened that in the course of a single year, when they had received 101 minority complaints, 21 were declared groundless, 80 were referred to committees of three. Forty-eight committees held 58 meetings, and at the end of the year three—yes, three and not more—cases were taken up by the Council of the League!

#### SOUTH AMERICA PRACTISES PHILOSOPHY IN EUROPE

But even if it got there, what use was it? The League appointed Dr. Mello-Franco as the referendary of minority affairs. He was a famous international lawyer, but happened to be a South American, where frontiers are not "drawn according to nationalities" and where emigrants do not arrive in order to live separated. This Dr. Mello-Franco explained that the mere fact of the existence of any national group does not suffice to make it a minority; at least centuries are needed for this qualification, perhaps battles fought in the past. And as there was no lack of these, especially along the Danube, the minorities nevertheless had nothing to hope anyhow. Was not it, according to the same Dr. Mello-Franco, the mission of the minorities to merge into the majorities? It may be so in South America, but the only reason for war in Central Europe was that there it should not be this way, and to entrust this Dr. Mello-Franco with the defence of the minorities was the same as if the Secretary for War should



be briefed to plead the cases of conscientious objectors. Dr. Mello-Franco's conception was highly philosophical; but nations are not philosophers, and although humans are fatalists and soon resign themselves to the fate of others, they will not be so easily resigned to their own, especially if they feel themselves cheated and robbed. This made people rebellious when the peace created a new order and—voluntarily or under compulsion—they built their lives on it, only to find that their guarantors were the first to withdraw their support.

### POLICEMAN WITHOUT A TRUNCHEON

This guarantee was anyhow only a travesty of what a business-man would accept as such. A League of Nations without America—there is only one less serious thing than that: a League of Nations without an army. Every village magistrate knows that a policeman is necessary to keep order and the policeman must have a truncheon; not in order to use it but in order that he should not be called upon to use it. Lincoln considered it a natural expedient that if he wanted to break his Southern fellow-citizens of the custom of keeping slaves, he must do it with guns. On the other hand ever since that time there is no need to fire the gun, for everybody who would like to keep slaves knows that there is a gun and it is not a wise thing to become its target. Since ancient Poland was ruined in her Diets by the veto of a single nobleman sufficing to foil the will of all the others, no such joke has been ever devised as the unanimity which is necessary for the decisions of the League. As it is constituted the League depends upon the goodwill of those against whom it ought to serve. How it should be regarded was obviously shown by its protectors. When Kemal did not enquire what the League liked or disliked, but took to arms, winning his rights on the battlefield, the Great League Powers sat down with him at the

conference table in Lausanne and gave him a treaty about all he wanted. From the faithless or desperate attempts to create, at least afterwards, a real peace or to forestall the dangers: the Kellogg Pact, which rejected war as a weapon of politics, had no sanctions attached; the Economic World Union remained a Utopia just like the United States of Europe. And what would have been more practical: the Western and Eastern "Locarno Pacts" were born outside the League and filed only afterwards. It became a sport to sneer at the League, then to leave it or to threaten it with leaving—and in the end everybody's strength was measured by the kick he could give to the Geneva institution.

#### DEMOCRACY ON THE RUN

Kicking the League of Nations. And kicking all the peace treaties of which, after all, the League was the real support. These treaties were bad and insupportable. But a few of their main stipulations could have been kept up, around a few of their main ideas peace could have been built.

Especially democracy. We have spoken of it already but we must speak of it again. Because after Versailles democracy was not only a possibility, but also a command and a command given by the greatest military, financial, economic and political powers of the world. Yearning for peace, nations, countries, individuals, staked their lives on this democracy and—Wilson's addition—on political freedom. On the assumption that every human being was equal and that there was only one master, the law; that nobody could be put at a disadvantage because of his ancestry, language, religion or party membership. And on the belief that for all this there were guarantors and guardians: here in Europe the two great, free and democratic powers, France and Great Britain; and beyond the



