By the Same Author

THE SECOND FIVE-YEAR PLAN OF DEVELOPMENT OF THE U.S.S.R.

ARMED INTERVENTION IN RUSSIA, 1918–1922

SCENES FROM SOVIET LIFE

FROM TSARDOM TO THE STALIN CONSTITUTION

WORLD AFFAIRS
AND THE
U.S.S.R.

BY
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PREFACE

In 1934, at the Annual Conference of the Labour Party at Southport, a resolution was passed in the following terms:

"This Conference expresses its deep satisfaction at the entry of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics into the League of Nations, with a Permanent Seat on the Council of the League, believing that this historic event will greatly strengthen the League, improve the relationship between neighbour States, render the Collective Peace System more effective, hasten a world agreement for new progressive disarmament, thereby creating new opportunities for effective international co-operation both in economic questions and in other fields, and assist in a general advance of the peoples of the world towards a Co-operative World Commonwealth."

It is no fault of the U.S.S.R. that since its entry into the League of Nations the League has lost immeasurably in power and influence. From the day the Soviet Government became a member it has on every possible occasion proved its loyalty to decisions of the League and to the principles on which the League is based.

Unfortunately, certain States have left Geneva, whilst Britain and France, in particular, have allowed the League's position to be gravely weakened and its authority undermined.

It can be said with truth that had all the States' members of the League of Nations been as loyal to it and as active in its service as the U.S.S.R. the present

deplorable and tragic situation in Europe and Asia would not have arisen.

Mr. and Mrs. Coates have performed a great service in setting out in clear and straight-forward terms the story of the part the U.S.S.R. has played in the changing international scene.

Special importance attaches to more recent events. I am glad that Mr. and Mrs. Coates have explained the attitude which the U.S.S.R. took during the Czechoslovakian crisis. There can be no doubt that attempts were made to mislead both the British and French Governments and that these Governments in their turn tried to mislead public opinion as to the part the U.S.S.R. was prepared to play in the event of war.

It is equally clear that both Governments deliberately turned their backs on Russia in the vain hope that they could strike up a permanent friendship with Germany and Italy. That policy of so-called "appeasement," and the idea of some four-pour pact between Britain, France, Germany and Italy, which might in fact have become an anti-Comintern League, or rather an anti-Soviet League, have now been exploded.

The culmination of "Munich" on March 15, 1939, when German troops marched as conquerors into Prague, finally killed "appeasement." It is now buried deep, never to be resurrected. Britain is now fumbling its way back to some form of collective security. A complete change has come over the situation. The U.S.S.R. once spurned and contemptuously ignored, is now being wooed as a potential ally of great value should there be a call to resist aggression.

The course of events in recent years, in the Far

East, Abyssinia, Spain, Austria, Czecho-Slovakia, and now Memel and Albania, shows conclusively that the policy of "appeasement" through capitulation and acquiescence in aggression is futile and fraught with tragedy and ever deepening danger. One adventure is but the prelude to another. Europe is now in greater turmoil than it was before "Munich". There is a feeling of growing apprehension abroad, arising from fear of swift action by one or both the Fascist Dictators.

The only way in which these fears can be allayed and confidence in the maintenance of peace restored is by an effective grouping of all peace-loving nations under the banner of collective security.

This book will, I believe; help powerfully in concentrating attention on the need for a sane determined policy, which will make aggression for ever impossible.

ARTHUR GREENWOOD.

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INTRODUCTION

THE present book does not, of course, pretend to be an exhaustive study of Soviet foreign policy. Our aim has been to give a short and as objective as possible an outline of the policy pursued by the Soviet Government in the various important questions which have occupied world attention during the last four years.

We have been impelled to deal with this subject because just as the condition of affairs within the U.S.S.R. has been continuously distorted, so the activities of the Soviet Government on the international field have been misrepresented time after time.

When in 1934, the Soviet Government decided to join the League of Nations, it was of course welcomed by every sincere lover of peace in this and other countries, but there were also two lines of attack or criticism. On the one hand, the "Die-hard" opponents of the U.S.S.R. saw in this step a sinister move to undermine the stability of all the other League members. Energetic efforts were made to prevent the entry of the U.S.S.R. into the League not only by individual reactionaries and organs of the press in this and other countries, but by members of the League, like Switzerland, Holland and Portugal and by Powers which had left the League—Nazi Germany and Japan.

It was also freely asserted at the time that the reason for the entry of the U.S.S.R. into the League

was purely selfish, that she hoped for League help in the inevitable war with Japan she saw looming ahead in the very near future.

On the other hand, the cry also went up both from some friends and foes of the U.S.S.R. that the Soviet Government had made a complete break with its former foreign policy. Having for many years denounced the League as a body organized for maintaining the peace of Versailles and the imperialist interests of its members, having denounced it as an organization contrived for united action against the U.S.S.R., how could the Soviet Government now make this *volte face* and join the League?

Such reasoning showed, of course, a fundamental misconception both of Soviet policy and the change in the international situation which had occurred since the League was first established.

The policy of the Soviet Government has been consistently based on the maintenance and promotion of peace since it first came into power in 1917.

So long as the League was largely used by France to establish her own hegemony in Europe, for the enforcement of the provisions of the Treaty of Versailles and as a nucleus for the possible organization of war against the U.S.S.R., the Soviet Government steadily opposed the League and refused to participate in its activities.

At the same time, it never refused to take part in such work of the League which promoted or might tend to promote international peace, thus the Soviet Government participated very actively in the League Disarmament Commission, in various economic activities of the League, etc.

The Soviet Government was never, in principle, against a League of Nations. On the contrary, as a Socialist Government it necessarily stood for peace and co-operation between all peoples. If it opposed the League of Nations as then constituted, it was precisely because it looked upon this League as not a real League of peoples but as a hot-bed of imperialist intrigues.

However, the world never stands still. By 1934, the rise of Nazi Germany with its naked aggressiveness, vile racial theories and glorification of militarism, had brought about a new international orientation in Europe. Side by side with this, Japan was threatening the peace of the world by her growing aggression in the Far East.

At the same time, the U.S.S.R. was becoming daily stronger both economically and in a military sense, and she became a definite and growing factor making for peace.

Under these circumstances, France which was directly threatened by Nazi Germany and to a less extent also Britain (whose interests in the Far East were threatened by Japan) and other Powers renounced, at any rate for the time being, their anti-Soviet policy and drew closer to the U.S.S.R., endeavouring to enlist her aid in the preservation of world peace.

The two mad dogs of war of that time, Japan and Nazi Germany, had withdrawn from the League in so far as the latter was to some extent hampering their freedom of action. In view of all this the Soviet Government, although by no means laying very great hopes on the possibility of the League (made up as

it was of mainly capitalist Powers) really assuring peace, nevertheless decided to pull its weight in favour of world peace and collective security by joining the League.

Pursuing a realistic and consistent policy the Soviet Government always suited the, as it were, day-to-day details of its policy to the changing circumstances whilst maintaining intact its fundamental principles, one of which was the preservation of peace in so far as that was possible without yielding its own fundamental rights or territories or the betrayal of its treaty obligations with other countries.

The criticisms of and attacks on the U.S.S.R. when she joined the League is one example of the misrepresentation of Soviet policy. Two more examples we take from more recent history.

In the great betrayal of Czechoslovakia, persistent rumours were spread that the U.S.S.R. too, was not prepared to honour her mutual assistance pact with Czechoslovakia. This was an absolutely baseless slander. M. Litvinov has made it perfectly clear that the Soviet Government was not only ready to fulfil all its obligations under this Treaty, but that the Soviet War Department was ready to discuss the necessary measures with representatives of the French and Czechoslovak War Departments.

From the first, the Soviet Government was against the efforts made by Britain and France to persuade Czechoslovakia to capitulate to Nazi threats. The Soviet Press denounced the Lord Runciman mission to Czechoslovakia for they saw where it was leading to. Similarly, they denounced Mr. Chamberlain's visit

to Berchtesgaden and all that followed this fatal flight to Hitler's stronghold.

Later it was represented that the U.S.S.R. had supported the Munich "Agreement". This, too, was a shameless lie repudiated alike by the behaviour of the Soviet Government throughout the crisis and officially by the Soviet authorities.

Later, too, we find from time to time echoes of this distortion of the real facts: for instance, the Diplomatic Correspondent of the *Manchester Guardian* in the course of an article on "Hitler's Ukrainian Aims" remarked casually as though it was a known and generally accepted fact that "the weakness of the Soviet Union was demonstrated during the recent crisis." [*Manchester Guardian*, December 12, 1938.]

In what way was this "weakness" demonstrated? Was it by the readiness of the Soviet Government to stand by its treaty obligations? Or did this Diplomatic Correspondent really expect the U.S.S.R. to attack Germany on behalf of Czechoslovakia when the latter followed the advice, or it would be more correct to say the peremptory order of Great Britain and France to capitulate to the naked German aggression? Did he expect the U.S.S.R., not in fulfilment of Treaty obligations (for she had none when France refused to come to the aid of Czechoslovakia) but as an act of chivalry, to precipitate a general European conflagration in which she would have stood alone against Germany, Poland, Italy, Japan, with France and Britain at best neutral and perhaps not even too friendly neutral seeing that they had made their "peace" with German aggression and throughout the crisis had cold-shouldered the U.S.S.R.?

We think that such strictures of Soviet "inactivity" arise largely from a misconception of Soviet peace aims. The U.S.S.R. has always stood against the provocation of war, she stands for collective security against aggression with a view to avoiding war. The Soviet Government holds that if all the peace-minded countries, i.e., the countries which at the present stage of world affairs are vitally interested in the preservation of peace, stand together against the would-be aggressors, the forces ranged against the latter would be so great that the aggressor countries would in all probability desist from their plans. A bold, combined front by Britain, France and the U.S.S.R. with the U.S.A. at the very least a friendly neutral, would rally most if not all the smaller European countries. If in spite of this an aggressor country, drunk with its previous effortless successes and in a megalomania of self-importance, or for other reasons, did carry out its threats of war, then it would be speedily crushed by the huge combination ranged against her even if her Fascist allies did come to her aid, which is by no means certain in such a struggle.

It is this same failure to comprehend the basis of Soviet foreign policy—where the misrepresentation is not deliberate—that has led certain critics of the Soviets to wonder why the U.S.S.R. "is not doing more to help China" against Japanese aggression. What would they have the Soviet do? The latter, unlike the French Government, has made no apologies for supplying China with arms and war materials to the best of her ability. But, say the critics, the most effective way of helping China would be for the U.S.S.R. to attack Japan and the reason she does not

do so is because of her military weakness. This is just nonsense. The U.S.S.R. by general consent has one of the finest air forces in the world. She now has a first-class highly mechanized army of which the man-power is second to none in number, training, equipment, skill and intelligence. From its highest commander to its newest rank and filer, they are fully conscious of what the Red Army stands for and in any war in which they might be called on to participate would understand fully what it is they were fighting for.

If the Soviet authorities have not made war against Japan it is certainly not because they are afraid of the military might of the latter, but because it is a fundamental principle of their policy that their armed forces are to be used only for the defence of their own territory or in defence of their treaty obligations. The U.S.S.R. has no mutual assistance pact with China. Under such circumstances, an attack by the U.S.S.R. on Japan would be entirely contrary to Soviet principles. On the other hand, when Japan hoping no doubt for an easy victory and for a gain of prestige made an aggressive attempt on Soviet territory, she met with a resistance which soon illustrated the effectiveness of the Soviet forces, and Japan was compelled to withdraw.

The above few examples, which are dealt with more fully in the various chapters of the book, are sufficient to illustrate the kind of misconceptions if not worse to which Soviet policy has been subjected.

The history of the past few years has been one of almost consistent retreat of the bourgeois democracies before the Fascist Powers. If the former are to survive

they must, sooner rather than later (for later may perhaps be too late), make a bold stand against the Fascists. In this stand, if it is a really determined and honest stand, the U.S.S.R. is ready at all times to lend its powerful aid.

Unfortunately the Governments of the bourgeois democracies in their dislike of Socialism, in their fear of its success in the U.S.S.R., in their fear of the rise of a really independent democratic China are prepared even to sacrifice their own imperial interests rather than make common cause with the U.S.S.R. to defeat Fascism. They may—most of them certainly do—prefer their own bourgeois democratic régimes, but if it is to be a choice between Socialism and Fascism they will in most cases plump for the latter. If Fascism in Germany or Italy were to fall, as there can be little doubt, it would fall if their Governments were to meet with military or a number of serious diplomatic and economic defeats, the probability is that a Socialist régime would take its place—this the present British and French Governments are not prepared to contemplate, hence one reason for their complacency in the face of Fascist attacks on and triumphs at the expense of British and French interests.

But the peoples of Britain and France, above all the workers by hand and brain, also have a say in the matter, and it is to them that this book is addressed. If they compel their Governments to resist the further encroachments of Fascism, then as the pages of this booklet demonstrate the U.S.S.R. will be ready to back up this resistance with all its military and economic might.

In conclusion, a few words as to the arrangement of this booklet. It will be seen that the opening chapter does not deal with Soviet policy at all, but consists of a discussion of Nazi policy illustrated by extracts from Hitler's *Mein Kampf* and from speeches by Hitler and other Nazi leaders. This has been done advisedly because the European and indeed the international situation has been largely dominated by the blustering assertiveness of Nazi aggression and racial bestiality. A comparison of *Mein Kampf* with Nazi policy since its accession to power shows how in all the main essentials Hitler has followed the course prescribed in that book.

One of the most important of Hitler's aims was an alliance between Germany, Great Britain and Italy, with a view to isolating France and thus putting her completely at Germany's mercy.

Unsuccessful so far in driving a wedge between France and Great Britain Hitler has, we must concede, quite cleverly manoeuvred Great Britain into forcing France herself to weaken her position on one front after another. The latest "Agreement" between France and Germany arising out of the "Munich Agreement" weakens the French international position still more.

Definitely, and the German Press so far from making a secret of it emphasizes the point, France is now regarded as no longer interested in what is happening in Central or Eastern Europe. The frontier between Germany and France is fixed finally for all time, but as regards France's other frontiers—the frontiers of France with Italy, Switzerland, Spain—Germany is still interested in all these and can strike there

through an ally or a victim at any time. And when France, so the calculation goes, in one way or another has been made completely helpless, then will come the final reckoning with as *Mein Kampf* puts it, Germany's mortal enemy—France.

The new agreement will then share the fate of other agreements and will become a mere scrap of paper.

The two points in which Nazi policy differs from that of *Mein Kampf* are: Nazi Germany has not yet attempted an attack upon the U.S.S.R.—the reason for this is obvious, the Nazis realize that the U.S.S.R. is stronger than Hitler had imagined it would be when he wrote *Mein Kampf* in 1923. Secondly, they have brought forward the question of German Colonies much sooner than contemplated in *Mein Kampf*. The reason for this is also obvious. Britain and France have proved far more complacent to his aggression than Hitler had thought would be the case and he therefore now feels that he may safely make any demands it pleases him without any great risk.

The coming to power of Hitler has necessarily influenced as we have already stated, the day-to-day foreign policy of the U.S.S.R. It has just as necessarily changed the Labour and Socialist attitude towards Germany, towards the foreign policy of their own countries, towards armaments, etc. Present-day Germany is not the German Republic of the Weimar Constitution whatever the faults of the latter, and this fact must always be borne in mind when discussing Socialist foreign policy. Hence any discussion of the international question must be preceded by an examination of the true import of the Nazi philosophy

(if we may use such an expression without insulting the whole conception of philosophy) and this explains the reason for our opening chapter.

As far as possible we have treated the various subjects in chronological order, but for the sake of clarity we have dealt with the different countries in separate chapters and where in any given chapter clearness would have been sacrificed by a strict adherence to chronology, we have chosen clearness in preference to chronology.

Finally, whilst dealing with the subject matter historically, we have neither attempted nor intended to write anything in the nature of a thorough history of these subjects but rather to give a series of rapid historical sketches as a background for discussing the policy pursued by the various countries, more particularly by the U.S.S.R. in each case.

In compiling the subject matter of this booklet, we have used mainly reports of the British press. Our task has been made very much easier by having at our disposal the excellent chronology of events given in the *Bulletin of International News* issued by the Royal Institute of International Affairs to which we would express our profound gratitude.

CHAPTER I

HITLER'S AIMS AS SET OUT IN *MEIN KAMPF*

BRITISH and other statesmen were apparently surprised by the European crisis of September, 1938, caused by Hitler's threat to Czechoslovakia, yet that crisis was the inevitable outcome of policies and aims laid down by Hitler in his book *Mein Kampf*, the Bible of the Nazi Movement.

A copy of this book is given at the expense of the State to every newly-married couple in Germany.[1] Here are a few relevant extracts from that delectable wedding present.

Hitler made it daylight clear that he does not consider the mere restoration of Germany's pre-war frontiers as sufficient. He wrote:

"The demand for a restoration of the boundaries of the year 1914 is political nonsense so colossal and grave in its consequences that it appears criminal. Quite apart from the fact that the boundaries of the Reich in the year 1914 were anything but logical. For in reality they were neither complete from the point of view of comprising all

[1] *The Times*, April 23, 1936, reported: "Registrars in Germany have been instructed by the Minister of the Interior to present a copy of Herr Hitler's *Mein Kampf* to all newly-married couples, Jews only excepted. The cost is to be borne by the municipalities."

people of German nationality, nor rational from the point of view of military geographical utility. They were not the result of conscious political action, but temporary boundaries in a political struggle in no way terminated. Yes, in part they were purely accidental. . . ." [Page 736].

Perhaps the Fuehrer did not think that was sufficiently downright, at any rate he emphasized these ideas in other paragraphs:

"But if one is convinced that the German future, whatever its course, demands the highest sacrifice, one must, quite apart from all considerations of political wisdom in itself, find and fight for an aim worthy of that sacrifice. The boundaries of the year 1914 have not the slightest significance for the future of the German nation. They neither provided protection in the past nor could they provide power in the future.