Great Water, the most powerful, the freest democracy, the United States. In this knowledge they began new life. In this conception they worked, they went to bed in the evening and woke in the morning—woke to the reality of tanks roaring over the streets, bayonets gleaming under their windows. . . . And those of them who were not killed or beaten to death, or sent to concentration camps; those who could get out, leaving everything behind except the clothes on their backs, when they reached the barriers of the Great Guarantors, they had to beg for visas, reply to cross-questioning, undergo an examination, till one out of a hundred was lucky if he got the permit of entry. . . . And then he had to wait till his number came in turn, one among one thousand; he had to show on what he would live; he had to name his guarantors in the new country; he had to pledge himself not to take a job and spoil the labour market; on the whole these people have the experience of being superfluous in the very world and a disturbing phenomenon for the same fellow-creatures according to whose prescripts they had behaved, and had arrived at the point of having to plead before them for entry as fugitives and beggars. There is nothing more bitter than having to beg as a mercy something which is a right and due, and to receive one's just share as charity. Whole countries, whole nations, millions of people, have been and are in this position since the Western Powers have given up caring for their own creations. Every anti-aircraft gun which now has to be fired, every ship which sinks, every city which is blacked out, every man who falls in a battle—all the immeasurable and untold sacrifices which in these bellicose times the great democracies owe to their own lives is a criticism of the past neglect of duty to democracy.

Because democracy can only be secured by democracy. A democracy can live in peace only if it is surrounded by democracies. A single spot of the ocean cannot remain

even and smooth while around it the waters are raging. And while there are totalitarian states, and they possess armies, the democracies cannot disarm. But our great democracies, in which Capitalism is even more powerful than Democracy, were afraid of the same democracy because they were afraid of Bolshevism; they considered that Democracy led to Socialism and Socialism to Bolshevism. First—they think—middle-class Radicalism is unable to keep pace in front of the voters with the bidding of the Socialists and rubs itself so long with social oil till it drips with Socialism. Then the Socialists are unable to defend before their workers the stab-in-the-back of the Bolsheviks, who accuse them of being the hirelings of capitalists; they go so far in the socialisation of the factories and the nationalisation of mines till they arrive at Bolshevism.

#### DEMOCRACY AND BOLSHEVISM

No doubt the example shown by Moscow of what the "dictatorship of the proletariat" meant and what fate awaited the "enterprisers" if "labour" is the overlord, could give little enthusiasm to those who had other things to lose than—as the Communist manifest of Marx said about the workers—their fetters. And the capitalists could easily calm their conscience, saying that their interests were identical with those of the nations, because it was easy to prove that in a century and a half capitalism had brought more progress, improvement and elevation than fifteen centuries before. Whatever betterment was achieved during the last generation by peasant, worker, lower middle-class man, but also by the intelligentsia—it might have been little in itself, but a dream compared to the past—was made possible by capitalism.

But Socialism—and this is the reason why it calls itself Social-Democracy—has nothing to do with Bolshevism. Nor did Bolshevism realise anything of Social-Democracy.



In Moscow there is a capitalism thrown back into a primitive state, where the State is running the enterprises and unskilled clerks do their best to make business life cost a hundred times more, yield a thousand times less, abuse the worker in a crazier way and keep him in a more terrible slavery than private capitalism does anywhere. Just as Bolshevism is nothing but Tsarism painted red; the revenge of the former victims of Tsarism with the weapons of Tsarism. And Russia can stand this robber system only because she could stand the Tsars too; because she is a whole continent in herself, inexhaustible in men, food, raw materials—it is no matter how much they squander. The fact that the portrait of Marx hangs above the desks of Bolshevik bureaucrats has just as little connection with Marxism as the crucifix which is placed in Tyrol even above the cashier's box of butchers has with Christianity. Marx himself settled this argument seventy or eighty years ago when he expelled Bakunin, the Bolshevik of that age, from his Workers' International and declared that "I myself am no Marxist". Marx's pupil and continental representative, the already mentioned Karl Kautsky, had been an absolute and firm enemy of Bolshevism; he feared it as a harmful influence for Social-Democracy. The Bolsheviks of the Red Tsardom cannot be a pretext for capitalism to play the game of "prevention" and in order to forestall Bolshevism to finance on the one side nationalist bestiality, private armies collected from the gutters, the dives organised by snobs against democracy; and, on the other hand, to force its governments and diplomatic corps to look benevolently upon them.