"The German people will neither obtain internal cohesion through them, nor will its food supply be guaranteed, nor are these boundaries effective or even adequate from the military point of view, nor, finally, can they improve on our present relations with the other world Powers or, more correctly, with the real world Powers." [Pages 738–9.]

Hitler apparently envisaged the future of Europe as one continuous series of wars and revision of frontiers until German hegemony was established:

"In contrast to this aim [the restoration of the 1914 frontiers], we National Socialists must steadfastly maintain our aim in foreign policy, namely, to secure for the German people the soil that is due to them on this earth. And this action is the only one that can justify a sacrifice of blood before God and our German posterity. . . .

"The soil on which in times to come peasant families will give birth to strong sons will justify the sacrifice of the sons of to-day, and will absolve the statesmen responsible, even if they are persecuted to-day, from all guilt for the sacrifice of the people. . . .

"A thoughtless imbecile may regard the division of the earth as fixed for all eternity, but in reality each temporary division is only an apparent point of rest in the current of development, created in constant change by the mighty forces of nature, only perhaps to be destroyed and remodelled by stronger forces to-morrow—and the same is true in human history of the boundaries of national living spaces.

"Boundaries are made by men and altered by men." [Pages 739–40.]

Hitler's first aim was to secure Germany's objects in Eastern Europe and then turn on France:

"We have finished with the eternal Germanic crusades towards the south and west of Europe, and turn our eyes towards the land in the east. We make a final break with the colonial and trade policy of the pre-war period and take up the territorial policy of the future.

"But when we speak to-day of new soil in Europe we can in the first instance only think of Russia and the border States subordinate to her." [Pages 741–2.]

"The giant empire in the east is ripe for collapse. And the end of the Jewish rule in Russia will also be the end of Russia as a State. We are chosen by fate to become the witnesses of a catastrophe which will be the most powerful proof of the correctness of the national race theory." [Page 743.]

As to Germany's future attitude towards France, Hitler wrote:

"The political testament of the German nation for its foreign policy must always of necessity be:—

"Never tolerate the rise of two continental Powers in Europe. Regard any attempt to organize a second military Power on the German frontier, even if only in the form of a State capable of becoming a military Power, as an attack on Germany, and should such an attempt be made, regard it not only as your right but also as your duty to prevent the creation of such a State by every means, including the use of armed force, and to shatter it should it already have arisen!" [Page 754.]

Hitler looked round for Allies, he came to the conclusion that Britain and Italy would suit his purposes. He therefore strongly advocated a German-English-Italian Alliance:

"The only Power that would oppose such an alliance, France, would not be able to do so. And so this alliance would make it possible for Germany to take, without interference, all the steps that, within the framework of such a coalition, will have to be taken, in one way or another, for our reckoning with France.

"For the significant feature of such an alliance is that Germany is not immediately upon its conclusion laid open to an enemy invasion, but that, on the contrary, the enemy alliance itself is broken up, that the Entente which has brought such misfortune upon us is dissolved and that thus the mortal enemy of our people, France, is left in isolation." [Page 755.]

"Even if this success at first were only a moral one it would suffice to give Germany a freedom of movement that can to-day scarcely be conceived, for the law of action would be in the hands of the new European Anglo-German-

Italian Alliance, and no longer in those of France." [Page 756.]

Well might Sir Archibald Sinclair, speaking in the House of Commons, October 3, 1938, respecting Hitler's aims, say:

"Two sources of enlightenment I enjoy about Herr Hitler's intentions. One source is his public speeches and the expression of his opinions and intentions in public and in private, and the other is *Mein Kampf*. I prefer *Mein Kampf*, because it has never yet let me down, and I commend it to the Prime Minister." [*Hansard*, October 3, 1938. Col. 76.]

We shall have no difficulty in demonstrating that Hitler ever since he attained office has relentlessly pursued his *Mein Kampf* policy and that any pacts, promises or agreements which he has made which seemed to run counter to that policy have been scrapped without the slightest compunction as soon as he has been in a position to do so. A short chronological statement of his promises and his acts prove this beyond doubt.

The Nazi Government came into power in Germany in March, 1933. Hitler at first apparently wished to give the world the impression that responsibility had sobered him.

May 17, 1933. Speaking in the Reichstag and referring to the Treaty of Versailles, the Kellogg Pact, the Locarno Treaty, etc., he said:

"Germany will tread no other path than that laid down by the treaties. The German Government will discuss

all political and economic questions only within the framework of and through the treaties. She understands too well that a military attack of any kind, if it were successful, must lead to disaster. The German people will not let itself be forced into anything that might prolong its disqualification. It has no thought of invading any country.

"The German Government wishes to settle all difficult questions with other Governments by peaceful methods. It knows that any military action in Europe, even if completely successful, would, in view of the sacrifice, bear no relation to the profit to be obtained." [*Times*, May 18, 1933.]

Since that date, as we shall see, Hitler's Government has violated the Kellogg Pact and repudiated the Treaties of Versailles and Locarno.

January 30, 1934. Hitler in the Reichstag referring to the Saar, declared:

"This question is the only one concerning territory which is still open between the two nations. After it has been settled the German Government is ready to accept not only the letter but also the spirit of the Locarno Pact, for then there will be no other territorial question at stake between France and Germany." [*Times*, January 31, 1934.]

Although the Saar question was settled some time later, the Reich Government nevertheless subsequently repudiated the Treaty of Locarno.

March 10, 1935. General Göring announced in Berlin, without consultation with the signatories of the Versailles Treaty, the existence of a German Air Force. This was a violation of the Versailles

Treaty. Article 198 lays down: "The armed forces of Germany must not include any military or naval air forces."

March 16, 1935. Hitler, in a proclamation to the German people announced the introduction of conscription, thus again violating the Versailles Treaty. However, apparently with the object of placating public opinion abroad, he declared:

"In this hour, the German Government renews before the German people and the whole world the assurance of its determination never to go beyond the protection of German honour and the freedom of the Reich, and, especially, not to create in the German national armaments an instrument of warlike aggression, but rather one of defence and of the maintenance of peace." [*Times*, March 18, 1935.]

The British Ambassador in Berlin strongly protested against these violations of the Versailles Treaty.

March 7, 1936. Hitler announced to the Allied Ambassadors in Berlin and in the Reichstag, his Government's denunciation of the Treaty of Locarno and the simultaneous reoccupation by German troops of the demilitarized zone.

[*Note.*—The demilitarized zone, which was reoccupied by German troops on March 7, was set up by Articles 42–8 of the Treaty of Versailles. These articles forbid Germany to maintain troops or construct fortifications anywhere to the west of the Rhine or within 50 kilometres to the east of the river. These articles were reaffirmed in the Locarno Treaty. This treaty was not forced upon Germany, but freely negotiated and concluded by Dr. Stresemann, with M. Briand, Sir Austen Chamberlain and Signor

Mussolini, on October 16, 1925, and subsequently also accepted by Hitler.]

In his Reichstag speech Hitler also said:

"After three years I believe that I can regard the struggle for German equality as concluded to-day. I believe, moreover, that thereby the first and foremost reason for our withdrawal from European collective collaboration has ceased to exist. We have no territorial demands to make in Europe. We know that all the tensions which arise from wrong territorial provisions or the disproportion between the sizes of national populations and their living room cannot be solved in Europe by war." [*Times*, March 9, 1936.]

July 11, 1936. An Austrian-German Pact was concluded under which it was provided:

"1. In accordance with statements of the Führer and Reich Chancellor of May 21, 1935, the German Reich Government recognizes the full sovereignty of the Federal States of Austria.

"2. Each of the two Governments considers the inner political developments existing in the other country, including the question of Austrian National Socialism, as an internal affair of the other country in which they will not interfere either directly or indirectly."

The terms of this pact were announced simultaneously in Berlin and Vienna by Dr. Goebbels and Dr. Schuschnigg respectively.

February 12, 1938. Hitler and Dr. Schuschnigg after prolonged conversations reached an agreement which, according to the official communiqué contained the following clause:

"All questions affecting the relations between Austria and the German Reich were submitted to a detailed examination in the discussion on February 12 between Herr von Schuschnigg and Herr Hitler. The aim of this discussion was to clarify the difficulties which have arisen in the working of the Austro-German agreement of July 11, 1936. It was agreed that both parties are resolved to keep to the principles of that agreement and regard it as the starting point for a satisfactory development of their relations."

March 11, 1938. Germany annexed Austria.

March 12, 1936. Hitler in a speech at Karlsruhe said:

"If the rest of the world treats Germany as an equal it will have no better and truer friend. Germany has no intention of attacking France, Czechoslovakia or Poland." [*Times*, March 13, 1936.]

March 14, 1938. Mr. Chamberlain stated in the House of Commons:

"The Czech Government have officially informed His Majesty's Government that though it is their earnest desire to live on the best possible neighbourly relations with the German Reich, they have followed with the greatest attention the development of events in Austria between the date of the Austro-German Agreement of July, 1936, up to the present day.

"I am informed that Field-Marshal Goering on 11th March gave a general assurance to the Czech Minister in Berlin—an assurance which he expressly renewed later on behalf of Herr Hitler—that it would be the earnest endeavour of the German Government to improve German-Czech relations. In particular, on 12th March, Field-Marshal Goering informed the Czech Minister that German troops marching into Austria had received the

strictest orders to keep at least 15 kilometres from the Czech frontier. On the same day the Czechoslovak Minister in Berlin was assured by Baron von Neurath that Germany considered herself bound by the German-Czechoslovak Arbitration Convention of October, 1925." [*Hansard*, March 14, 1938. Cols. 50/51.]

September 24, 1938. Germany sent a seven-day ultimatum to Czechoslovakia.

September 26, 1938. Hitler, speaking in the Reichstag and referring to Czechoslovakia, said:

"And now the last problem which must be solved, and which wlll be solved, confronts us. It is the last territorial claim which I have to make in Europe, but it is the claim from which I do not recede and which I shall fulfil, God willing.

"I have further assured him [Mr. Chamberlain], and I stress it now, that when this problem is solved Germany has no more territorial problems in Europe." [*Manchester Guardian*, September 27, 1938.]

September 28, 1938. Mr. Chamberlain, speaking in the House of Commons and referring to his Berchtesgaden visit to Hitler, said:

"Herr Hitler made it plain that he had made up his mind that the Sudeten-Germans must have the right of self-determination, and of returning, if they wished, to the Reich. If they could not achieve this by their own efforts, he said, he would assist them to do so, and he declared categorically that rather than wait he would be prepared to risk a world war." [*Hansard*, September 28, 1938. Col. 14.]

September 15, 1938. In the course of Berchtesgaden conversations Herr Hitler informed Mr. Chamberlain

"that he was glad to leave the Memelland as it was so long as the Memel Statute was observed by the Lithuanian Government." (*Hansard*, December 22, 1938.]

March 21, 1939. Nazi Germans invaded and annexed Memel. No accusation was even made that Lithuania had in any way violated the Memel Statute.

September 30, 1938. A declaration was signed by Herr Hitler and Mr. Neville Chamberlain, stating:

"We are resolved that the method of consultation shall be the method adopted to deal with any other questions that may concern our two countries, and we are determined to continue our efforts to remove possible sources of difference and thus to contribute to assure the peace of Europe." [*Times*, October 1, 1938.]

In view of Hitler's declared policy as outlined in *Mein Kampf* and his series of broken promises as detailed above, what is his promise worth? Are there any reasons for thinking that Hitler will consider his promise to Chamberlain any more binding than his promises in connection with the treaties with Austria, Czechoslovakia, Memel, etc.

It is only necessary to add that, on October 1, 1938, German troops, in accordance with the Munich Agreement of September 29, 1938, began occupation of Sudeten-Deutsche territory. Further, well before the end of November, Hitler had broken the Munich Agreement and occupied far more of Czechoslovakia than he had even demanded at Godesberg, demands which even Mr. Chamberlain had said that he was not prepared to concede, and on March 15, 1939, Germany completely annexed Czechoslovakia.

CHAPTER II

THE BALTIC STATES, THE U.S.S.R. AND GERMANY

THE Nazi Government's intentions *vis-à-vis* the Baltic States, as outlined in *Mein Kampf*, have been quoted on an earlier page. Unfortunately the refusal of Germany, in April, 1934, to guarantee jointly with the U.S.S.R. the independence of these States, gives an additional and sinister significance to these declared intentions.

On March 28, 1934, M. Litvinov, the Soviet Commissar for Foreign Affairs, offered the German Government through its Moscow Ambassador, M. Nadolny, to sign a joint Protocol wherein the two Governments always undertook to take into account in their foreign policy the obligation to preserve the independence and integrity of the Baltic States and to refrain from any acts which might directly or indirectly violate this independence. This Protocol was to remain open for signature by any other country interested in the matter.

M. Litvinov, in making this proposal, stated that the Soviet Government was actuated by the desire to strengthen world peace in general and peace in Eastern Europe in particular and also to promote an improvement in the relations between the U.S.S.R. and Germany.

Whilst waiting for the German reply the Soviet

Government gave further additional proof of its own peaceful intentions regarding these States. On April 4, 1934, it signed a Protocol prolonging for a period of 10 years the Non-Aggression Pacts which it had concluded with Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania, for a peaceful solution of any conflicts that might arise between the signatories.

After the signature of this Protocol, in the Conference Hall of the Commissariat for Foreign Affairs in Moscow, M. Litvinov declared:

"To-day we have been concerned with the fate of the Pacts, the duration of which runs for another year and a half. The paying of a bill before the date on which it is due is a sign both of goodwill and of the excellent financial position of the drawer. . . .

"The act we have carried out together was undertaken and completed at a time when the international position was becoming more acute daily. Day by day the menace of war threatening all the continents of the world is discussed in speech and writing. But there is hardly a murmur regarding the possibility of, and means for, averting this coming catastrophe. . . . The only thing of which they seem to be able to think is merely a universal rearmament and that race for armaments which in the past not only did not prevent war, but actually stimulated its outbreak. . . .

"Political anxiety and threats of war in Europe are caused at the present time by disputes between neighbouring States arising from the transference of given provinces or sections of territory from one State to another, the formation of new political entities from these territories and from the dissatisfaction with treaties formulating these territorial re-distributions.

"The Soviet Union does not know such disputes. She

never demanded the revision of existing agreements and has no intention of demanding this. The Soviet State to whom the ideas of chauvinism, nationalism, racial or national prejudices are completely alien desires no conquests, no expansion, no extension of territory. She does not regard the honour of the nation as consisting in the inculcation into its people of the spirit of militarism or blood-thirstiness.

"She regards as the highest duty the realization of that ideal for which the Soviet Union arose and which she regards as the whole significance of her existence, namely, the construction of a socialist society. It is to this work which the U.S.S.R., if only not interfered with, intends to devote all her State strength and this is the inexhaustible source of her policy of peace.

"When a roll call is made of States interested in the preservation and consolidation of peace, the Soviet Union will always reply, 'Here.' The readiness with which the States represented by you have replied to our proposals realized in the Protocol signed to-day, gives the assurance that in similar international roll calls they, too, in unison with the Soviet Government will always be ready to reply, 'Here'."

In reply to M. Litvinov's speech, the oldest of the diplomats represented at the Conference, M. Baltrushaitiss, the Lithuanian Minister in Moscow, expressed the views of himself and his colleagues as follows:

"First of all I should like to stress how important and dear to our hearts is the fact that this act of prolonging the Pacts, so modest but so significant for our peoples and for the whole of humanity, has been carried out with your personal participation, Monsieur People's Commissar, i.e., with the participation of a person whom all countries now consider the foremost and greatest fighter for peace. I not

only hope, but I am quite convinced that all the Baltic States will adhere without wavering and fully to those great and vital ideas which you have just expressed on behalf of the Soviet Union.

"The prolongation of our Pacts of Non-Aggression is, I repeat, a modest act, but it is a deeply important one, for it has been carried out in circumstances when special significance attaches to every effort for the consolidation of universal peace.

"You noted, Monsieur People's Commissar, that in the roll call of States for the preservation and consolidation of peace your country will always reply, 'Here.' I am certain that on that day when the U.S.S.R. will again address herself to the Baltic States with a call for the consolidation of peace, our peoples will be as quick to reply with a decisive, 'Here.' Permit me to conclude with best wishes for the prosperity and growth of the strength of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics."

Three days later, April 7, 1934, a similar Protocol was signed by the U.S.S.R. and Finland.

However, on April 14, 1934, M. Nadolny, on behalf of his Government, informed M. Litvinov that the German Government had decided not to sign the proposed German-Soviet Protocol. M. Nadolny, in the course of his explanation, among other things, stated:

"If Germany and the Soviet Government in order to improve relations between them must take upon themselves a special treaty obligation in regard to the independence and integrity of the Baltic States, it naturally follows that the independence and integrity of these countries is threatened from one side or the other in the absence of such a positive obligation.

"The German Government does not consider that

Soviet Russia in any way threatens the Baltic States and naturally still less can Germany admit any such intention or possibility so far as she is concerned. The fundamental line of German policy in the East has been outlined by the Reich Chancellor on various occasions, publicly and very clearly, and we must categorically denounce any attempt to cast doubt upon the sincerity of this policy.

"Thus, if there is no possibility of a threat to the Baltic States either on the part of Germany or the Soviet Union, then the only positive reason for the proposed pact would be the possibility of a threat to the independence and integrity of these States on the part of third Powers. It is the opinion of the German Government that this supposition is also entirely without foundation. The German Government cannot, therefore, see any reason why Germany and the Soviet Union should take upon themselves the role of protectors of the Baltic States.

"Consequently, since the independence and integrity of the Baltic States are, in the opinion of the German Government, in no way threatened, it sees no reason whatever for the conclusion with the Soviet Government of any special treaty for the protection of these States.

"If the Soviet Government will examine dispassionately this point of view, it will undoubtedly come to the conclusion that its proposal is unsuitable for improving German-Soviet relations. If, as I hope, the Soviet Government will maintain firmly its desire to restore mutual confidence, then some other way must be sought and can be found. It seems to us, however, that no new political treaty is required for this purpose, since all political questions which might be regulated by way of a formal treaty would seem to be provided for by existing treaties, particularly by the Berlin treaty.

"At the same time, it should not be forgotten that it was precisely the new German Government which ratified

the prolongation of the Berlin Treaty and thereby formally declared itself as a supporter of this treaty and its political basis. . . .

"This Treaty anticipates that both Governments will maintain friendly contact so that agreement may be assured on all political and economic questions concerning the two countries. The German Government would be very willing to discuss with the Soviet Government in accordance with this agreement the question of the restoration of relations of confidence so necessary for both countries."

M. Litvinov, on behalf of the Soviet Government, in his reply, stated:

"My Government and I have received with sincere regret the refusal of the German Government to accept the proposal of a Baltic Protocol. Particularly important is the very fact of the refusal of our proposal, the more so, since the explanation given by the German Government for its refusal in no way weakens the significance of this fact. . . .

"One can only deny the menace to the security of certain small States at the present time if one ignores the reality of the international position and public opinion in the whole world. Least of all can one regard as free from such menace those countries which the Soviet proposal had in view and which are undoubtedly experiencing at the present moment considerable anxiety as to their fate and as to their independence. The violation of peace in this part of Europe may be and in all probability will be the prelude to the outbreak of a new world war. . . .

"Of course, every measure for the consolidation of peace is directed against those countries which intend to violate this peace, but no country should regard it as directed against itself if it has no such intention.

"The German Government quite rightly indicates in their declaration that there is no need to fear any threat from the U.S.S.R. to the independence of the Baltic States. The Soviet Government has given sufficient proof of this, including the recent prolongation of the Non-Aggression Pacts with these countries to over ten years. A still more convincing proof is its proposal to conclude a Soviet-German Protocol for the non-violation of the independence and integrity of the Baltic countries. . . .

"There can be no doubt whatever that the adoption of the Soviet proposition could not be interpreted otherwise than as a serious strengthening of peace in Eastern Europe. It is also impossible to deny that it would have strengthened the feeling of security of the Baltic States who, it goes without saying, would have been previously informed and who would undoubtedly have regarded the proposition most favourably.

"At the same time, the protocol would not have, of course, in the least violated the interests of its participants in so far as they really had no aggressive intention in relation to the Baltic countries. The Soviet Government cannot find in the declaration of the German Government a single convincing motive or reason against the signature of the Protocol regarding the non-violation of the independence and integrity of the Baltic countries. . . .

"The Berlin Agreement, although it is most important and valuable, does not cover those questions concerning the Soviet Union which have arisen as a result of the new international situation and of the policy the new German Government has brought into being. I can assure you that we shall always be ready to consider favourably any concrete proposals made by the German Government which could in fact bring about an improvement in our relations and strengthen the mutual confidence between our two countries."

Immediately it became known that Germany had refused to sign the Pact there was widespread disappointment both in the Baltic States and beyond their frontiers.

Thus, the Latvian "Socialdemokrats" in the course of a leading article pointed out that the Soviet proposals formed a good means for the complete exposure of Germany's aggressive intentions.

Other Latvian journals, with the exception of the Fascist press, spoke similarly of the German menace against the Baltic States made evident by the refusal of Germany to sign the proposed protocol.

The Lithuanian *Lietuvos Zinios* pointed out that Germany had put off an attack on Poland for ten years, but her refusal to sign the Soviet Protocol shows that she was preparing as soon as possible for an attack on the Baltic States and through them on the U.S.S.R.

The press of the other Baltic States and many of their leading statesmen were no less outspoken.

The foreign press was, of course, unanimous in its condemnation of the German refusal, and it was interesting to note that in other countries too, Germany's refusal had been interpreted as a proof of her aggressive intentions.

Thus, the Stockholm *Social Demokraten* says: "The U.S.S.R. wants peace. What does Germany want? The National Socialists have given a groundless refusal to the Soviet far-sighted note."

The *Neue Zürcher Zeitung* said: "Litvinov endeavoured to probe German Eastern policy. One might almost say that he laid a trap for Germany in which the latter was caught immediately. Germany

is thus placed in an unfavourable light and the French thesis . . . that German rearmament will not serve merely purposes of defence is thus confirmed."

One could not but agree with M. Litvinov that the most disturbing cause for anxiety lay in "the very fact of the German refusal to sign" the protocol to respect the independence and integrity of the Baltic States. The feeble attempt to explain this refusal only accentuated the fear of Germany's real intentions and plans with respect to the Baltic States and the U.S.S.R.

No doubt at that time many observers thought—despite Hitler's declared intentions against the Baltic States in *Mein Kampf*—that the Soviet Government was quite unduly apprehensive regarding Nazi Germany's aims in this part of Europe.

Unfortunately the sequel proved that these fears were only too well founded. Hitler having invaded and annexed Austria and the Sudeten districts prepared for his next pounce. Who would be the next victim? In Kaunas uneasiness grew in Government circles, which was clearly revealed in an interview given to a representative of the *Daily Telegraph* by the Premier of Lithuania, Father Vladas Mironas, January 5, 1939. He said:

"We feel that Germany recognizes the essential interdependence of Memel and the Lithuanian hinterland. She knows that Lithuanian trade and commerce have built up the port of Memel, and that Lithuania is as necessary for Memel's prosperity as Memel is for Lithuania's.

"We remember, too Herr Hitler's declaration during the discussions on the Czech issue last September that he had no further territorial claims in Europe, and in view of

our 100 per cent fulfilment of the autonomy terms of the Memel Statute we trust this pronouncement will hold for us. Herr Hitler has also stated that a chief concern of his for German populations in other lands is that they shall have full freedom of culture and to express their German ideas, and our liberal interpretation of the Statute has given this to our Memel Germans." [*Daily Telegraph*, 9 January, 1939.]

These words did not deceive any capable observer. They were too reminiscent of the many optimistic speeches made by Dr. Benes before the Munich "settlement." They expressed wistful hopes rather than convictions. It is no exaggeration to say that when these words were being spoken in Kaunas, the next blows, one of which was to fall on Lithuania, were being prepared in Berlin. When the stroke came immediately after the annexation of Czechoslovakia it was swift and sudden.

The Foreign Minister of the little Baltic country was ordered to present himself to Herr von Ribbentrop in Berlin, March 20, 1939, to "discuss" the question of Memel. What passed at that interview was thus summed up ironically by the Berlin correspondent of the *Manchester Guardian*:

"If and when the Memellanders make known their desire to 'return to the Reich' Germany is ready to receive them with open arms, and Lithuania will consider herself rid of unnecessary ballast.

"That appears to be the outcome of to-day's conversations between the Lithuanian Foreign Minister, Herr Urbsys, and Herr von Ribbentrop, the German Foreign Minister.

"The Memel Parliament will probably raise the familiar cry of 'self-determination' and Lithuania will find that cry most reasonable. Hitler's marching columns will enter Memel as liberators, and Lithuania will be offered attractive terms for selling her produce—chiefly geese, butter, eggs and timber—to Germany." [*Manchester Guardian*, 21 March, 1939.]

The Nazis were not thinking alone of Memel, it was to be a stepping-stone to something much bigger. On the same day the *Daily Telegraph's* Warsaw correspondent cabled:

"Diplomatic and military observers are now paying very close attention to Lithuania. The Polish Government, I understand, strongly deprecates the possibility of Memel being annexed to the Reich. The consequences, it is felt, would quickly follow the Sudeten pattern, with Lithuania becoming, like Czechoslovakia, a German 'protectorate'.

"In that case, Germany would be separated from Soviet Russia only by the Vilna 'corridor'. It would then become strategically difficult, if not indeed impossible, for Poland effectively to assist Rumania if the Polish-Rumanian alliance required her to do so."

However, events moved even more rapidly than the Correspondent of the *Manchester Guardian* in Berlin anticipated. In the early hours of March 22, the *Daily Telegraph's* representative cabled from Kaunas:

"The Lithuanian Government has agreed in principle to unconditional demands made by Germany for the transfer of the Memel territory to the Reich. The Lithu-

anian Parliament will meet in public to-day to ratify this decision.

"This decision was reached by the Cabinet this morning after a nine-hour session under M. Smetona, the President.

"The Government was faced with an ultimatum handed by Herr von Ribbentrop, German Foreign Minister, to M. Urbsys, Lithuanian Foreign Secretary, in Berlin. Germany threatened military occupation of Lithuania unless Memel was ceded within 48 hours."

The Lithuanian Government in the course of an official declaration pitifully remarked: "According to Article 15 of the Convention, sovereignty over the Memel territory, as well as the exercise of rights of sovereignty over the territory, could not be relinquished without the consent of the signatories Great Britain, Japan, Italy and France" (*Daily Telegraph*, March 22, 1939).

Legally the statement was quite accurate, but by this date Nazi Germany knew that Italy and Japan would endorse what she had done, and as for Britain and France——

The Lithuanian Parliament ratified the "Agreement" with Germany, March 22, and on the following day Nazi troops entered the district and the administration passed into German hands. Next day, March 23, 1939, Herr Hitler made a ceremonial entry into Memel and calmly told his fellow countrymen: "We do not intend to harm the outside world, but we had to make good the harm which it has done us, and I believe we have already reached substantially the conclusion of this unique reparation" (*Manchester Guardian*, March 24, 1939).

What next? At present we refrain from prophecy.

Much will depend on whether Britain and France have learned their lesson. In conclusion we would only add that the suspicions of the Soviet Government respecting Germany's intentions unfortunately have again been justified by the march of events.

CHAPTER III

THE PROPOSED EASTERN LOCARNO PACT

THE proposed Eastern Locarno (Eastern Pact of Mutual Guarantee) was first mooted in the Spring of 1934, after prolonged discussions between M. Litvinov and M. Barthou, but authoritative details of the proposed plan were first revealed to the British public by Sir John Simon (then Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs) on July 13, 1934, after M. Barthou had paid a visit to London. Sir John explained the objectives thus:

"The plan in contemplation is one which would involve, in the first place, a pact of mutual assistance between the five elements (counting the Baltic States as one)—that is to say, between Soviet Russia, the Baltic States, Poland, Czechoslovakia and Germany. That is the project which was put before us. The nature of the relation created by such a pact, if it could be negotiated and brought about, would be, as I have already described it, a pact of mutual assistance, and it would therefore follow the analogy of Locarno. In addition to that there is a further feature which I am right in saying that M. Barthou described as a condition, which would in a certain way connect Russia with the existing Locarno Treaty, in a form which may have to be considered by the statesmen of Europe if this matter is pursued; and it will take the form of a guarantee on the part of Russia to France on the one hand and Germany on the other, in the event of conditions arising

which bring the provisions of the Locarno Treaty into operation. . . .

"Also, reciprocally, there would be an assurance offered by France in respect of the boundaries of Russia and the boundaries of Germany on Germany's Eastern side. That is the bare bones of what is no doubt a very ambitious and elaborate scheme." [*Hansard*, July 18, 1934. Col. 694.]

As regards the British Government's appraisal of the proposed pact, the Foreign Secretary said:

"If, therefore, Russia is prepared to offer the same guarantee to Germany as she has now offered to France, and if France is prepared to offer the same guarantee to Germany as she has offered to Russia, then it does appear to me that any objection on the score that what is contemplated is not in the true sense a mutual guarantee, is entirely met. That point, so far as discussion between M. Barthou and myself are concerned, is completely established." [ibid. Col. 695.]

The proposed pact, which conformed to the League Covenant and was to be registered with the League of Nations, was hailed from all sides of the House of Commons.

However, it was violently attacked in Germany because, as was known then and has since become clear to all, the Reich Government was determined to establish a military-economic hegemony over Eastern, Central and South-Eastern Europe. Here we can only give a few examples of the Nazi attitude.

An official statement issued in Berlin, September 10, 1934, declared:

"The German Government believe that other methods

of ensuring peace would hold out more prospects of success. In general, Germany would prefer two-sided treaties. She does not, however, reject multi-pacts, but the principle of these must be the obligation to refrain from attack and for the parties interested in a conflict to enter into consultation, rather than automatic obligation to intervene militarily in case of war." [*Times*, September 11, 1934.]

In other words, Germany had no objection to multi-lateral pacts provided they were without teeth.

Poland followed suit. *The Times* Correspondent cabled from Warsaw two days later:

"The Government's dislike of the Eastern Pact is, according to the semi-official newspapers, because of its 'nebulous, vague, and complicated character,' and because, moreover, it conflicts with the line of policy which Poland has consistently and successfully followed for several years —that is, the policy of bilateral pacts as exemplified in the non-aggression agreements with Soviet Russia and Germany." [*Times*, September 13, 1934.]

Discouraging though these reactions were the French and Soviet Governments continued their efforts to win the adhesion of Germany and Poland to the proposed Eastern Pact, but without avail.

A semi-official statement issued in Berlin, March 31, 1935, declared: "Germany had to reject this scheme because she could only regard it as the screen behind which an alliance, planned—or even directed—against Germany, though not perhaps immediately, was to be hidden." [*Times*, April 1, 1935.]

This of course was pure nonsense. Germany under the Pact would have received the same guarantees as all the other signatories.

Mr. Eden (then Lord Privy Seal) had a lengthy conversation with Marshal Pilsudski and M. Beck (Polish Minister of Foreign Affairs) in Warsaw, on April 3, 1935, in the course of which the Marshal and the Minister reiterated Poland's refusal to sign the Eastern Pact. Commenting on this refusal *The Times* Warsaw Correspondent cabled that Poland's "opposition to the Eastern Pact is, in the last resort, dictated by fear of antagonizing Germany, with whom she is on good terms after many years of violent recrimination. The Poles see that Germany is getting stronger every day; overnight she has become the military equal of, if not the military superior to, her strongest neighbours. The smaller countries of Europe will think long before they offend a country whose inflexible policy and extraordinary efficiency in secret rearmament have so much impressed them." [*Times*, April 4, 1935.]

The correspondent added: "Poland, of course, would sign the Eastern Pact if the Great Powers which have raised the proposal would guarantee her frontiers. But without such guarantees hopes of concluding the pact are remote." [ibid.]

Poland's decision was hailed in Germany. The officially inspired "Diplomatic Correspondence," April 4, 1935, declared: "that Mr. Eden's Warsaw visit has only confirmed that Poland for good reasons regards the proposed Eastern Pact at any rate as superfluous. The writer fully agrees with Poland's attitude not to accept a 'system which in fact would be a coalition directed against a certain country'—meaning Germany." [*Manchester Guardian*, April 5, 1935.]

Germany affected to believe that the Eastern Pact was directed against her, and Poland held aloof from the Pact because she feared to anger Germany. The question which remains to be answered is, had Germany any grounds for her alleged uneasiness? To answer this we cannot do better than quote from a speech in the House of Commons by Viscount Cranbourne, who had accompanied Mr. Eden to Berlin, Warsaw and Moscow. He said:

"Therefore, the conclusion to which I personally came, and it is the conclusion to which I believe most independent observers come, is that the German idea of a military Russian peril is an absolute myth, and I find the greatest difficulty in believing that the German General Staff really believe it themselves.

"If Germany's neighbours have great armaments, and some of them have, one cannot help feeling that the reason is not they are hostile to, or that they want to go to war with Germany. It is because they are anxious. That is obvious to anyone who goes through Europe now. The neighbours of Germany are nervous of the present trend of their policy. They see all the young people of Germany brought up in a frame of mind of fanatical militarism and nationalism. They read speeches like that of Dr. Goebbels at Danzig, or General Ludendorf on his seventieth birthday.

"The Committee will remember the latter's speech, in which he put down the failure of Germany in 1918 to Christianity, the degrading effects of Christianity, and said she was now free from Christianity, and implied, therefore, that she might be expected to win the next war.

"All Germany's neighbours read these things and hear these things, and it is widely thought in neighbouring countries that she has definitely decided on a policy based

on force, a policy of facing Europe with *faits accomplis*, of holding a pistol to the heads of her neighbours and saying: 'Your money or your life.'" [*Hansard*, May 2, 1935. Cols. 628–9.]

It is not necessary to add anything to this lucid statement. The French and Soviet Governments did everything humanly possible to bring the Eastern Pact into force. Their efforts were defeated by Germany and Poland, the latter because she feared the Reich. When Paris and Moscow were convinced that their efforts had failed then and only then as a second best did they conclude the Franco-Soviet Pact of Non-Aggression and Mutual Assistance, which was signed on May 2, 1935.

On this signature the *Daily Herald* aptly commented: "The Franco-Soviet Treaty of mutual assistance against aggression is a bull-point for peace.

"It is within the League. The two countries invite others, including Germany, to join the system. Like all security commitments of similar kind, it makes war less likely by the simple but essential process of increasing the forces which will be thrown against aggression." [*Daily Herald*, May 6, 1935.]

This Pact was supplemented by the Soviet- Cezchoslovak Pact of Non-Aggression and Mutual Assistance, signed May 16, 1935. The *Daily Herald's* comments respecting the Franco-Soviet Pact were equally applicable to the Soviet-Czechoslovak Pact.

CHAPTER IV

THE SOVIET UNION AND THE LEAGUE OF NATIONS

THE U.S.S.R. joined the League of Nations, September, 1934.

In the course of his speech at the League Assembly, September 18, 1934, M. Litvinov said:

"In order to make our position quite clear I should like further to state that the idea in itself of an association of nations contains nothing theoretically inacceptable for the Soviet State and its ideology.

"The Soviet Union is itself a league of nations in the best sense of the word, uniting over 200 nationalities, thirteen of which have a population of not less than one million each, and others, such as Russia and the Ukraine, a population running into scores of millions."

Commenting on the entry of the U.S.S.R. into the League, the *Izvestia*, September 20, 1934, declared:

"The Soviet Government is entering into the League of Nations in order to support those Powers which will struggle for the preservation and the consolidation of peace. . . . Comrade Litvinov, in his splendid speech . . . frankly declared that the Soviet Union in the League of Nations would struggle for more effective means against the war danger than those hitherto used by the League of Nations."