Nor is it true that socialism cuts the profits of capitalism so severely that if it is not checked no enterprise would pay. The golden age of capitalism from Disraeli through Bismarck right up to the Great War showed that its profits were more than adequate to yield a fair return and at the same time for a large-scale social policy. There is no truth

either in the statement that democracy is unable to make a stand against Bolshevism. It is well able to do so if it is not tripped up. Democracy's destiny is the prevention of Bolshevism. Democracy possesses all the weapons against Bolshevism, provided these weapons are not wrested from its hands. If only conservative society has the brains to pave the middle way for democracy on which the conservative cart can also get along on its business and after its profit. If only it would not train highway robbers who might in the beginning overthrow only the motor-cycles of socialists—but soon would want to have the same sport with the Rolls-Royces. In the end not only the Left Wing great writer, Thomas Mann, and the Left Wing genius, Einstein, has to flee into exile on Hitler's account, but also the great capitalist gentleman, Fritz Thyssen, whose money made Hitler a chancellor. The German left wing, hiding in its catacombs, says then openly: if it comes to hanging, it won't be Hitler and his followers, but the Thyssens, Hugenburgs and Papens who smuggled Hitler into power!

There had never been Tsarism in the West, not even in the worst periods of absolutism. Therefore nowhere has there been Bolshevism. But if they introduce Tsarism afterwards on the pretext of preventing Bolshevism, there can be only one answer: Bolshevism!

#### FORSAKEN WEIMAR

It is a fact that after Versailles the democratic Weimar Republic, although it had no past and no dowry, stood on its feet at once—and kept its stand both towards the Left and the Right. First the Socialist Minister for War, Noske, swept the "Spartakists" off the streets with his guns, and with them the first Bolshevist rising. Then the President of the Republic, ex-saddler Ebert, choked the right-wing Papp *putsch* by a general strike and thereby finished the



first counter-revolution. Democracy therefore—even the juvenile German one—possessed the necessary strength to fend off both the left and the right wing. The only thing it needed was to be left to stand on its own feet, so that the attitude of the Western Powers towards the German Government should not have been dictated by Mr. Deterding, the international oil-king. When the Weimar Republic honourably disarmed, according to its pledged duties, the Western committees supervising this disarmament enquired into the humblest coffee machine, lest God should allow it to become an aeroplane; but when the *putsch* was organised openly in Munich and arms were transported in the blaze of noon for the conspirators of the Bierkellers, the same committees looked by chance in another direction. It had been necessary not only to put a wreath every November on the grave of the Unknown Soldier, but also to pay attention to the known soldier, that excellent writer and honest German patriot Ossietzky, who in his paper published details of the secret rearmament and was therefore sent for life, as a living corpse, to Hitler's concentration camp. It had been necessary that when, after the war, the Western Powers, with the pretext of punishing Germany, paralysed and humiliated the Weimar Republic, they should be vigilant and severe also towards those elements from the gutter which organised themselves against that republic; and that, on the other hand, the understanding and conciliatory spirit which these subterranean movements, Nazism and Hitlerism, found should not be withheld either from the Weimar Republic. The truth is that German democracy did not make any impression on the Western democracies and they did not want it, but the organised scum of the beer-cellars (if not of the penal convicts)—in a word, Nazi-Germany—brought into significance and into place and then, when in power, supported by the Western democracies and their real capitalistic rulers, has grown over their heads.

## GUNS AGAINST WORKERS' FLATS

It was the same in little Austria, which the Paris Conference prevented from joining Germany because—and there was much truth in it which was proved later tragically—it would have been fatal for the new Czechoslovakia if a nationalist Germany could have encircled her from the south. The Berlin Fuehrer's palaces will be auctioneers' halls when the workers' flat-blocks of the Vienna Socialists will still proclaim how you can leave to business enterprise all commercial profit and possibility and, at the same time, supply the worker with all human dignity and provision. Never was there such discipline, such efficiency as that of the Viennese workers, who elected as their governors the best educated brains and most upright characters. They made old Vienna a new metropolis from the ruins of the war; they forced the peasant population of the small country to keep pace with this peerless city of culture. It is not true that this Vienna was Bolshevist. There were one or two theoreticians among the Viennese socialists who—especially in magazine articles—looked upon Moscow as the first great experiment of the workers' rule. But these very governing and acting leaders had no illusions about what Bolshevism brought for the workers; and they could the less aim at the "dictatorship of the proletariat" because they had to calculate in Vienna itself on an important Christian-Socialist minority. The Catholic Christian-Socialists, together with the German Nationalists, were in a majority in the Republic and governed the State. It is not in the least true that the Socialists brought up a workers' aristocracy on the backs of the Austrian peasant folk. The peasant-worker had never had such a good time in Austria—neither before nor since this period—as in the days when the Socialists attained for them the same wages and insurances as for the city workers. And also the small farmer was able to bear these economic burdens; never



before had he been taught so carefully how wheat can be grown even on a mountain ridge; wheat and foodstuffs had never had such prices as at the time when, besides the Prelate-Chancellor, Monsignore Seipel, workers who had grown up on the Vienna pavements and "Herr Doktors" had also a say in his business. Here also it was necessary that the Western democracies, while they helped this personally unassuming priest of the holy life through the League of Nations by loans and other support, should also have paid some attention when this ascetic organised through village priests the reactionary village against the progressive city; when he turned village youths, who all hated the workers, into Viennese policemen, and washed his hands absent-mindedly while the die-hards of the Jockey Club organised private armies of unemployed on the money of Jewish war profiteers. It was a pity that the Western protectors were not absent-minded too when Dollfuss, the Christian-Socialist Chancellor—who later himself became a victim of the Nazis—followed the example of Noske's action against the Spartakists and trained guns on the Viennese workers' houses while he chased the Socialists from the Vienna Town Hall. This broke the strength of Vienna and Austria which was so badly needed later against the Nazis. When the unfortunate Schuschnigg wanted to re-arm the workers, it was too late, and Hitler trampled down the Christian-Socialists in the same way as they had trampled down the Social Democrats.

### THE HRADSKIN SLEEPS

But after all great democracies are big enough to recover even from negligence of their own interests. Small democracies, on the contrary, one would believe, know that whoever goes to sleep on sentry duty dies. But they did not know. In 1934 Dollfuss besieged with guns the Vienna workers' flats—Hitler had already thrown his shadow over

Austria for the past year; but the neighbouring Czechoslovakia was still very much alive and flowering, rich in money and rich in tanks . . . the very Czechoslovakia for which—there is no need to explain this again—the democratic Vienna was a life or death matter so that the Nazis should not be able to encircle her from Austria. But Czechoslovakia was deeply asleep and did not even awaken at the guns' roar when they finished democracy in Vienna. Dr. Benes, her Foreign Secretary, who had the ear of the Western democracies, was more worried about the possibility of a Habsburg restoration in Vienna. And yet at that time many people in Paris were thinking of this, as of a form of government, rooted in the hearts of the Danube Basin's inhabitants and as of a natural barrier against German invasion. It was more or less natural that the Habsburgs, should they return to Vienna or even perhaps to Budapest, could only plan a democratic and social monarchy the model of which they saw closely in Belgium, where the friendship of the king had given them a haven in their exile. To-day every king is a "good one," for, if he is not, he loses his throne. It was clear that if a monarch should sit in the Vienna Burg or perhaps the Budapest Royal Castle, he would not have further pretensions; he would not be an uncomfortable neighbour for the former Habsburg possessions—not a whit more than these countries were under their present governments. Hitler is no king, but nevertheless he too was able to take the trip from the Vienna Burg to the Hradsin of Prague. The kingless Hungarian kingdom, however, never resigned itself—"no, no—never!" to its mutilation and despoiling. Hungary marched without a king into Slovakia and Carpatho-Ruthenia. On the other hand, Hungary's last king, the Emperor Charles, after the last war did not prevent the Southern Slav Croats, Slovenes and Bosnians from joining peacefully the new Yugoslavia; he gave personal instructions to his intimate, Admiral Horthy, to give them as a



dowry the fine Austro-Hungarian fleet, which had a not inglorious past. In his time Francis Joseph resigned himself to the loss of Lombardy and Venice; he even entered into an alliance with the King of Italy, whose father had taken away these territories, and there is no reason to suppose that a modern Habsburg, after so many lessons, would have been less amenable. Perhaps all this is a long out-dated point and would probably be of no use now. But at that time it had an aim and a possibility. But Dr. Benes declared: "Rather the *Anschluss* than the Habsburgs!" Well, he got it—never was the wish of a national leader fulfilled so completely! Democracy is certainly the best form of government if for no other reason than that no better one has been invented. But it must have some fault, as its grave is always dug by the democrats themselves.