The *Pravda* of the same date, commented:

"The Soviet Union enters into the League of Nations as a country of the victorious working class and gives up none of the characteristics of such a State, remaining true to its aims and ideals. She enters the League of Nations after the circumstances and the repeated assurances of the majority of the members of the League of Nations have given us reasons to consider that the present form of international co-operation will make it possible for the Soviet Government to struggle even more actively, more energetically to attain the aim which it desires, namely, the organization of peace, an active and real struggle for guarantees of security against the menace of war which now represents the greatest danger for all peoples and which cannot be avoided by exhortations and prayers."

Since her entry into the League, the U.S.S.R. more than any other nation has striven to uphold and apply the principles of collective security.

Here it is only possible to quote a few of the many instances in which the Soviet representatives endeavoured to strengthen the League Covenant.

On April 16, 1935, a resolution was submitted to the League Council jointly by Sir John Simon, M. Laval and Baron Aloisi, stating that Germany had "failed in her duty to respect her undertakings" denouncing "any unilateral repudiation of international obligations" and proposing the setting up of a Committee to formulate measures "to render the Covenant more effective in the organization of collective security, and to define in particular the economic and financial measures which might be applied should, in the future, a State, whether a member of the League of Nations or not, endanger peace by the unilateral repudiation of its international obligations."

It was not clear from the wording whether the resolution referred to States outside Europe.

M. Litvinov stated that "before giving his vote he would like to be clear about the end of the resolution, which proposed certain measures against the violation of international treaties. From the wording it would seem that these measures should be limited only to the violation of treaties in Europe, from which it might be deduced that violations outside Europe were quite justified and could always pass unpunished. He would like to have some explanation or interpretation of the resolution in the sense that the Committee would be free to propose measures not only for Europe but also for other countries, otherwise he was afraid that he would have to make a reservation with regard to this part of the resolution." [*Manchester Guardian*, April 18, 1935.]

Strange to relate this reasonable proposal was resisted by the three sponsors of the resolution on the plea that they were dealing only with a European dispute. On the understanding that the application of the proposals to disputes also outside Europe could be raised later, M. Litvinov withdrew his opposition and supported the resolution.

At the meeting of the League Assembly, September 15, 1935, M. Litvinov made two important proposals respecting, to quote his own words, "the unfinished and even uncommenced work of the League." As regards the definition of an aggressor he said: "A universal recognition of the definition of aggression would on more than one occasion have helped the League out of most regrettable difficulties. If they had had before them from Italy a formal and well-

founded complaint of the acts of aggression committed by Abyssinia the representative of Italy would have obtained full justice from the League."

Respecting attacks on the Covenant, he declared: "If they left this Assembly with the certainty that the States whose representatives had addressed them had formally and solemnly pledged their Governments to allow no new attempts on the Covenant as an instrument of peace and to make use of it in all cases of aggression, irrespective of their origin or their object, this Assembly would become a landmark in the new history of the League."

And for his own Government's policy, he added: "Soviet Russia would be second to none in the loyal discharge of the international obligations she had assumed."

On October 13, 1935, when the League Sanctions Committee had under discussion the application of sanctions against Italy, and the refusal of certain countries within the League to participate in these measures, the delegate of the U.S.S.R. raised the question of extending the economic pressure to these countries such as Austria, Hungary and Albania and to non-members of the League. In regard to League members he advocated a restriction of credit and for the non-members a restriction on exports such as would make re-exportation to Italy impossible.

Commenting on this proposal, the Diplomatic Correspondent of the *Daily Telegraph* wrote: "So far the Committee have felt that it would be unwise to attempt thus to widen the area of economic conflict. But there is sympathy with the Russian motive—namely, the desire to make the League 100

per cent. effective." [*Daily Telegraph*, October 14, 1935.]

On July 1, 1936, the League Assembly had before it the question of raising sanctions against Italy on the grounds that they could not at that date "reverse the order of events in Abyssinia."

Both Mr. Eden and M. Blum spoke of "rebuilding the authority of the League" and making the League universal. As usual, M. Litvinov was more downright. He declared:

"We are asked at all costs to restore to the League States which have left if only because they saw obstacles to the fulfilment of their aggressive intentions in the Covenant in Articles 10 and 16.

"The suggestion, therefore, is, 'Let us make the League safe for aggressors.' I say that we do not need such a League with all its universalities, since such a League from an instrument of peace will turn into its very opposite. At best, by depriving the League of the functions of collective defence we should be turning it into a debating society or a charitable institution unworthy of the name of the League of Nations, unworthy of resources spent on it, and not answering to those hopes and anticipations built on it. It is not the Covenant which we have to degrade, but people whom we have to educate and bring up to the level of its lofty ideals. We must strive for the universality of the League, but not make it safe for the aggressor for the sake of that universality. On the contrary, every new member and every old member wishing to return to it must read over its doorway: 'Abandon all hope of aggression with impunity ye who enter here.' "

The League members had been asked to submit to that body measures for strengthening the application

of the Covenant. While some members were timid and hesitant, the Soviet Government was bold and courageous.

Here, for considerations of space, we can only quote four of the Soviet proposals:

(1) In the event of a war against a member of the League the Council shall be summoned not later than three days after the notification thereof to the Secretary-General.

(2) Within three days of its convocation, the Council shall reach a decision about the existence of circumstances calling for the application of Article XVI of the Covenant. Such decision shall be recognized to have been taken if at least three-quarters of the members present (not including the representatives of the attacked State and the State denounced) vote in favour of it.

(5) Failure on the part of the Council to reach a decision shall not prejudice the immediate execution, by States' parties to the mutual assistance agreement, of their obligation to afford assistance.

(11) Mutual assistance agreements between States concerned in the maintenance of security in specific areas shall be recognized as constituting a supplementary guarantee of security within the framework of the Covenant.

Who will question to-day that had these proposals been heartily accepted by Great Britain and France then the League would have become a really effective instrument for the maintenance of peace?

The Soviet leaders were realists not pessimists. They were convinced that joint action by and determination on the part of the peace-loving States could abolish the spectre of war. Speaking in a general discussion at the League Assembly, September 28, 1936, M. Litvinov declared:

"The aggressor was accessible only to the voice of a policy no less firm than his own, concessions merely producing on him an impression of weakness and encouraging him to further illegalities. Yet the aggregate power of the peace-loving countries in both the economic and the military sense considerably surpassed the strength of any possible combination of countries the aggressor might rally round him. There was no need for new *blocs*. They had in the League a *bloc* of countries that wanted peace. This *bloc* should draw up its plan of action well ahead and organization of war should be answered by effective action for the organization of collective resistance."

On September 21, 1937, the League Assembly discussed the Secretary-General's report on League reform. The question of universality dominated the debate. M. Litvinov left no doubt as to the attitude of the Soviets. He declared:

"What is wanted is not universality, but that those who take part in any international organization or conference, whatever the difference between their national interests, should be united by a common universal idea binding them together, such as the idea of peace, the idea of respecting the integrity and independence of all peoples, the idea of outlawing force as an instrument of national policy, the idea which lies at the foundation of the Covenant of the League of Nations and the Briand-Kellogg Pact.

"We know three States which have drawn apart from these ideas and in recent years have made attacks on other States. With all the difference between the régimes, ideologies, material and cultural levels of the objects of attack, all three States justify their aggression by one and the same motive: the struggle against Communism. The

rulers of these states naively think, or rather pretend to think, that it is sufficient for them to utter the words 'anti-Communism,' and all their international felonies and crimes will be forgiven them."

M. Litvinov had no illusions as to the real objectives of these States. He continued:

"However, the founders of this ideology sometimes begin themselves to doubt whether it is convincing and acceptable enough as a guiding international principle. They then descend from their ideological heights and give us a more prosaic interpretation of their anti-Communist slogans. We then learn, what we could never find in a single encyclopædia, that anti-Communism has also a geological meaning, and signifies a yearning for tin, zinc, mercury, copper, and other minerals. When this explanation, too, proves insufficient, anti-Communism is then explained to be a thirst for profitable trade. I doubt, however, whether these are the last and only interpretations of anti-Communism."

Then came a crushing retort to these States. The Soviet Commissar declared:

"Surely we know already the example of one Communist State, with great mineral wealth, which has never refused to export its minerals to other countries, and to carry on very extensive trade with them, whatever the régimes prevailing in those countries, be they even Fascist or National-Socialist. Furthermore, these same countries have always very willingly received minerals and other raw materials from the Communist State, not only not renouncing trade with it, but striving—and still striving to-day—to extend that trade to the maximum, offering most advantageous terms."

On January 27, 1938, the League Council discussed the attachment of their various Governments to League principles.

Mr. Eden was somewhat pessimistic. He argued that the defection of some important members meant "that the area of co-operation was restricted," the League could not at that moment fulfil the hopes of its founders, and that "for the present we must recognize realities, and our best course would seem to be that we should continue to use the instrument that lies ready to our hand for all the purposes for which it is fitted, and thus show our faith in the essential principles on which the League was founded." [*Times*, January 28, 1938.]

M. Delbos was somewhat more cheerful. After stressing that the League was passing through difficult times, that war could not be localized, that collective methods were more necessary than ever, he concluded: "How can we doubt our possibilities since the nations grouped at Geneva constitute, if they have the will, a material and moral force that is greater than any other?" [*Manchester Guardian*, January 28, 1938.]

Not for the first time it was left to M. Litvinov to strike a bold and challenging note. He stressed that the Soviets had joined the League after two members had left it and after one of them had openly proclaimed the chief aim of its foreign policy to be the annexation of other people's territory, while the other had in fact invaded the territory of another State. This had not frightened the U.S.S.R., on the contrary, it became convinced that the League of Nations might really be a hindrance to the forces of aggression.

M. Litvinov continued:

"Moreover, the intrigues that the aggressive States and their agents carried on against the League showed that they believed in the strength of the League and in its capacity to impede their aggressive aims more than did some pusillanimous League members."

He then turned to the "bogies of ideological *blocs*" and said:

"If it was a question of ideology underlying the internal constitution of this or that State there was no danger of the League becoming an ideological *bloc* in that sense, for within the League there were representatives of a vast diversity of ideology beginning with the Communist and ending with the semi-Fascist—and until recently even the wholly Fascist régimes."

The Soviet Commissar proceeded: "There was, however, another kind of ideology, the essential principles of which were respect for the integrity and independence of all existing States, inviolability of their frontiers, renunciation of war as an instrument for settling international disputes, recognition of the equal rights of all peoples great and small. If the League of Nations wished to be true to its aims it must be a *bloc* of that kind of ideology." He ended on a firm note: "As long as the least hope subsisted that the League of Nations would remain a *bloc* or axis of peaceful States, prepared loyally to apply the League Covenant, the Soviet Union saw no reason for revising its attitude to the League."

The debate on League reform in the Council concluded on February 1, 1938, with the acceptance of a proposal by Viscount Cranborne that a report of

the debates be sent to League members for subsequent consideration by the Assembly.

In the course of the discussion at the last session of the Council, Britain, France and the U.S.S.R. opposed any weakening of the Covenant.

Viscount Cranborne declared that:

"The views expressed by the various nations were divergent, and they required time to consider and reflect upon them. The situation could not be regarded as discouraging. On all sides there had been evidence of continued attachment to the principles of the Covenant and convinced belief in the importance of maintaining the collective system. The British Government had not weakened, and did not intend to weaken their support of the League. Mr. Eden had made the position of the British Government abundantly clear at the opening of the Council." [*Times*, February 2, 1938.]

M. Paul Boncour stated that he did not agree at all with those who suggested that in order to secure the adhesion or the return of certain States, they must abandon or weaken the principles which constituted the *raison d'être* of the League. There was no State whose return was worth the weakening of the Covenant.

M. Litvinov (to quote *The Times*) "brought a more combative spirit into the debate by making a destructive analysis of the arguments of those who would abolish 'sanctions'."

The Soviet Commissar went on:

"The opponents of Article 16 would evidently like to see the League transformed into a universal non-intervention committee, with full freedom of action for any aggressor

in any circumstances, a League which was something between a diplomatic academy and a charitable society. He asked those who had expressed the wish to regain absolute neutrality whether they expected the League to safeguard their neutrality, or to remain neutral if it were violated; and whether, in freeing themselves from the obligations of Article 16, they still intended to take part in the discussions upon its application." [*Times*, February 2, 1938.]

The report was adopted and sent to the Assembly for consideration by that body.

When the Assembly met, September 16, 1938, the British Government, through its representative Lord De La Warr, showed signs of a desire to retreat from the position which it had taken up in January. Under Article 16 all member States are expected automatically to apply economic and military sanctions against any country declared by the League to be guilty of an unprovoked attack. Great Britain now wished to tone down this article. Lord De La Warr said:

"The circumstances for international action and the possibility and nature of that action cannot be determined in advance. Each case must be considered on its merits. There can be no automatic obligation to apply economic or military sanctions.

"There is a general obligation to consider whether and how far Article 16 [Application of Sanctions] can be applied, and what common steps could be taken to render aid to the victim of a breach of the Covenant.

"Each State must be the judge of the extent to which it can participate, and will be influenced by the extent to which others are prepared to act." [*Times*, September 17, 1938.]

However, he added: "Aggression against a member of the League must be a matter of concern to all members and not one on which they are entitled to adopt an attitude of indifference." [ibid.]

M. Litvinov, speaking September 23, 1938, vigorously combatted Lord De La Warr's point of view. He declared that:

"Certain smaller States had feared the anger of international highwaymen to whom sanctions might be applied. They had at least had some excuse in the compulsory nature of sanctions, and could plead that they were bound to do their duty before the League. They must now lose that excuse, since it was to be a matter of voluntary decision, which meant that they would be subjected to even greater pressure and terrorisation at the hands of the aggressor.

"Article 16 ceased to be a restraining factor or a reason for hesitation on the part of the aggressor. Being able now to come to an understanding with some Members of the League and to terrorize others, the aggressor was enabled beforehand to avert any possibility of sanctions being applied to him.

"The enunciation of the principle that every Member of the League could give its own arbitrary interpretation of Article 16—contrary perhaps to the sense and recognized formal significance of that article—opened up the possibility of acting in the same way with other articles of the Covenant."

It is a pleasure to be able to record that Mr. Campbell, on behalf of New Zealand, "objected to any weakening of the Covenant" and M. Paul-Boncour said "that the obligations of Article 16 ought to be understood in the sense that every State

member should collaborate effectively to oppose aggression and enforce the Covenant." [*Manchester Guardian*, September 24, 1938.]

Finally, on September 29, 1938, a draft resolution was agreed to by the Political Committee of the League Assembly in which it was stated that:

"With regard to Article XVI (Sanctions) it had been found that the members were agreed that the principles of the Covenant should remain unaltered, and that the military measures contemplated in the Article were not compulsory. As for the economic and financial measures, many members were agreed that they could not, in the present conditions, be considered automatically bound to apply them, but some took the opposite view. It was accordingly decided to recommend only that the report, which expressed no opinion, should be sent to all members of the League." [*Times*, September 30, 1938.]

There the matter stands at the moment of writing. One conclusion stands out clearly from the foregoing, viz., that the Soviet representatives strove, as no others, to strengthen in every way and render more effective the League Covenant.

Subsequently the Soviet Delegation supported every measure tending in the direction of collective security as well as to minimise the brutalities of present-day warfare.

At the session of the League Council, January 18, 1939, during a discussion on aerial bombardment in Spain, the Soviet Delegate, M. Suritz, stressed that "his Government was prepared for any international action for the protection of civilian populations and for the prevention of the use of those inhuman

methods of warfare." [*Manchester Guardian*, January 19, 1939.]

Again, at the session of the Council, January 20, when a resolution on the question of aid for China was discussed, the Soviet Delegate fought hard to get the League to adopt a firm attitude and again expressed his Government's willingness to participate in any measure of collective action. The resolution actually adopted, although better than nothing, was very weak and was denounced as such both by the Soviet and New Zealand Delegates.

CHAPTER V

THE RAPE OF ABYSSINIA

On November 23, 1934, an incident occurred at Walwal involving fighting between Italians and Abyssinians. According to the Abyssinian version an Anglo-Abyssinian Commission investigating pasture lands had been prevented by an Italian force from continuing its work upon its arrival at Walwal, about 100 kilometres within the frontier.

On December 5, 1934, again according to the Abyssinian version, the Italian troops, without any provocation, attacked the Abyssinian escort of the Commission, and on December 8, in spite of a joint protest by the Abyssinian and British Commissioners against these provocative acts, Italian aeroplanes bombarded Ado and Gerlogubi in the same area.

The Italian Government, on the other hand, maintained that the locality of the fighting at Walwal belonged to Italian Somaliland and had been garrisoned by Italian troops for some years. In their turn the Italians charged the Abyssinians with beginning the fighting, by a concerted attack on the post, and insisted that reparations and apologies due for what had occurred should be furnished at the earliest possible date.

The dispute was raised at the League of Nations, December 14, 1934, and whilst the two Governments continued to accuse one another of aggression in

Abyssinia, the Italians steadily advanced into Abyssinian territory.

On January 19, 1935, the Secretary-General of the League of Nations informed the Council that he had received from representatives of the Ethiopean and Italian Governments letters stating that they were ready to agree to seek a settlement of the dispute over Walwal in conformity with the spirit of the Treaty of 1908, and undertook to take all steps to prevent further incidents. The Council accordingly decided to postpone discussion of the Abyssinian appeal till the May session. The Abyssinians agreed to this postponement under strong pressure from Great Britain and France.

However, in spite of the agreement to negotiate, incidents continued to occur and between February 5 and February 11, 1935, two divisions were mobilized by the Italian Government "as a precautionary and defensive measure."

Moreover, although the Italian Government continued to profess a desire for a peaceful settlement it was freely stated in Rome that during the first fortnight of February over 100 aeroplanes had been despatched to Eritrea, and that an expeditionary force was about to be sent to Abyssinia.