#### TESCHEN WAS THEIR ONLY SORROW

Not that it must be a democracy. Poland, for instance, was anything but a democracy. But it was her life interest that Czechoslovakia should exist in her neighbourhood; either as a democracy or as anything else. For Poland was in the same position towards Czechoslovakia as Czechoslovakia towards little Austria: it was death for her if the Germans could invade Bohemia and encircle her from the south too. Just as Czechoslovakia did not fire a single shot when first the Socialists were massacred in Vienna, after which Hitler entered Austria with machine-guns, so Poland had also no other worry when Hitler dismembered Czechoslovakia than to join the fray and re-take Teschen, which was given in 1919 to Czechoslovakia instead of to her. It is true history decided that at the same time Hungary, the old friend of Poland, could hoist her flag again in ancient Upper Hungary, and through Carpatho-Ruthenia became again continuous with Poland. This would have been very good indeed if Slovaks had not

broken away from the Czechs and declared her independence, only to serve as an approach for Hitler to attack Poland.

Public Enemy Number One, they explained from Paris to Washington, was German nationalism. The war of 1914 was against it. In 1919 they built all conceivable barriers to break this down. Among the barriers there was one which could have been a real dam: democracy. They let this dam break. But even so Versailles could have brought it about and certainly left behind one or two possibilities. Did they take advantage of these?



## VI

### THINGS WHICH MIGHT HAVE BEEN DONE

#### THE MURDERED SOUTH GERMAN

AMONG so many thousands and tens of thousands a single victim, even if he would be valuable individually, would not count. But this man meant more than his own personality. Germans who had escaped into Switzerland brought the news that he had died recently in the prison of the Gestapo—probably not a natural death. His name was Benedict Schmittmann, and he was a college professor of Cologne. Cologne is one of the chief cultural centres of the South German Rhineland, of Roman origin, possessing thousand-year-old traditions just like Vienna on the Danube; and it has as much in common with Berlin as Berlin has with Vienna. And this Schmittmann was one of the leaders of South German Federalism, which maintains that “as long as Prussia rules Germany there cannot be any freedom in the Reich or any peace in Europe!”

Schmittman died for this idea, but it was not his discovery. There were always people maintaining it; everybody who knows history can testify to this. Prussia first robbed and forced together everything she could from the Russian frontier to Belgium and north from the Danube and the Main. Then with the same power she forced the Southern Germans to attack the French with her and then, in 1871, return from the Versailles Hall of Mirrors as a “German Reich”, under the Prussian King, who was made a “German Emperor”. This last great manœuvre was engineered by Bismarck, who later became Northern German and finally Reich Chancellor. As he was brutal *in mento* so he was diplomatic in his means. His art sufficed to herd the Southern Germans so tactfully under

Prussian rule and keep them there. He was so careful not to abuse the strength of the Reich in foreign policy that the Germans and the peoples of Europe alike were deceived for some time about the nature of the Prussian rule. But this illusion was dispelled when the young Wilhelm pushed old Bismarck aside and wanted to continue on a grand scale at the point where his ancestor, Frederick the Great, had stopped on a small scale. After the World War the broken and starving German people looked at each other broodingly: what need was there for this? In this question the whole criticism of the Prussian rule over German soil and German people was included.

Over German soil and German people. . . . The German language may be the same—and may have become homogeneous in the usage of a great literature—from Königsberg to Berne and from Strasbourg to Vienna. But the origin, the past, and especially the historical education of these German-speaking peoples is not the same. Their lingual territory is divided by many natural frontiers into diverse parts. And if the Prussian dictatorship now tramples with the excuse and on the basis of racial idea over the Germans and forces into war only Europe for the time being, the same theory could be turned against it. One might ask whether the Prussians and Saxons are not originally Slavs, whether the Rhinelanders and other Germans have no Latin blood . . . and whether the same blood (*horribile dictum!*) is quite free of even Jewish mixture? But this is not a decisive factor and the racial prying is no argument even if it works against the Nazis. There is a stronger argument if we state that, for instance, the Bavarian could never stand the Prussian and never felt any community with him; that the Austrian, while feeling affinity with the Bavarian, shared this anti-Prussian aversion. This is to say nothing against the Prussians: there are exquisite dishes, for instance strawberries or oysters, which cause rash on certain skins. The Prussians have