On February 24, 1935, it was officially announced that 5,000 Italian troops had left Italian ports for Africa and that all the material sent to Africa was being replaced simultaneously by orders given to national industries.

It was becoming more clear daily that Italy was preparing for an invasion of Abyssinian territory and accordingly the Abyssinian Government made a formal

request to the League for an investigation of the dispute with Italy in accordance with Article 15 of the Covenant. The Note which set forth in detail the history of the Italian-Abyssinian conflict and the systematic refusal by Italy to agree to any real negotiation or arbitration was circulated to the members of the League on March 19, 1935.

In the hope of avoiding the discussion of the question by the League, Italy in her turn issued on March 23, 1935, a seemingly conciliatory reply in which she agreed to appoint representatives to the conciliation committee. At the May session of the League it was decided that the Italian and Ethiopian Governments were to seek a settlement "by conciliation and arbitration." There were congratulations all round at this peaceful solution, it was hailed as victory for the League and peace. But significantly the Italians gave no direct reply to the question, whether Italy agreed to make no troop movements during the period of arbitration, and no undertaking to this effect was obtained from the Italians.

There followed months of talk, three Power, two Power, etc., of appeals and counter-appeals to the League of Nations, France and Great Britain—but France in particular, her direct interests not being immediately threatened and anxious to maintain friendly relations with Italy as against the growing menace of Germany—strove hard to find ways and means to conciliate Italy. Under pressure of the French and British Governments, Abyssinia agreed to important concessions to Italy. Great Britain even proposed to cede a small piece of her own African territory as compensation to Abyssinia, but all in

vain. Italy continued to despatch men and arms to Eritrea and Italian Somaliland and as her armed strength there increased, so with every concession wrung from Abyssinia, Italy's demands became more strident and finally she openly demanded a protectorate over Abyssinia. In the meantime, by every possible device, the discussion of the question by the League, in accordance with the relevant Articles (11 and 15) for preventing the outbreak of a war between two member States, was being prevented. Major-General A. C. Temperley, writing in the *Daily Telegraph*, July 31, 1935, strongly urged immediate action and concluded:

"Time is the essence of the matter. Something definite must be done in the next few weeks to satisfy the reasonable aspirations of Italy without grave injustice to Abyssinia, if war in a peculiarly horrible form and a mortal blow at the League are to be avoided.

"The case is admittedly desperate, but determined and collective action at Geneva under French and British leadership to apply the Covenant may even now cause Signor Mussolini to think again; procrastination and indecision will certainly be fatal."

But "procrastination" and "indecision" held the field and the mortal blow at the League was struck.

But although the policy of the French and British Governments might be characterized as "procrastination" and "indecision" as regards League action, there was no such procrastination and indecision in regard to the witholding of arms from Abyssinia. There was a show of impartiality in so far as the embargo on exports of arms was applied both to Abyssinia and Italy. This was, of course, the most

shameless mockery, for whereas Italy already had and could manufacture all the most modern arms she required, including tanks, aeroplanes, poison gas, etc., Abyssinia had practically no modern weapons and no means of obtaining any. The *News Chronicle* (August 8, 1935), in a vigorous leader on this subject rightly declared:

"In itself that is offensive to the ordinary sense of fair play. But it is also, so far as this country is concerned, a definite breach of faith. For by a treaty signed five years ago the British Government bound itself specifically to allow to the Emperor of Abyssinia the right to import such arms as he needed for his defence."

The "procrastination" of the League, on the other hand, suited Italy admirably, for in any case she could not start her war in Abyssinia till the rainy season was over and that would not be till the beginning of October.

In these circumstances, it was only to be expected that negotiations which had been taking place in Paris during the summer between France, Great Britain and Italy failed completely owing to the intransigence of the latter; on the other hand, the standpoint of France and Great Britain—which had differed to some extent owing to their somewhat different interests in the question under dispute—showed signs of greater approximation. The *Financial News*, August 21, 1935, commenting on this in a leader, said:

"First of all, now that the Paris negotiations have failed, it is to be hoped that the Cabinet will remove the unequal

arms embargo. Despite Baron Aloisi's talk of 450,000 armed Ethiopians, the fact is that Abyssinia has very little ammunition. The next step, of course, is the League Council on September 4. It is difficult to see how further conciliation will be possible. There is, indeed, only one ray of hope in the situation. And that is the stiffer attitude of M. Laval and of French public opinion. At first, there was a definite difference between the British and French Governments—a direct consequence of the Anglo-German naval agreement and the rupture of the Stresa front—but this now appears to have been resolved. For this, the pressure of the Little Entente—always most sensitive to Covenant-breaking—and the U.S.S.R. must be held responsible, together with the real danger to France of a breakdown of the League system."

When the League Council met on September 4, 1935, Mr. Eden gave an outline of the Anglo-French proposals for important concessions to Italy. Mr. Eden and also M. Laval who followed him made a plea for the use of the League machinery to settle the dispute. But Italy would hear of no concessions and Baron Aloisi made a violent attack on Abyssinia and declared roundly Italy would feel herself profoundly wounded in her dignity if she had to continue the discussions within the League on a footing of equality with Ethiopia, and she, in fact, refused to recognize that equality. She could no longer count on the clauses of the 1928 Treaty, nor could she, in the case of a country like Ethiopia, rely on guarantees to bring about the disappearance of the peril to her own colonies.

In an interview with the foreign press, Baron Aloisi stated that Italy would have no further dis-

cussion of any kind with Abyssinia, which she considered "outside the law", and as to Mr. Eden's proposals, they did not seem generous to Italy; for her, only 100 per cent. of her demands could be regarded as a generous concession.

After the Abyssinian delegate had pleaded to the League for assistance in dealing with this flagrant threat of aggression, M. Litvinov made the position of the U.S.S.R. on behalf of collective security absolutely clear.

It should be borne in mind that at that time the relations of the U.S.S.R. with Italy were friendly, both in the diplomatic and economic field and, on the other hand, the Soviet Union had no direct diplomatic relations with Abyssinia; nevertheless, there was no equivocation in the Soviet attitude. M. Litvinov, amongst other things, said:

"The incident which has given rise to the question being submitted to us for discussion has been eliminated, and, in fact, a concrete dispute between the sides no longer exists. Nevertheless, there undoubtedly exists a danger of war, a danger of aggression, which is not only not denied, but on the contrary, is confirmed by the representative of Italy himself. Is it possible for us to ignore this danger, and to forget about the existence of Articles 10, 11 and 15 of the League Covenant? Would this not be a flagrant violation of the League Covenant. Would not its violation by the whole Council not mean a complete denial and abolition of the Covenant?

"I may be told that there is a precedent when the League Council did not take the necessary measures to prevent a conflict between two members of the League. We should not and cannot forget this precedent, since until now we feel to what an extent this incident has

weakened the League of Nations, has diminished its authority and helped to create that politically unstable, threatening situation in which the whole world at present finds itself, and maybe even to bring about the given conflict. A repetition of this precedent would have an accumulative effect, and in its turn, would serve to encourage the outbreak of new conflicts more directly involving the whole of Europe. The principle of the indivisibility of peace is fortunately receiving more and more recognition. It is now clear to the whole world that nearly every war is the offspring of the preceding war and the parent of new wars.

"I also cannot agree with the motives for the proposal made by the respected representative of Italy. I am sure that there is no one here who would defend the internal régime of Abyssinia as it is described in the documents presented to us, but surely the countries of the world, in respect to internal régime, now represent considerable variety, and very few of them have preserved similarity among themselves. Nothing in the League Covenant gives us the right, however, to differentiate between members of the League because of their internal régime, of the colour of their skin, of racial traits, or of the degree of civilization and to deprive one or the other of them of privileges which they enjoy in view of their membership in the League, and in the first place, the right to maintain their territorial integrity and independence. . . .

"The State which I represent, only a year ago entered the League of Nations, with the single aim and with the single promise to co-operate in every way with other nations in the cause of preserving indivisible peace. Only this aim and this promise guide me to-day when I propose to the Council not to refrain from any efforts and means in order to avert an armed conflict between two members of the League, and to fulfil the task which is the reason for the existence of the League."

At the opening of the League Assembly, September 11, 1935, Sir Samuel Hoare made an important speech in which he seemed to throw Great Britain powerfully on the side of collective security and exclaimed in conclusion:

"The League stands, and my country stands with it, for the collective maintenance of the Covenant in its entirety, and particularly for steady and collective resistance to all acts of unprovoked aggression. . . . This is no variable and unreliable sentiment, but a principle of international conduct to which the nation and their Government hold with firm, enduring and universal persistence.

"There, then, is the British attitude towards the Covenant. I cannot believe that it will be changed so long as the League remains an effective body, and the main bridge between the United Kingdom and the Continent remains intact." [*Times*, September 12, 1935.]

The British lead was followed by Belgium, Norway, Holland, Sweden, Portugal, New Zealand, Canada, Finland, Afghanistan, Honduras and Equador, all of whom declared that their Governments were ready to share full responsibility in the application of the Covenant.

M. Laval, on behalf of France, also affirmed his faith in the Covenant and collective security, but declared:

"I have spared no effort for conciliation. . . . I maintain that the Council may, within a short space of time, be able to discharge its task of conciliation. . . . I persist in refusing to think that it is without hope." [*Times*, September 14, 1935.]

M. Litvinov, in a speech delivered September 14, 1935, again not only supported the League Covenant in a general way, but in simple direct language outlined a concrete plan of action. In the first place he drew attention to the importance of having a clear definition of what constitutes aggression, and he pointed out that had the League adopted the definition of an aggressor proposed by the Soviet Government they could have come to a rapid conclusion as to who was the aggressor in the Italo-Abyssinian dispute and acted accordingly. Italy as well as Abyssinia would have received justice from the League. He proceeded:

"I fear that in the future, as in the past, the League of Nations, in settling conflicts between States, will inevitably come up against the obstacle caused by the absence of a generally recognized definition of aggression. And I ask myself, is it not time to subject this question to a new and independent examination, freeing it from dependence on the little wheels of the mechanism of the League in which one standing wheel stops all the others. I hope that the Council will take up this question even if it should be necessary to prepare it beforehand through diplomatic channels."

He next dwelt on the importance of the Soviet proposal to set up a permanent peace conference and declared:

"This proposal finds a new justification in the fact that for four years the League of Nations has been engaged in the settlement of armed conflicts between members of the League or of threats of such conflicts, causing the necessity of fairly frequent extraordinary sessions both of the Council and of the League Assembly itself. A permanent

peace conference, apart from facilitating the procedure of the discussion of the prevention of conflicts itself and apart from other advantages which I have dealt with in the past, would have been of great agitational importance from the point of view of peace and would have reminded potential aggressors of the fact that the League is seeing to the preservation of peace and watching events capable of leading to its violation, permanently and not only in emergencies and belatedly."

After referring to a number of other questions and dwelling on the importance of regional mutual assistance pacts and the significance of the various kinds of non-aggression pacts, Litvinov again turned to the Italo-Abyssinian dispute. He greeted Sir Samuel Hoare's speech as a good omen and concluded:

"To the Soviet delegation there can be no question of supporting this or that of the contending parties, or of defending anybody's interests. As you should know, the Soviet Government is opposed in principle to the system of colonies, to the policy of spheres of influence, to mandates and to everything related to imperialist aims. The Soviet delegation is faced solely with the question of upholding the League Covenant as an instrument of peace. This instrument has already been slightly dulled by previous attempts on it and we cannot permit any new attempts which might render it totally useless. We may require it yet more than once, and even more badly than in the present case. Should we depart from the present Assembly with the assurance that the States whose representatives, speaking formally, solemnly pledged themselves in the name of their Governments never again to permit new attempts to take place on the League Covenant as an instrument of peace, and to resort to it in all cases of

aggression whatever its source and whomever it may be directed against, the present Assembly would prove to be the beginning of a new history of the League of Nations. I want to assure you that the State which I represent will not be behind anyone in loyal fulfilment of international obligations undertaken, especially if it is a question of guaranteeing to all peoples the benefits of peace which humanity has never prized so highly as at the present time, after the relatively recent trials. We must rid it in the future of such trials."

A Committe of Five which had been set up by the League to examine the case drew up a plan of international assistance to Abyssinia under the aegis of the League. It provided generally for the protection of the interests of foreigners in Abyssinia, but in a protocol issued by the French and British Governments they stated that the French and British Governments were prepared to recognize a special Italian interest in the economic development of Ethiopia, and "consequently these Governments will look with favour on the conclusion of economic agreements between Italy and Ethiopia, on condition that the existing rights of French and British nationals are respected by the two parties; and that the recognized interests of France and the United Kingdom under all agreements already in force are safeguarded."

In another protocol the two Governments affirmed that they had informed the Committee that they were "ready to facilitate any territorial adjustments between Italy and Ethiopia by offering, if necessary, certain sacrifices in the region of the Somaliland Coast."

The Abyssinian Government, still hoping for

practical assistance by the League, accepted the report with some reservation.

Not so Italy. On September 21, 1935, Baron Aloisi stated the Italian claims to be as follows:

(1) Abyssinia to be totally disarmed.

(2) The organization, armament and training of future armed forces to be entrusted solely to Italy.

(3) Italy to receive a belt of territory passing West of Addis Ababa and connecting Eritrea with Somaliland.

(4) The non-Amharic territories to be separated from the two Amharic areas and placed under Italian control.

(5) Abyssinia might be allowed an outlet to the sea, but only on the understanding that the port was in Italian territory.

At the session of the Council of the League, September 26, 1935, a Committee of Thirteen (i.e., representatives of all the members of the Council except the interested parties) was set up to draw up a report on the basis of paragraph 4 of Article 15.[1] All the members except, of course, Italy expressed their desire for the application of the League Covenant to the dispute if conciliation failed. M. Litvinov promised the full adherence of the U.S.S.R. to the Covenant and said that the time had now come to cease talking and to begin to act.

Having concentrated an enormous amount of armaments in Abyssinia and the rains having ceased,

[1] Paragraph 4 states: "In case a dispute cannot be settled, the Council is to draw up and publish a report, adopted either unanimously or by a majority, for information on the circumstances of the dispute, as well as decisions proposed by it as being most just and suitable to the case."

Italy acted and on October 3, 1935, the Italian forces crossed the Eritrean frontier into Abyssinia. For the first time, the League acted with despatch. On October 5, 1935, the Central Committee of Thirteen published its report on the whole dispute; two days later a Committee of six formed to examine it, issued its findings in which Italy was accused of having resorted to war in disregard of Article 12 of the Covenant. The Council of the League adopted these findings, on the same day (October 7) unanimously, Italy of course dissenting.

For the first time in the history of the League the Council in its report indicted a member of the League with having violated the League Covenant.

The report analyzed the treaties affecting Abyssinia concluded with or without that country by the Great Powers, and reviewed the history of the dispute since it was brought to the attention of the League by Abyssinia in December, 1934. It strongly criticized Italy for her dilatoriness in agreeing to the arbitration of the dispute with Abyssinia in the first instance, for the irrelevance of her attacks on the internal conditions of Abyssinia and her general intransigence, and declared:

"The Italian memorandum was laid on the Council table on September 4, 1935, whereas Ethiopia's first appeal to the Council had been made on December 14, 1934. In the interval between these two dates the Italian Government opposed the consideration of the question by the Council on the ground that the only appropriate procedure was that provided for in the Italo-Abyssinian Treaty of 1928. Throughout the whole of that period, moreover, the dispatch of Italian troops to East Africa was proceeding.

These shipments of troops were represented to the Council by the Italian Government as necessary for the defence of its colonies, menaced by Abyssinia's military preparations. Abyssinia, on the contrary, drew attention to the official pronouncements made in Italy, which, in its opinion, left no doubt as to the hostile intentions of the Italian Government."

Abyssinia on the other hand, the report pointed out, had from the outset sought a settlement by pacific means, she had throughout been very conciliatory and had declared herself prepared to abide by the award of an arbitration commission even if the findings were against her. She had asked for the despatch of neutral observers and was ready to facilitate any enquiries the League might desire to make.

Under such circumstances, the League could not but proceed with the application of Article 16 of the Covenant. All the States, with the exception of Austria, Hungary and Albania, indicated their adhesion to the application of sanctions to the aggressor; Switzerland also made certain reservations. A co-ordinating Committee was set up to work out details. Five proposals were made which in brief were as follows; Proposal Number 1 provided for an immediate embargo on the export, re-export or transit to Italy of arms, munitions and implements of war; for the prevention of the export of such goods to other countries for the purpose of re-export to Italy; and for their unrestricted supply to Abyssinia.

Proposal Number 2 prohibited the grant of loans and credits to the Italian Government, or to public authorities, persons, or corporations in Italian terri-

tory, whether directly or through intermediaries of whatever nationality.

These two measures were to be enforced by October 31, 1935.

Proposal Number 3 dealt with the prohibition of the import of goods (other than gold and silver bullion and coin) consigned from, grown, produced or manufactured in Italy, from whatever place they might arrive.

Proposal Number 4 dealt with the export and re-export of transport animals, a variety of metals, etc., but significantly left out of the prohibited list the most important substances required by Italy for the prosecution of her attack on Abyssinia, e.g., oil, coal, iron and steel, cotton, wool, copper, lead and zinc.

Proposals Number 4 and 5 were to be applied by November 18.

Proposal Number 5 recommended that the Governments concerned should mutually "assist the organisation of the international marketing of goods to offset the loss of Italian markets."

The Soviet Government showed no vacillation, from the first their delegates advocated firm, wholehearted, general action and suggested that with regard to the countries refusing to participate in sanctions (Austria, Hungary and Albania) that it would be advisable to limit the credits and export to these countries to a minimum required to meet their normal vital needs.

As regards the countries which may suffer losses as a result of the economic sanctions, the Soviet delegate suggested that it might be necessary to raise the

question of an equal distribution of sacrifices, perhaps by the opening of new markets to these countries and by similar measures.