every right to live as they can, but not to invade places where everybody abhors them. When the great French Revolution carried its firebrands into the German Rhineland, it brought foreign rule, it destroyed and extorted, but nevertheless everybody breathed with relief in the freer air it had brought. Napoleon experimented, in order to break up the Holy Roman Empire, with the Rheinbund and did not succeed. But not as if it had not been justified by culture and geography. Only because the conservative European interests did not want the French Revolution or Napoleon in any respect and after his fall they wanted to wipe off everything he did. God alone knows what Frankfurt, city of Goethe, or Duesseldorf, Heine's city, felt and thought when, after the fall of Napoleon, the Prussians dictated again what human beings must not feel and what it was their duty to think. From Frankfurt to Vienna, compared to the North German world, the South German world was just as unique and independent as the Dutch or the Swiss—not to speak of the Danish, Norwegian, Swedish, and in the final analysis of the English—of whom the Nazis can prove with grammar and dictionary that they are at least as Germanic as they are. The South Germans are a separate world, if for no other reason than that they are Catholics, which is not only a difference in religion, but a spiritual attitude which divides the Munich atheist, if such exists, as much from the Berlin atheist as from His Holiness the Pope himself. This South German world is divided by the River Main geographically, too, from the Northern; and from Napoleon to the present day the tradition of the South German separatism or federalism, on account of which the Gestapo murdered Professor Schmittman, has never ceased.

#### A NATION "OMITTED"

We can accept the premise that this Schmittmann was a good German and a good patriot, not a whit less than

any one of the Nazis. In the same way the South German, and with him the Rhineland separatist, does not dream of exchanging the Prussian rule for—say—French rule. France would only profit by it, gaining peace if Prussian aggressiveness could not count upon South German help, while France could count upon a strong and independent South German Reich in the same way as Great Britain counts upon a strong and independent France. Since the invention of bombing-planes, Great Britain's eastern frontier is the Rhine. Baldwin first expressed this, but it was already true in 1918. It was true when the war ended and the peace had to be made, because there were aeroplanes even then. The same interests according to which the frontiers of France had to be defined to create a real peace instead of an armistice between two wars are the interests of Great Britain, and if it has been once in America's interests to march with France and Great Britain, the French frontier problems concern her too. After the war it was a natural question how France could avoid the new attack of a possibly again inimical and finally strengthened Germany. The French Marshal Foch could not attain what for military reasons he wanted—namely, the permanent French occupation of the right (German) bank of the Rhine. But from Switzerland to Holland a thirty-mile wide strip was drawn along the Rhine where the Germans could not build fortifications, could not keep soldiers, and for fifteen years after the peace the Allies would keep it occupied. For the same reason and with the same aim Austria was forbidden to join Germany, but also forbidden to draw the Sudeten Germans from Czechoslovakia to herself.

How much more effective, how much better it would have been for France and, through the French interests, for Great Britain and America, if something else had been created here! Something positive and alive and self-supporting and not a negative like a demilitarized zone,



which after all could not be kept up for ever and which had to be guarded by armed force from one side of the frontier in order that one day the other party could not break into it from the other side. "Isn't he allowed to occupy his own country?" the Western sympathisers of the Nazis said when Herr Hitler did march into the Rhineland. How much more practical and at the same time moral would have been the Rhineland as a separate and independent country, justified by history, like Switzerland or Holland or Belgium! Or, starting from this Rhine Country towards the east, through Munich right to Vienna, a separate South German empire or federation, a South German nation which could have lived alone, defended itself and at the same time yielded the advantage—freely, without force or hypocrisy—of defending the French, British and American interests! This combination would have been, or would be, a solution of the Austrian problem too—or if the peoples concerned even of a much larger one.

We have already mentioned the Czech patriot Palacky. In the great year of national revolutions, in 1848, he conceived the resurrection and freedom of his people as a Slav State with a federal—and strong!—South German and Slav Empire. His authority was unquestionable. In any case, with Slavs or without them, this conception is neither unfounded nor aimless nor traditionless; and the French did not want anything unjust or immoral or against German national interests when during the Great War they presented the idea of an independent German "buffer state" in the Rhineland. But Great Britain did not want it and America turned it down at the Peace Conference. After Versailles, patriots of the Rhineland, first with French and then with Belgian support, twice proclaimed the Rhine Republic. But they were either left without support by America or prevented by Great Britain. The Rhineland dream collapsed and Doktor Dorten, the

man who wanted to realise it for his Rhineland German brothers, could be happy when a French general freed him from his prison and he did not have to share as a "traitor" and "a French mercenary" the fate of Ossietzky. He certainly discovered what fate awaited those who wanted to blaze the trail for democracy and staked their lives on the freedom of nations.

#### PLEBISCITE—FOR HITLER

And just as along the Rhine so it was the same along the German-French frontier.