On October 19, 1935, the Soviet Government advised the Committee on Sanctions that it had given the necessary instructions to the People's Commissariat for Foreign Trade to enforce an embargo against Italy on arms, ammunition and other raw materials and issued instructions to the banks and the People's Commissariat for Foreign Trade regarding the application of financial sanctions.

At the session of the Sanctions Committee in Geneva on October 20, 1935, Litvinov put the position of his Government quite clearly and declared:

"Despite the rather mild character of the sanctions, one is forced to note with regret that they have been adopted with far less unanimity than we had the right to expect. Many delegations made reservations: some in regard to all the sanctions, others in regard to the application of one or another category. In justification of this, various arguments were adduced, such as friendship with Italy, ethnographic or racial affinity, or reference was made to the special geographical or economic situation of this or that country, or to the ethnic composition of its population.

"I shall not engage in a criticism or evaluation of the validity of these motives. I shall merely say that it is hardly possible to conceive of other cases of aggression where similar justifications for evading the enforcement of sanctions could not be made on the same grounds. Any aggressor will find among the 54 States-members of the League so-called traditional or temporary casual momentary friends. This being so, we shall never be able to hope for the enforcement of sanctions by all the members of the

League. If the League of Nations wants to be a pillar of peace, it is not charitable donations, that is, voluntary sanctions, but universal obligations which will make it into such a pillar. . . .

"The State which I represent has no dispute with Italy, has no sense of hostility towards her and no interests of its own in the given conflict. Italy is one of the best buyers and suppliers of the Soviet Union. My State has a favourable trade balance with Italy. Hence the enforcement of sanctions involves considerable material losses to the U.S.S.R., in addition to damaging our friendly relations with Italy.

"If we agree to bear these losses it is only because of the obligations undertaken by us, because of the international solidarity in the interests of peace and the independence of all nations.

"These obligations must be equal, however, to all the members of the League, or else they are not international obligations at all. I do not know in what measure the States which demand exemptions by virtue of their 'special situation' will be able to interfere with the measures adopted to-day by the Co-ordination Committee. I consider it my duty, however, to warn right now that should the exemptions assume the character of such interference and place in doubt the effectiveness of these measures, I shall reserve for my Government the right to revise its attitude towards the measures recommended by the Co-ordination Committee which it accepts for fulfilment at present. I hope, however, that we shall not be forced to this course by the other members of the League."

Mr. Eden, on behalf of Great Britain, also demanded a firm attitude.

But M. Laval, on behalf of France, was on the one hand desirous to maintain good relations with Great Britain and the League lest France herself should

require this help later against German aggression, on the other hand, he was anxious to maintain the friendship with Italy cemented by the Franco-Italian Agreement of January 7, 1935. In the course of this Agreement it is highly probable that he gave Mussolini certain assurances in regard to Italian plans in Abyssinia—this would account to some extent for Italian intransigence in its dealing with the League regarding Abyssinia. There can be no doubt that Laval did not wish to weaken Italy as he hoped for her support against Germany.

Hence Laval's constant efforts to delay decisions, to postpone the application of sanctions, to try to reconcile the irreconcilable attempts to evade a definite promise of support in the Mediterranean for Great Britain in the event of trouble with Italy over sanctions, etc. This desire to placate Italy even went so far that in violation of her Treaty obligations, France refused the use of the Jibuti Railway by Abyssinia for importing arms.

This French attempt to hunt with the hounds and run with the hare in the final result was, as we now see, disastrous. French weakness was a powerful factor, though of course not the only one, in the failure of the League to apply such sanctions as would really have forced Italy to abandon her aggression; on the other hand, Italy's comparative isolation drove her into the arms of Germany—the two aggressor States "found one another" and later the third aggressor State of our times, Japan, naturally enough, joined them.

The net result was, for the time being at any rate, a smashing blow at the League of Nations and

collective security, whilst France took a long step towards losing her commanding position in Europe.

On November 25, 1935, the Russian and the Rumanian Governments informed the Secretary General of the League that they agreed to an embargo on the export to Italy of petrol, coal, iron and steel from the date that may be fixed by the Committee of Eighteen, provided that all the other producing countries adopted it at the same time.

The general extension of sanctions to oil, coal, iron and steel was, of course, of the utmost importance, and the subject was to have come up for discussion at a meeting of the Committee of Eighteen on November 29, 1935, but both the British and French Governments, and more particularly the latter, demanded postponement. Why? Officially because important debates in the French Chamber necessitated M. Laval's presence in Paris, but the real reason was undoubtedly the fact that M. Laval and Sir Samuel Hoare without any permission from the League Committee were even then working for a "peace" plan acceptable to Mussolini.

The meeting of the Committee was postponed to December 12, 1935, and significantly enough on December 9 and 10, unofficial reports were current in Paris, Geneva and elsewhere of the notorious Hoare-Laval "peace" terms.

Public opinion in Britain and abroad was dismayed, the feelings amongst the delegations of the other countries were thus summed up by *The Times* Geneva Correspondent:

"Strong feeling has been aroused among the permanent delegates here by these reports.

"The general argument of these delegations is: We took part in defining Italy as an aggressor in the Italo-Ethiopian dispute, although we had no direct interest in the dispute and risked certain losses by our action, because we believed it to be our duty to establish the principle that the League Covenant is a guarantee against aggression. We now find to our astonishment that France and Great Britain are proposing an arrangement which would give to the aggressor the territorial benefits of his aggression. What security do we any longer possess within the Covenant of the League?" [*Times*, December 11, 1935.]

Both M. Laval and Mr. Eden disclaimed any intention to dictate to the League, both, particularly Mr. Eden, were apologetic in tone, but the result was a further postponement of any extension of sanctions to oil, metals, etc. Mussolini was thus assured of further supplies of fuel for his bombers and raw materials for his armaments.

The discussion of the Hoare-Laval proposals was postponed to December 18, 1935. These proposals briefly gave large slices of Abyssinian territory to Italy, as well as giving the latter extensive economic and political rights over another large section of Abyssinia. The Abyssinian Delegate to the League thus characterized the proposals as his Government understood them, in the following statement: Ethiopia was invited (1) to cede to its Italian aggressor in a more or less disguised form, and under the pretext of a fallacious exchange of territory, about half of its national territory in order to enable the aggressor country to settle part of its population there; (2) to agree that the League of Nations should confer upon its aggressor in a disguised form control over the

other half of its territory, pending future annexation.

The feeling in Great Britain was so intense that Sir Samuel Hoare was forced to resign.

In effect and, indeed, not without reason, Sir Samuel Hoare put the main blame for the Hoare-Laval plan on France. In any case, Mr. Baldwin in the House of Commons, declared: "It is perfectly obvious now that the proposals are absolutely and completely dead." [*Hansard*, December 19, 1935. Col. 2032.]

Similarly, Lord Halifax in the House of Lords, December 19, 1935, declared:

"This effort towards peace, rightly or wrongly, is dead. . . . I am prepared to admit that we made a mistake —not the mistake, perhaps, that is commonly attributed to us, but the mistake of not appreciating the damage that, rightly or wrongly, these terms would be held by public opinion to inflict upon the cause we were pledged to serve."

and he concluded:

"The Foreign Secretary goes, but the League remains, and remains the basis of international endeavour, and with the failure of these proposals the position reverts to that which it was before the proposals were made. H.M. Government will continue to support it, and to support the League in all action that the other members may, with ourselves, think it right, appropriate and possible to take."

Mr. Chamberlain, speaking at Birmingham, took the same line when he declared:

"We agreed now we made a mistake . . . those proposals are dead. They are dead, and they have already been buried at Geneva. . . .

"We must, therefore, go back to the policy of sanctions, and in due course I trust that the nations of the League will show that they are prepared to make themselves ready to resist any attack that may be made on any one of their number." [*Times*, December 21, 1935.]

But the position could not revert "to that which it was before the proposals were made."

For in the first place, the drafting of such a plan caused the postponement of the discussion of the application of oil sanctions, it spread distrust of the two principal Powers within the League and thus definitely weakened the latter and, finally, perhaps most immediately important it proved to Mussolini that he had nothing to fear, that the Powers whilst putting up a show of condemnation of the aggressor would shrink from taking any action which could save the victim from annihilation.

However, the plan died a natural death, regretted by no one. Abyssinia, whilst condemning it, indignantly refused either to accept or reject it formally, leaving it for the League to decide. Rome made no secret of the fact that even this precious "plan" would not satisfy them, and at the meeting of the League Council, December 19, 1935, there was not a single voice raised to do it reverence. The U.S.S.R. delegates as well as those of the Little and Balkan Ententes and the Scandinavian countries strongly opposed having any truck whatever with it. M. Potemkin, Soviet Delegate, amongst other things, said:

"It was already evident that the two parties would not give affirmative replies. Even on the purely theoretical assumption that they did both accept the proposals all that the Council could do would be to note the fact that they had come to an agreement, but that would not, and could not, imply any approval of the proposals on the part of the League.

"The proposals had been condemned by international public opinion, by important groups in England and France and other countries, and even by leading members of the two Governments that had proposed them."

M. Potemkin added, on behalf of his Government, that the proposals were incompatible with the Covenant. His Government would never give their approval to them.

The Hoare-Laval plan was dropped, but in effect Abyssinia was again betrayed, for although the sanctions then in force were continued, the question of oil, coal and other important sanctions were left to hang fire. The result was that although life for the Italians at home was made somewhat less comfortable, Italy was in no way prevented from continuing her brutal bombing and gas warfare.

The Committee of Thirteen met again, January 20 and 21, 1936, and decided against any further attempt at conciliation, as also against sending out a Commission of Inquiry into Abyssinia as demanded by the latter, at the same time it also found it impossible to accord Abyssinia any financial assistance.

The question of an oil embargo was discussed at the session of the Committee of Eighteen (responsible for all the details of economic sanctions) which opened January 21, 1936, and decided:

"To appoint a Committee of Experts to conduct a technical examination of the conditions governing the trade in and transport of petroleum and its derivations, by-products, and residues, with a view to submitting an early report to the Committee of Eighteen on the effectiveness and extension of the embargo to the above-mentioned commodities."

It was expressly stated by some within the League that this was not a mere shelving device, but it is surely difficult to characterize it in any other way. Was there a single man or woman who could doubt the effectiveness of an oil embargo? The chief producing countries, members of the League, such as the U.S.S.R. and Rumania, had long ago expressed their willingness to put an embargo on their oil exports to Italy. The U.S.A. had expressed her willingness to restrict oil exports to the normal peace figures, and it is highly probable that, had the League adopted oil sanctions, public opinion in the U.S.A. might have forced a practically complete oil embargo there. To make the oil embargo effective it only remained for the oil carrying countries—chief of whom were Great Britain, Holland and Norway to refuse to transport oil to Italy and her Colonies from non-League countries, for the embargo to become really effective.

If a Committee of Experts was necessary it should have been appointed immediately Italy was denounced as an aggressor State and Article 16 of the Covenant began to be applied. As it was, however, Italy had had such a long warning about the possibilities of an oil embargo that she had no doubt stored up large quantities—a further few months talk would give

her an opportunity to take further precautionary measures—the setting up of another committee at this stage was really only one more indication to Mussolini that the League might bark but would never bite.

On February 12, 1936, the Committee of Experts issued its report and found that:

"In the event of such an embargo being applied by all States-Members of the Co-ordination Committee it would be effective if the United States of America were to limit their exports to Italy to the normal level of their exports prior to 1935.

"If such an embargo were applied by the States-Members of the Co-ordination Committee alone, the only effect which it would have on Italy would be to render the purchase of petroleum more difficult and expensive."

That to make such an embargo effective it should include industrial alcohol and benzol. It also made recommendations regarding an embargo on transport, etc.

It may be added that by this time, opinion in the U.S.A. had become so disgusted with League inaction, that the eagerness of the American oil interests to make extra profits (by providing Italy with increased supplies) seemed to have received *carte blanche* to make their blood money by the action taken by the Foreign Relations Committee of the U.S.A. Senate which "extended the life of the old but expiring Neutrality Act to May 1, 1937. In the Act there was no mention either of oil or of limitation." [*Daily Telegraph*, February 13, 1936.]

However, the decision was not yet final and in any

case even so the imposition of an oil embargo by the League States, even at this late hour, would have made it more difficult and expensive for Italy to get her oil and might still have had an effect on U.S.A. public opinion.

The Committee of Eighteen met again on March 2, 1936, and at once M. Flandin (who after the French elections had taken M. Laval's place) immediately suggested a further effort at conciliation by the Committee of Thirteen, the question of oil sanctions being postponed for the time being. Mr. Eden, on behalf of Great Britain, accepted this proposal declaring at the same time that "having considered the evidence of the Experts' report, the British Government are in favour of the imposition of an oil embargo by the members of the League and are prepared to join in the application of such a sanction if the other supplying and transporting States who are members of the League of Nations are prepared to do likewise." [*Times*, March 3, 1936.]

The U.S.S.R., Rumania, Turkey and Yugoslavia supported the proposal to impose the embargo, but the French and other delegations obstructed and in the end the matter of the oil embargo was allowed to drop under the guise of making a fresh appeal to the two belligerents to cease hostilities.

At the same time, Hitler's occupation of the demilitarized Rhineland Zone on March 7, 1936, in violation of the Versailles and Locarno Treaties, completely overshadowed the Italian invasion of Abyssinia.

However, the Committee of Thirteen met again on March 23, 1936, to consider the replies of the two sides to their appeal.

Abyssinia replied on March 5, 1936, agreeing to negotiations providing the Covenant of the League was respected.

Mussolini replied on March 9, 1936. His object was undoubtedly a further postponement of an oil embargo. He agreed, in principle, to negotiations, but when the President of the Council, Senor de Madariaga, invited the two sides to enter into direct relations with him, Mussolini, on April 2, 1936, agreed to send a delegate after Easter, at the same time suggesting that as it was important to determine the best ways and means of establishing contact, it was desirable that a preliminary exchange of ideas with the head of the Italian Government should take place in Rome, thus clearly seeking to side-track the whole subject away from Geneva.

In the meantime Italy, after the appeal of the Council, had redoubled her bombing and gas warfare in Abyssinia. The Emperor of Abyssinia appealed to the League against Italian brutality and frightfulness but in vain. The Press in this and other countries were loud in their denunciations. As an example may be given the comparatively restrained utterance of the *Spectator*:

"The unspeakable brutality of the use against defenceless negroes of an instrument diabolical in its capacity for inflicting agony and disablement is in one sense the least part of Italy's crime. The citizens of this and other countries have read for six months and more with sickened disgust of Italian military successes owed to the aeroplanes which detect every movement of an enemy 'blind' himself, and drop tons of bombs on his camps and concentrations while he has hardly a machine that can attempt a response.

But that is in a sense legitimate warfare, except when the objectives of the attentions from the air are Red Cross units or open towns like Harrar. It was the memory of gas-war in Europe from 1915 onwards that led to the treaty of 1925, whose signatories, including Britain and France and Italy and Abyssinia, bound themselves to abjure absolutely and for ever the use in war 'of asphyxiating, poisonous and other gases, and of all analogous liquids, materials or devices.' That was in 1925. This is 1936. For so long and no longer has Italy's signature been honoured. She has broken her pledge without even the hollow excuse of military exigency. She did not need gas to win the war. Aeroplanes and tanks and heavy guns were blasting from her path an enemy devoid of all such weapons. Her assumption of the badge of barbarism is gratuitous and deliberate." [*Spectator*, April 10, 1936.]

However, nothing could disturb the calm, slow progress or rather time-marking of Geneva. Mr. Eden, it is true, took a strong line for an early discussion at the session of the Committee of Thirteen, which opened April 8, 1936, but M. Flandin again succeeded in putting a spoke in the wheel of a rapid decision and even went so far as to maintain that the Committee's task was to obtain information and to initiate negotiations for peace. Neither the Committee nor the Council could dictate to the parties. If the latter met and Abyssinia broke off the negotiations she would have to be held responsible for prolonging the war.

Finally, the Committee adjourned until April 16, 1936. It was then learned that the Italians absolutely refused to carry on any negotiations under the auspices of the League, but only with Abyssinia, and she refused to cease hostilities: naturally, seeing that the League presented no serious obstacle to the

prosecution of her aggression and being by that time in a decidedly strong military position. The Abyssinians, of course, refused the Italian terms and all that the League Council did on April 20, 1936, was to pass a resolution in which Italy was again characterized as carrying on a war contrary to the Covenant. But nothing was done. By May 11, 1936, when the Council met again, the Emperor was in exile and the Italians were in Addis Ababa.

The question of sanctions appeared on the Agenda, but its discussion was again postponed. The U.S.S.R. had done its best to make collective, economic sanctions efficacious, other countries, including Great Britain were also, on the whole, ready in this case for the first time to apply the League Covenant to a case of flagrant aggression, but French opposition was decisive in making a failure of the scheme. The attitude of the U.S.S.R. as compared with other countries was well summed up by M. Molotov, Chairman of the Council of People's Commissars, when referring to the Italo-Abyssinian war in his speech at the Central Executive Committee of the U.S.S.R., January 10, 1936, he declared:

"The Italo-Abyssinian war is a typical imperialist war for colonies. Italian Fascism openly defends the conquest of Abyssinia and its transformation into an Italian colony. Considering herself a Power which had been badly treated in regard to colonial booty by the chief imperialist Powers when the latter shared out the spoils amongst themselves at the end of the world war, Italy has started a new war in order to extend by force of arms her colonial possessions at the expense of Abyssinia.

"Fascist Italy comes forward in the present instance as

an instigator for a new partial re-division of the world, and this may bring in its train big and many unexpected events for the ruling capitalist classes in Europe. Fascist Italy demands at the same time that the other imperialist Powers, and the League of Nations as a whole, should support her colonial offensive.