The war mainly raged on French soil. Germany was saved its immediate horrors, and at the conference France wanted to get at least the huge industrial and coal district, the German Saar, as compensation. She did not get it. The only thing she achieved was that for fifteen years the Saar could remain under the administration of the victors and after that a plebiscite would settle its fate. During the fifteen years no attempt was made to organise the Saar people and every opportunity was given for the work of Prussian nationalism. By the time the plebiscite was held in January 1935 Hitler had been ruling in Berlin for almost two years, and his Nazi propaganda and the temptation and threat of Nazi terror had a free sway over the Saar voters. They duly voted just as it has been usual to vote during the prior seven years under the whip of Nazi plebiscite-organisers. The Saar returned under Prussian rule.

#### THERE WAS NO NEED TO SHOOT HIMSELF

Well . . . at least this was according to the Treaty of Versailles. If not according to its intentions, at least it conformed to its letter.

But on March 7, 1936, German soldiers marched into the Rhineland zone and started at once to fortify the territory



where, on a strip of thirty miles width, no German soldier could stay and where the Germans were not allowed to build fortifications. This is what the Versailles Treaty had said and it was re-affirmed by the Locarno Treaty. But Hitler had denounced the Locarno Treaty and kicked the Versailles Treaty aside. He did well, for of the guarantors of the treaties nobody blocked his way and Albert Sarraut, the French Home Minister, just like the whole French Government, was busy with elections. They did not want to be disturbed when Hitler "re-occupied his own country". The German High Command opposed this step—they did not want to risk a war. But Hitler reassured them. It is alleged that he said, "I'll shoot myself if you see a single Allied 'plane approaching when we march in—and you can still retire!" There was no need for him to shoot himself, there was no need to retire. Not a single Allied 'plane was seen over the Rhine. Only France could have felt a ghastly worry how to defend her eastern frontier in the inevitable future.

It is only natural that when, two years later, Hitler marched into Austria his only difficulty was the Vienna pavement which collapsed beneath his tanks. It is true that Austria's independence was proclaimed emphatically by the St. Germain Treaty. But did not the French Foreign Minister, the Socialist Paul Boncour, wax jubilant in the corridor of the Geneva League Palace when the Nazis began to undermine Austria and Mussolini had protested sharply? Did not he burst out saying: "Thank God that there is no need for us to be the gendarme of Austria!" Mussolini was not a gendarme for long on the Brenner and could not be found in Rome when Chancellor Schuschnigg made desperate last-minute attempts to save his country. In Paris there was naturally a Cabinet crisis and they had other troubles than little Austria, where people were running around in shorts and yodelling to each other from mountain-tops. Anyhow, months before,

the story went round in Vienna that in London a responsible statesman had asked Baron Franckenstein, the London ambassador, "Why are the Austrians kicking against the *Anschluss*? Germans belong to Germany!" And lo! a few weeks later the "plebiscite" decided with ninety-nine per cent for Hitler and everybody took part in it, except the Communists, the Catholics, the Jews, the Socialists, the Christian-Socialists, the Liberals, and the academicians who were killed or jailed in the meantime if they did not succeed in escaping. . . .

The Sudeten people of Czechoslovakia were Germans too. For years they have been subsidised and terrorised, and part of them really wanted Hitler. Now he could threaten or tempt them from the immediate vicinity of Austria. There was a time immediately after the war when democratic little Austria had called them. At this time the Western Powers ordered them back. But if the totalitarian Third Reich "could not endure any longer that Czechs should torture and oppress their German brothers", this was another case; and the guarantors of the Versailles and other treaties flew from three directions to Munich so that Sudeten German mothers could bear Nazis in the future. This was perhaps the reason why Herr Hitler endured for another six months that the Czechs should be Czechs and only half a year later marched into Prague. Dr. Benes could also fly now—to London. There was at this time no trace of Habsburg. (Only the Nazis issued the warrant against one of them, accusing him of stealing silver spoons!) And now not only the Austrian but the Czechoslovak *Anschluss* had become a fact!