"Only the Soviet Union has taken up a position in the Italo-Abyssinian war which, in principle, is opposed to any and every imperialism, and to any and every policy of colonial conquest. Only the Soviet Union can declare that she stands for the principle of the equality and independence of Abyssinia, herself a member of the League of Nations, and that she (the Soviet Union) cannot support any action of the League of Nations or of any capitalist Powers aimed at the violation of this independence and equality. This policy of the Soviet Union distinguishes her from the other members of the League of Nations. It is of exceptional importance and will undoubtedly still bear abundant fruit."

By May, 1936, it was clear that the only thing that could avail to wrest the victim from the clutches of Italy would have been a combined military campaign against the latter, but under the circumstances it was obvious that this could not be carried out. The vast majority of the countries represented at the League felt that under such circumstances nothing remained but the lifting of the existing sanctions which could not now in any way help Abyssinia. This was also the view of the U.S.S.R. Delegation, and at the July, 1936, session of the League Assembly it was decided that the sanctions against Italy should be formally raised on July 15th.

Litvinov, on behalf of the Soviet Government, whilst supporting the raising of sanctions as the only

logical thing that could be done at the moment, insisted on the need of strengthening rather than weakening the Covenant. He stressed that sanctions had failed in stopping aggression only because they had not been applied sufficiently thoroughly and he urged that the lesson to be drawn was not that sanctions were ineffective, but that their wholehearted application could prove effective.

Had Litvinov's demand to learn the lesson from their failure been heeded, this first attempt at real collective security might have led to the blocking of the way to further aggression. Unfortunately, Litvinov's warning to strengthen the League was unheeded. On the contrary, at the League meeting in September, 1938, Great Britain led the movement for drawing the teeth out of Article 16 by making its application by the League member-States purely voluntary, thus assuring all aggressors that sanctions would never be effectively applied against them. The net result of the whole Italo-Abyssinian episode was a crushing blow to collective security for which undoubtedly the French Government was mainly responsible—a blow, the really painful if not fatal impact of which has only become fully apparent at the present time.

As a postscript to the foregoing it may be well to remind our readers that by the 1896 Italo-Abyssinian Treaty which followed Italy's defeat at Adowa, the absolute independence of Abyssinia was recognized. In an agreement signed in 1906, France, Great Britain and Italy whilst parcelling out between them certain spheres of influence in Africa nevertheless undertook to respect the integrity of Abyssinia. In 1908, Italy and Abyssinia signed a Convention regulating the

frontiers of Italian possessions in Abyssinia (Somaliland and Eritrea), but the work of demarcation was never completed.

In 1915, in a secret Treaty, Italy's entry into the war on the side of the Allies was secured so it is alleged, by promising her concessions in Africa. This Italy interpreted after the war as concessions in Abyssinia, but her claims were not upheld by the parties to the secret Treaty.

In 1923, Abyssinia, with the warm support of Fascist Italy, was admitted a member of the League of Nations.

In 1925, Britain and Italy made a separate agreement whereby they undertook to support one another's claims in Abyssinia—England desiring to construct a barrage on Lake Tana, whilst Italy wanted a concession to construct a railway connecting her Colonies and also to obtain "exclusive economic influence in Western Abyssinia". When this Agreement was published, Abyssinia protested to the League of Nations. France, not having been a party to the agreement, supported Abyssinia, and finally Britain and Italy issued a statement declaring that they had no intention of forcing Abyssinia to grant any concessions or favours against her wish.

In 1928, Italy and Abyssinia concluded a Treaty of Friendship and Arbitration in which they agreed to promote trade between the two countries and for a period of 20 years disputes arising between them which could not otherwise be settled were to be submitted to arbitration.

A Treaty concluded in 1930 between Abyssinia, Great Britain, France and Italy regulated the import

of arms and ammunition to conform with the principles of the Covenant and the Kellogg Pact and to respect the territorial integrity and political independence of Abyssinia.

On April 16, 1938, Great Britain concluded an Agreement with Italy whereby, in brief, in return for the reiteration of a number of promises which Italy had made on previous occasions, but broken when it suited her convenience, and a number of new promises, the British Government in effect granted Italy, amongst other things: (1) freedom of action in Spain so long as the war there continued; (2) recognition of her annexation of Abyssinia; (3) equality of rights in Arabia as a sphere of interest; (4) a first foothold in Egypt.

When Lord Halifax formally brought this Agreement before the Council of the League at Geneva on May 8, 1938, he characterized the Agreement as "a contribution to general peace." Of course, the most war-like aggressors prefer to attain their objects without resort to arms, and if the British and other Governments are prepared to look on benevolently while one weak country after another succumbs this may be, for the time being, peace of a kind—but hardly of such a kind as to satisfy the victims—Spain, Abyssinia, China, Austria, Czechoslovakia, Albania, etc.

By the Anglo-Italian Agreement, Great Britain had undertaken to propose at the Council of the League the lifting of the ban on the recognition of Italy's conquest of Abyssinia. Before this matter was raised at a public session, the question as to the admission of the Abyssinian Delegation to the discussion was debated at

a private session of the Council. Reporting this sitting Mr. Vernon Bartlett stated:

"M. Litvinov (Soviet Foreign Commissar) spoke very strongly against any attempts to keep her silent, and he was backed up by the delegates of New Zealand and Bolivia. The Polish delegate was full of questions about Abyssinia's existence."

Although Lord Halifax did not take part in the discussion, he is reported to have been strongly in favour of the participation of the Abyssinian delegate in the debate. Finally, it was agreed to admit the Abyssinian Delegation.

On May 12, 1938, in a public sitting the matter was raised by Lord Halifax. The purport and effect (again only moral) of this speech can perhaps best be characterised by quoting a pargraph from Mr. Vernon Bartlett's report:

"When he (Lord Halifax) explained his belief that two ideals were in conflict—'on the one hand the ideal of devotion, unflinching but unpractical, to some high purpose; on the other the ideal of a practical victory for peace', he lost all hold over his audience, for so few members of it believed that the best method of maintaining peace was to recognize defeat and disappearance of another member State on such slender evidence." [*News Chronicle*, 13 May, 1938.]

Ato Taezaz (speaking on behalf of the Emperor, Haile Selassie) pleaded against the recognition of the Italian conquest both on moral and practical grounds and in the interest of lasting peace itself.

The Negus also strongly deprecated the alleged fact

that the Ango-Italian Agreement had sacrificed Abyssinia for the sake of peace in Spain. Here the Negus was making a serious mistake—not only Abyssinia but also Spain was sold, indeed given away (in so far as Mr. Chamberlain could do so) to the aggressors.

Abyssinia's plea was supported strongly by China and by New Zealand. Mr. Jordan on behalf of the latter, amongst other things, remarked:

"The proceedings in which we are engaged, however they may be disguised, will only be regarded as a stage further in the surrender to aggression."

M. Litvinov, on behalf of the U.S.S.R. analysed the question both from the point of view of the actual situation and the principles of the League, and amongst other things declared:

"The question before us has to be considered from two points of view. The first is whether it is practicable and expedient to continue the action which the League undertook in defence of the territorial integrity and political independence of one of its members, in accordance with Article 10 of the Covenant. The second is the bearing which our decision may have on the prestige, authority and further efficiency of the League."

After stressing the importance of non-recognition in many cases, and that it should be accompanied by other more effective methods of combating the aggressor provided by Article 16 of the Covenant, M. Litvinov continued:

"In attempting to apply what I have said to the Ethiopian problem, we should obviously find ourselves in a

difficult position. There is information that the struggle in Ethiopia has never ceased and is now even increasing in its intensity, if not in its extent. There are also assertions to the contrary. The material at our disposal does not permit us to arrive at a final conclusion. The despatch of a Commission of investigation would be an obvious way out, but there are apparently enormous obstacles to such a course.

"On the other hand, we cannot ignore the fact that there have already been breaches by some League members of the resolution adopted by the League Assembly in 1936 as to the non-recognition of the conquest of Ethiopia, and also the obvious intention of others not to reckon any longer with that resolution for the future, whatever the Council or the Assembly may decide. At all events I can assure the Council that *the Government of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics for its part would be ready to solve this problem, not from the standpoint of its national interests, but in the spirit of the Covenant of the League of Nations and of the principles of collective security, international solidarity, and the indivisibility of peace.*"

The question of recognizing the conquest of Abyssinia was left for decision to individual members of the League, and both the British and French Governments agreed in principle on such recognition.

On November 16, 1938, the Anglo-Italian Agreement, in spite of strong opposition in Britain, was ratified, and Great Britain formally recognized the conquest of Abyssinia by Italy.

After the conclusion of the Anglo-Italian Agreement in April 1938, there was a move on the part of France to negotiate a similar agreement with Italy, and on April 19, a preliminary meeting took place between the French Chargé d'Affaires in Rome and Count

Ciano. Henceforth the talks proceeded slowly, Italy being more concerned at the time with Hitler's visit to Rome which took place May 3–9, 1938. Later Mussolini was at pains to manifest publicly his apparent lukewarmness to an understanding with France. His real aims, however, were even more apparent. *The Times* Rome correspondent, referring to a speech on the subject made by Mussolini at Genoa, May 14, 1938, said: "In the view of many observers Signor Mussolini's remarks were meant to lay down the essential Italian condition of any agreement with France. The Fascist Government consider that the Spanish civil war must have only one outcome—the complete victory of the Burgos Government and the elimination of every Bolshevist influence," and *The Times* Genoa correspondent declared: "Never has the antithesis between Italy and France over the Spanish civil war been so bluntly stated in public. It was a clear indication to the French Government that they can have friendship with Italy only at the price of dropping their Russian policy."

M. Mussolini, on the other hand, made very friendly references to Mr. Chamberlain in the hope, no doubt, of driving a wedge between Britain and France. Conversations between the Governments of France and Italy were suspended after May 11, 1938, whilst attacks on France continued in a crescendo of violence in the Italian press.

However, in accordance with the oft-repeated policy of the bourgeois democracies to meet the Fascist States not merely halfway, but 95 per cent of the way, the French Government, on October 4, 1938, informed the Italian Chargé d'Affaires in Paris that

France had decided to send an Ambassador to Rome. This, of course, meant that France was now ready to recognize formally the conquest of Abyssinia by Italy. The post of French Ambassador had been vacant since October 1936, when the then French Ambassador retired. No new appointment was made because Italy insisted on new Ambassadors being accredited to "the King of Italy and Emperor of Ethiopia," and France having refused to recognize the conquest of Ethiopia could not therefore appoint a new Ambassador.

On October 12, 1938, the French Government announced that M. François Poncet had been appointed as Ambassador to Rome, where he arrived November 7, 1938. Two days later he presented a copy of his credentials to Count Ciano (the King of Italy being then out of Rome), and on November 19, 1938, he presented them to the Italian King, thus formally completing the recognition of the conquest of Abyssinia by Italy.

CHAPTER VI

THE MARTYRDOM OF SPAIN

THE establishment of a Spanish Republic after the abdication of Alfonso was never accepted with resignation by the Spanish monarchists and other reactionaries. So long, however, as the "Right" Fascist or semi-Fascist groups dominated the Republican Government, it was tolerated. However, after the brutal suppression of the Asturian miners' revolt, the "Left" parties (Republicans, Socialists and Communists) combined to form the anti-Fascist Frente Popular and in the elections of February 16, 1936, there was a big swing to the Left and the Frente Popular received 265 mandates as against 144 obtained by the Right and 64 by the Centre groups. A Republican Government was formed which the Socialists and Communists supported but did not enter.

The Government attempted to institute a series of reforms, but left the command of the army in the hands of officers who were, to a very large extent, scions of the old Spanish autocracy.

Less than two months after the election violent pamphlets were being circulated urging a military revolt against the Frente Popular Government, and on May 18, 1936, there was an abortive revolt of the Second and Third Cavalry Regiments at Alcala, about twenty miles from Madrid. This was but an overture

to the main well-prepared revolt, which began on July 18, 1936, both in Spanish Morocco and in many of the big garrison towns in Spain. About 80 per cent. of the regular troops were seduced by their officers to break their oath of allegiance to the Republic.

The revolt broke out a little earlier than had evidently been intended, but it was established subsequently that Italian airmen had been recruited for service in Spain three days before its outbreak.

On July 25, 1936, came the amazing decision of the French Popular Front Government of which M. Blum was Premier, to prohibit the export of munitions to Government Spain. This in spite of the facts that the Frente Popular Government was the *legal* Government of Spain, and France had an agreement with Spain to supply the latter with war material.

The probability is, and that was at the time the generally accepted view, that France had been induced to take this action as a result of pressure and threats by the German and Italian Governments.

However, the two Fascist Governments had by no means scrupled to continue to violate international law by supplying arms to the insurgents. A week later, August 1, 1936, the French Government appealed to the British and Italian Governments for "the rapid adoption and rigid observance of an agreed arrangement for non-intervention in Spain." They also stated that "pending the establishment of a community of views on this subject between all the principal Governments concerned, the fact that war supplies are now reaching the insurgents from foreign countries obliges the French Government to

reserve its freedom of judgment in regard to the application of a decision taken by it."

Subsequently Germany, Portugal and the U.S.S.R. were also appealed to. Great Britain replied affirmatively, August 4, and the U.S.S.R. also affirmatively, August 5, 1936.

The German, Italian and Portuguese Governments delayed replying to the French appeal until they had liberally furnished the rebels with military equipment of all kinds. Finally, these Governments agreed, in principle, to prohibit the export of munitions to the rebels, but the formal enforcement of these prohibitions only took place in the case of Germany, direct export, on August 24, 1936, and transit export on August 29, 1936; in the case of Portugal on August 27, and in the case of Italy, on August 28, 1936.

British and other foreign correspondents on Spanish and Spanish Moroccan territory stressed that between August 3 and these dates munitions from the Fascist States were sent in large quantities to the rebels.

It may be well to recall that it was freely and authoritatively stated at the time without contradiction that France made the proposal for non-intervention because she could get no guarantee of help from Great Britain in the event of trouble with the Fascist Powers arising from the rival supply of arms to Spain.

By September, 1936, a large number of other countries accepted the French proposal and a Committee for the application of the Non-Intervention Agreement was formed. This Committee went to work very leisurely. It met on September 9, 1936, but not only was the Portuguese representative still absent, but both the German representative and the Italian

representative insisted that they had no powers to agree to anything, and would have to refer everything back to their Governments.

Portugal hedged her adherence to the Non-Intervention Committee with all sorts of conditions and reservations and was not represented at the Non-Intervention Committee until its Fourth Session on September 28, 1936. In the meantime, the Diplomatic Correspondent of the *Manchester Guardian*, September 15, 1936, reported:

"Germany and Italy, who continue to support the rebels, have placed embargoes on the export of war material to Spain, but not to Portugal."

This was obviously a very neat way of paying lip service to a principle and yet acting in direct antagonism to it.

So far as the published reports went, the only definite work done by the Committee by the end of September, would seem to have been the collection, collation and summarizing of the legislative and other measures stated to have been taken by the participating Governments to give effect to the Non-Intervention Agreement.

Even a strict adherence by all to refrain from supplying arms both to the Government and the insurgents was in reality a violation of international law whereby foreign Governments are not prohibited from supplying arms to the legal Government for the purpose of suppressing an internal revolt. Nevertheless, there was something to be said for the French scheme since a really loyal adherence to non-intervention and a complete cessation of the supply of arms

to both sides would not only have avoided all possibility of international complications but would perforce have led to an early cessation of the civil war in Spain.

Unfortunately it very soon became clear that Intervention Committee or Non-Intervention Committee the Fascist States had no intention to cease their supply of arms to the insurgents.

Evidence supplied by the Spanish Government both to the League and to the Non-Intervention Committee, as well as the reports of eye-witnesses and the quite evident continual increase in the air force and heavy armaments of the insurgents proved conclusively that they were continuing to receive armaments from Italy, Germany and (or via) Portugal. These reports were, of course, denied by the German and Italian Governments, but it is a significant fact that the Spanish Government pleaded for the cessation of non-intervention. It was prepared to take the risk of the insurgents obtaining more arms from their backers providing they—the Government—were permitted to purchase the arms they required—the truth was that in those early days the Spanish Government had the men—the nation was with them, but though the insurgents obtained as much and more arms than they needed, they had comparatively few men, since the Spanish people were against them.

The Soviet Delegates to the Non-Intervention Committee repeatedly endeavoured to get a move on in the adoption of some practical measures to stop the continued supply of arms, etc., to the rebels, but very little, if anything, was done in this direction by the Committee. At last, evidently exasperated

by the inactivity of the Committee for Non-Intervention, the Soviet Government, on October 7, 1936, announced that if something effective were not done immediately to stop the violation of the non-intervention agreement by Italy, Germany and Portugal, the U.S.S.R. would leave the Committee and consider herself free to pursue her own line.

The Soviet Delegate, M. Kagan, at the session of the Non-Intervention Committee, October 7, 1936, after enumerating the cases of violations of the Non-Intervention agreement by Italy, Germany and Portugal, declared:

"Since the formation of our Committee the Soviet Government, through me, has constantly raised the question of investigating the actions of Portugal which has been openly violating the non-intervention agreement, and of the cessation of such actions.

"The Soviet Government can under no circumstances agree to convert the non-intervention agreement into a screen covering military aid to the insurgents from certain participants of the agreement, against the lawful Spanish Government. The Soviet Government is, therefore, obliged to declare that unless the violations of the non-intervention agreement are immediately discontinued it will consider itself free from the obligations arising out of the agreement."

At the session of the Committee on October 9, 1936, M. Kagan proposed:

"(i) that an impartial committee shall be sent to the Spanish-Portuguese frontier to ascertain the true state of affairs there; and

"(ii) that, after reporting, the committee shall leave on the frontier a permanent sub-committee to keep watch."

It is interesting to observe that in regard to these proposals *The Times* diplomatic correspondent commented:

"In proposing that a committee of investigation should be sent to the Spanish-Portuguese frontier the Soviet Government had revived some of the Lisbon Government's worst apprehensions, which it had taken weeks of diplomatic effort to allay to the point at which Portugal would join the Committee."

So it would appear that in order to get Portugal to participate in so-called non-intervention she was to be given a free hand to intervene and no questions asked.