#### POSTPONED WAR—FORFEITED PEACE

And then came the Polish *Anschluss*. War became inevitable, and the question arises, if it could not be avoided, why did not the world decide on it earlier when the



strength and strategy of the Third Reich had not increased so powerfully by the Rhine frontier, the Austrian and partly Czechoslovak territories, industries, war-chests, arms, hinterlands, and people who could be forced to take up arms? It would be indiscreet to answer this question during a war and while every hope and honour is staked on its success on the side of the Allies. History is going to answer the question. Many people explain that peace, the hope of the maintenance of peace, was worth every sacrifice. As long as Prussian aggression did not become even in its peace-time form a war, any conflict would have been a preventive one. It is true that even Bismarck, who was certainly an expert, opposed in his memoirs preventive wars. Only God, he wrote in his memoirs, can know what will happen to-morrow, and for every human being it is lunacy to make sacrifices for the uncertainty of the future. This may have been so in Bismarck's time. The wars Bismarck knew were only army manœuvres compared to the present ones, and in order to prevent such horrible danger one must not flinch even from the supreme sacrifice. To-day a war can only be avoided by risking it. If the world had not waited till Prussian aggression enriched itself with the Rhineland, Austrian and Czechoslovak advantages, if M. Albert Sarraut had not worried about the French voters, if the first Allied 'plane had really appeared over the Rhineland zone when the German soldiers marched in—Hitler would have had ample reason to shoot himself, and the German High Command would have given up the war. It may be amateurish to maintain this after the fact, on the strength of a mere word of honour, but not even the experts—who were involved with their personal safety—saw it in different light. A Polish source states that as soon as Hitler became Chancellor, Marshal Pilsudski, the leader of the new Poland, offered at once to the Western democracies to march with them if they would march; and only when they refused did he turn and make an

agreement of ten years' peace with Hitler. Two years later the Third Reich showed openly for what it was preparing and began it on the Rhine. At that time, it is said, the Polish Foreign Secretary Beck and the Yugoslav Foreign Minister and Premier Stojadinovich made the offer to the Western Powers of marching before it was too late. Certainly it is not too late even to-day, and during a war it is vain to brood whether peace was not forfeited when it was saved.

### THE WHALE SUBMERGED

Has Versailles been quite useless or only not used enough? The politicians must accept the responsibility because individuals and nations are not the masters of their own fate, neither in totalitarian nor in parliamentary States. Human beings want only to live in peace and to work undisturbed; they feel themselves deceived if they are robbed of this opportunity.

There is a legend about a fairy tale monster, a gigantic whale which once came up from the depths of the ocean to sun itself. Its back was above water and, being a giant, a hundred or a thousand years meant only a minute for it. Earth was carried on to its back by the wind, forests grew from the soil, flowers in the undergrowth. People came to cut down the forest, to till the soil on the whale's back, and build cities. Then the whale felt that it had had enough sun. It submerged into the sea and the world built on it collapsed. Peace was such a whale. On it people built their houses, their countries—built on democracy, national idea, political liberty. The whale submerged and now human beings have to fight desperately against the suction of the whirlpool.





THE COMPANY'S

THE MOMENT

each

each

THE COMPANY'S

THE MOMENT

each

each

each

each

each

each

each

each

each

each

each

each

each

each

each

each

each

each

each

each

each

each

each

each

each

each

each

sh 1/-  
**PALLAS PUBLISHING COMPANY'S**

new and highly topical series

## **TOPICS OF THE MOMENT**

written by eminent English and Continental authors, each  
a recognised authority on his special subject.

**1s. net each volume**

**Two volumes each month**

**MARCH 1940:**

### **FROM VERSAILLES TO THE SECOND WORLD WAR**

By *H. IGNOTUS*

### **THE BALTIC COUNTRIES**

By *JAN APSE*

**APRIL 1940:**

### **THE FIFTH COLUMN**

By *K. KELEMEN*

### **WILL AUSTRIA SURVIVE?**

By *COUNT STRACHWITZ*

**MAY 1940:**

### **HOW CHANCE HAS INFLUENCED WORLD POLITICS IN THE LAST FEW YEARS**

By *ALEC DYER*

### **ECONOMICS IN WAR**

By *Dr. LEON ZEITLIN*

---

#### **Previous volumes:**

1. **THE MAGINOT AND SIEGFRIED LINES**, by James Eastwood.
2. **THE NAZI MYTH**, by Paul Tabor.
3. **WHAT PEACE TERMS?** The Rt. Hon. A. Duff-Cooper; Madame Tabouis, etc.
4. **THE U-BOAT WARFARE**, by Capt. Pierre Guitard.
5. **STRANGE BEDFELLOWS (Stalin and Hitler)**, by James Cleugh.
6. **THIS MAN GOEBBELS**, by Joachim Reichenau.

**Further highly topical volumes in preparation.**