It is interesting to note that the *Observer*, October 11, 1936, whilst arguing heatedly against Moscow in regard to the Spanish situation, naïvely gave away the whole game of non-intervention. In the course of the editorial notes the *Observer* said:

"It is Portugal's own cause that General Franco is upholding. The menace of Communism has been lapping Portugal's frontiers; and Portugal has something worth saving from the menace. How, therefore, can Portugal be neutral? When one's neighbour's house is on fire, how can neutrality be expected as between the fire and the fire engine?"

The Committee contented itself with requesting the remarks of the German, Italian and Portuguese, and asking for further details of the alleged violations.

Since no definite date for the next meeting had been fixed, the Soviet Delegate on October 14, 1936, handed another Note to Lord Plymouth, the Chairman of the Committee, in the course of which it was stated:

"The principal supply of arms to the rebels proceeds through Portugal and Portuguese ports.

"In order to put an end to this supply and the violation of the agreement of non-intervention, the least and most urgent measure should be the immediate establishment of control over the Portuguese ports.

"We demand that the committee establish such control.

"We suggest that the British or French Navy, or both together, should be entrusted with the carrying out of this control.

"Without such a step as the least and most urgent measure against violation of the agreement on non-intervention in Spanish affairs the agreement not only does not answer the purpose but serves as a camouflage for the rebels against the lawful Spanish Government.

"I beg to request you that the proposals made should be discussed at the next session of the committee, which I urgently request you to convene without any delay."

The *Daily Herald* throughout applauded the attitude of the Soviet Government in the Non-Intervention Committee; thus on October 8, 1936, in a leader, this journal said:

"The Soviet Government, in effect, demands from Berlin, from Rome and from Lisbon a quick and firm decision. They can no longer break it while others keep it.

"It is the plain duty of the British Government to support the Russian move and to add to the Soviet Government's warning its own emphatic warning that

Great Britain cannot continue much longer to honour a pact which others cynically and deliberately violate."

But the British Government did not support the Russian move. Non-intervention continued to be, in effect, intervention by the Fascist Powers on behalf of the insurgents.

Instead of adopting independent means of preventing the infringement of non-intervention at the various ports and land frontiers of Spain, the Committee simply wasted time, by deciding first of all to request the observations of the accused Governments on the facts alleged against them. It was no doubt interesting to establish the truth or otherwise of the allegations, but surely it was a thousand times more important to create conditions which would make impossible the infringement of the Non-Intervention Agreement by any country, and this is exactly what the Soviet Government was endeavouring to persuade the Non-Intervention Committee to do.

The allegations against them were, of course, hotly denied by the German, Italian and Portuguese Governments, who in their turn accused the Soviet Government of sending arms to the Spanish Government, but at the sessions of the Committee, October 23 and 24, 1936, M. Maisky, the Soviet delegate, subjected these replies to a masterly examination which revealed how completely they were devoid of any weighty, adequate denials of the accusations made against them. However, the Committee accepted the replies and decided that there was no proof of contravention of the Non-Intervention Agreement by Italy and Portugal, and as regards Germany, Lord

Plymouth, the Chairman, expressed the opinion that their explanations were satisfactory, except in respect of two complaints. But the Committee did not explain as to where exactly Franco was obtaining his aeroplanes and armaments which were increasing almost daily and which could not possibly have been manufactured at that time in rebel Spain.

At the session of the Committee on October 23, 1936, M. Maisky read a statement in the course of which he declared:

"The Agreement has turned out to be an empty, torn scrap of paper, and has ceased in practice to exist.

"The Soviet Government sees only one way out—to return to the Spanish Government the facilities to purchase arms outside of Spain and to extend to the participants of the Agreement the right to sell or not to sell arms to Spain.

"In any case the Soviet Government is compelled to declare that it cannot consider itself bound by the Agreement for Non-Intervention to any greater extent than any of the remaining participants"

The Committee objected that they could not understand what the Soviet declaration meant.

Accordingly on October 28, 1936, M. Maisky made a further statement to elucidate the Soviet position in the course of which he stated:

"The Soviet Government adhered to the declaration regarding non-intervention presuming equal obligations for all the participants of the Agreement. The violation of the obligations even by one of the participants of the Agreement relieves also the other participants of the obligations.

"The Soviet Government, as probably the whole world,

is firmly convinced that even after the Agreement came into effect the Governments sympathizing with the objects and aims of the Spanish rebel generals continued abundantly to supply them with military aeroplanes, tanks, artillery, machine-guns, rifles, munitions and other war materials.

"The proceedings of the Committee have convinced the Soviet Government that at present there are no guarantees against further supply to the rebel generals of war materials. In these circumstances the Soviet Government is of the opinion that until such guarantees are created, and an effective control over the strict fulfilment of the obligations regarding non-intervention established, those Governments who consider supplying the legitimate Spanish Government as conforming to international law, international order and international justice are morally entitled not to consider themselves more bound by the Agreement than those Governments who supply the rebels in contravention of the Agreement."

M. Maisky stressed the need to discuss immediately proposals for establishing control on the Spanish land frontiers and ports and concluded:

"My Government, earnestly desires to effect the real enforcement of the Non-Intervention Agreement and the best proof of this is our agreement to the establishment of complete control over the importation of arms and munitions into Spain. Only by framing and enforcing adequate measures to carry out such effective control can this Committee justify its existence."

But as one reads through the proceedings of successive sessions of the Non-Intervention Committee one becomes more and more convinced of the tragic farce of the whole business. No responsible journalists

and eye-witnesses disputed the fact that Germany and Italy, particularly the latter, continued to pour 'planes, tanks, guns and other munitions into rebel Spain—the Committee, however, seemed unable in most cases to establish the facts, and for the most part accepted the mere denials—unsupported by any real evidence—of the German, Italian and Portuguese Delegates. On the other hand, even if a certain amount of arms did reach Government Spain from France and the U.S.S.R., the amount was out of all proportion smaller than that received by the rebels, and was justified precisely because the Fascist Governments flouted the non-intervention decisions from the first.

However, the fact that the Committee could not establish the actual facts of the dispatch and receipt of arms by one side or the other was in itself not so important, what was essential was the establishment of *effective control* on the land and port frontiers so as to prevent arms reaching the combatants. That was the real *raison d'etre* of the Committee and that was precisely what the Committee seemed in no hurry to accomplish.

At last, November 12, 1936, the Committee "approved the scheme prepared by the Chairman's subcommittee for the establishment of a system of supervision in Spain to secure the application of the Agreement, subject to certain drafting amendments and on the understanding that this approval was subject to the confirmation by their respective Governments", but precisely at this point the Italian Delegate launched a violent attack on the U.S.S.R. in general and her alleged activities in Spain before

and after the rebellion in particular. M. Maisky replied vigorously to this shameless side-tracking of the issue and turning to the actual business in hand declared:

"After weeks of aimless wanderings our Committee has eventually come to a practical task; it has elaborated a scheme for the more or less effective control of the Non-Intervention Agreement. This scheme has been discussed this afternoon as the first item on the Agenda with, I am happy to say, considerable unanimity and accord throughout the Committee. This is a very gratifying fact; it brings something of a new atmosphere into the Committee and gives the hope of practical and concrete results of its work.

"And now, just at such a moment, comes the speech of the Italian representative which is in utter disharmony with this new spirit."

In the control scheme of November 12, 1936, the import of aeroplanes had not been included. Later a scheme was produced for air control. During the discussion of this scheme at the meeting of the Sub-Committee on Non-Intervention it was reported by the *Manchester Guardian* (November 24, 1936) that Germany, supported by Italy and Portugal, endeavoured to "delay the carrying out of the scheme already agreed upon for land and sea control until all the details of the air control scheme should be worked out".

Equally interesting for its naïvity was the opposition of the Portuguese delegation to the scheme for air control on the ground that "it meant sending agents to various Governments, and it would offend the dignity of Governments to receive such agents"!

However, the Chairman rightly pointed out the untenability of such an objection and finally it was agreed that the conclusions of the technical advisors to whom the draft scheme for air control had been submitted should be submitted by the delegates to their respective Governments.

In the meantime, Germany and Italy undeterred by the crescendo of horror amongst all decent minded people at the bombing by the rebels of hospitals, of women and children and of historic buildings in areas of no military importance, recognized the Franco Government as the *de jure* Government of Spain on November 18, 1936. And Britain? She, Mr. Eden declared, refused to recognize either side as belligerents and Britain therefore regarded any search of British ships outside the three-mile limit as an act of piracy. This was, of course, a clear indication that within Spanish waters Franco was at liberty to bomb and sink British ships at will—a permission of which his Italian and German planes gratefully took full advantage.

Moreover, irrespective of what the Fascist Powers might do, Mr. Eden also announced on November 23, 1936, that the British Government would remain neutral and that it was about to introduce legislation to make the carrying of arms to Spain illegal. Such a Bill became law early in December, 1936.

Of course, the prohibition to import arms into Spain from this country or from other countries in British ships would have been not only legitimate but very desirable had non-intervention been adhered to by the Fascist Powers and had adequate control over the illegal imports of arms into Spain been

established by the Non-Intervention Committee, but since the insurgents were receiving ever more and more help from their friends it would surely have been more consistent with impartiality in the Spanish civil war if this country had not been in such a hurry to carry out their side of the non-intervention bargain until the other side had shown some indications of their good faith. In effect, Mr. Eden's attitude at this time was a clear indication to Germany and Italy that they were at liberty to do what they liked to help the Spanish rebels. Whatever happened, Britain would not help the lawful Spanish Government to defend itself even though British interests might be directly menaced by the establishment of a Fascist State on the Mediterranean under the protection of Italy and Germany.

Early in December, 1936, the British and French Governments made an appeal to the Governments of Germany, Italy, Portugal and the U.S.S.R. to renounce all action which might lead to foreign intervention in the Spanish civil war and that they should co-operate in an endeavour to put an end to the conflict by making an offer of mediation, with the object of enabling Spain to "give united expression to its national will" by a plebiscite or other means of that kind.

This effort by the French and British Governments was no doubt due to the fact that although they refused any help to the Spanish Government and were unwilling, or afraid, to hinder the German and Italian Governments from rendering help to the insurgents, they were nevertheless uneasy at the prolongation of the Spanish war and the menace

which an unequivocal Franco victory by the help of Italy might be for British and French interests in the Mediterranean.

The Soviet Government denied that it had broken the Agreement, and said that the U.S.S.R. was prepared, jointly with the other States, to declare again that they refrained from action, direct or indirect, which might entail intervention, but expected that full control of similar abstention by others would be guaranteed.

The German Government, whilst expressing its willingness to discuss means to make control effective, demanded that gifts of money, food, propaganda and expressions of sympathy must also be regarded as intervention and dealt with as such. As for mediation, the Government of the Reich considered that in the circumstances "reconciliation with the Valencia Government was hardly conceivable". The reply doubted the possibility of "an orderly plebiscite" and made no secret of the conviction of the German Government that they regarded General Franco's administration as the only factor in Spain which could still raise a claim to represent the Spanish people.

The Italian reply expressed exactly the same views as the German and added that "the Spanish people had already sufficiently expressed their will in favour of the Nationalist Government" of General Franco.

Portugal declared merely that if both sides in the war wished for mediation, she would be prepared to study the form this should take.

In the early stages of the Spanish civil war volunteers from Great Britain, France and other countries

had rallied to the side of the Spanish Government. These were, of course, real private volunteers who went to Spain at their own risk against the wishes of their Governments. The Spanish Government naturally welcomed these volunteers but would certainly have rather been accorded the right to purchase arms, for they had the full support of their own people. On the other hand, the insurgents received enormous quantities of arms, but they had comparatively few Spaniards. Under such circumstances, Italy and Germany began to send what they euphemistically called "volunteers" but which were actually conscripts and that, not in ones or twos or scores or even hundreds, but by the thousand. In August and September, 1936, when the Spanish Government was receiving its driblets of volunteers, the Italian, German and Portuguese Governments raised the question of including volunteers in the scheme of non-intervention. At that time, however, no scheme of arms control had yet been worked out, and the number of volunteers was in any case small. But by December, 1936, the Italians and to a less extent the Germans, were pouring into insurgent Spain not only planes, pilots, arms and experts, but also large numbers of men. At last the question could not be ignored and was brought up at the Non-Intervention Committee.

After continuous discussion of plans, and communications between the Committee and the various Governments, the Non-Intervention Committee, on February 16, 1937, adopted the following decision: (1) From midnight of February 20 to extend the Non-Intervention Agreement to cover the recruitment in, the transit through, or the departure from their respective

countries of persons of non-Spanish nationality proposing to proceed to take part in the war; (2) To furnish the International Committee with particulars as to the measures taken to give effect to the foregoing; (3) From February 20, to adopt the system of supervision prepared by their technical advisory subcommittee; and (4) to bring into operation the scheme of supervision referred to under No. 3 from midnight of March 6. But Portugal still made reservation in regard to points (3) and (4).

However, after further negotiations Portugal at last agreed to allow British observers to carry out their work in Portugal and between February 18–22, 1937, Germany, France, Italy, Portugal and the U.S.S.R. passed measures prohibiting the recruitment and departure of volunteers. Great Britain had already taken steps to this end by January 10, 1937, i.e., without waiting until the Fascist Powers had agreed to stop "volunteers" from going to the aid of the insurgents. By February 22, 1937, the Non-Intervention Committee had worked out measures to institute frontier control. Great Britain and France were between them to patrol the north coast, and France the south-west coast from the Portuguese frontier to Gibraltar, the Atlantic seaboard of Morocco, and Majorca and Iviza Islands. Great Britain was to take the Mediterranean coast of Morocco and the Spanish ports from Gibraltar to Almeria; also the Canary Islands and Rio d'Oro. Germany and Italy were to patrol the rest of the coast, Italy being responsible also for Minorca. Eight search stations were to be established, where inspectors would board ships bound for Spain, at the Goodwin Sands, Cher-

bourg, Bordeaux, Gibraltar, Marseilles, Palermo, Oran (Algeria) and Madeira.

Whether on land or sea the observers had no executive powers and their duty was to verify the situation and report to their Governments. Officers of warships patrolling the coast were given no right of search or detention, but only the right to board, with a view to establishing identity. But it was not until April 19–20, 1937, that the observers began their duties. However, the organization of a system of observers at various points on the Spanish frontier left so many gaps that both men and supplies continued to pour into Spain, particularly for the use of the insurgents. True, this was denied from time to time, but the Italian Press published casualty lists of its "glorious volunteers" and repeatedly boasted of the part played by Italy in the Spanish civil war. Thus to give but two examples in an article attributed to Mussolini himself, on June 26, 1937, in the *Popolo d'Italia*, it was declared: "In this great fight, which has brought face to face two types of civilization and two conceptions of the world, Fascist Italy has not been neutral, but has fought, and victory will also be hers." [*Bulletin of International News*, July 10, 1937.]

Again, when Santander fell, August 26, 1937, the Italian Press and Mussolini himself hailed it openly as an Italian victory.

The Italian Press published the names of the ten Italian generals who directed the fighting before Santander, and Mussolini in reply to a wire of gratitude sent to him by Franco, declared:

"I am particularly proud that the Italian Legionaries

have, during ten days of hard fighting, contributed mightily to the splendid victory of Santander, and that their contribution receives coveted recognition in your telegram. This brotherhood of arms, already close, guarantees the final victory which will liberate Spain in the Mediterranean from any menace to our common civilization." [*Times*, August 28, 1937.]

On June19, 1937, it was announced in Germany that four torpedoes had been fired at the German cruiser Leipzig whilst off Oran on June 15 and 18; the vessel had, however, not been hit. Immediately the German Government showed its hand. They were determined to endeavour to utilize the incident (if indeed it really did occur—the Spanish Government asserted that none of its submarines were at sea on June 15 and 18) to obtain joint action by Germany, Italy, France and Great Britain against the Spanish Government.

Without waiting for any inquiry, the German Government demanded that their version of the incident should be accepted and that a Note should be presented to the Valencia Government demanding an explanation, an apology, and an undertaking that there would be no repetition, and they also demanded that, in support of the Note, a joint demonstration should be made before Valencia, of units of the fleets of the four Powers. They also proposed that the Valencia Government should be required to hand over all their submarines, to be impounded in a neutral port.

Even after negotiations, the least Germany demanded was an immediate joint naval demonstration by the four Powers, leaving their other demands for subsequent discussion. Italy, of course, supported

Germany, but to their honour be it said, Great Britain and France would not agree to such an obviously unjust demand.

Thereupon Germany and also Italy withdrew from the International Naval Patrol system. They did not, however, withdraw from the Non-Intervention Committee—the latter served as too good a screen for their active intervention for them to abandon it.

When Germany and Italy withdrew from the naval patrol scheme, France and Britain proposed to fill the gap left by taking on the additional zones themselves. This proposal was supported by the U.S.S.R. and other Governments, Portugal reserved her attitude, but the German and Italian Governments objected vehemently and demanded that an entirely new system of control be initiated and on July 2, 1937, the German and Italian delegations to the Non-Intervention Committee proposed their new scheme, e.g.:

"That all interested parties should grant the two parties in Spain belligerent rights.

"That the international naval patrol system should be abandoned.

"That the rest of the present supervision system on land and sea should be maintained." [*Times*, July 3, 1937.]

These proposals were opposed by all the other delegations except the Portuguese. "The Belgian, Czechoslovak, Swedish and Russian Representatives," continued *The Times* report, "all reaffirmed their support of the Franco-British proposal to fill the gap in the naval control system by making the French

and British fleets responsible for the supervision of the whole of the Spanish coasts, with an understanding that neutral observers might be stationed in the patrolling warships."

On July 14, 1937, the British Government submitted to the other twenty-six States on the Non-Intervention Committee a new plan, since known as the "British Plan". The substance of this plan was: that instead of the Naval Patrol system, international observers should be placed in Spanish ports to carry out the duties previously performed by the Naval Patrol system; that a Commission be sent to Spain to supervise the withdrawal of vounteers; and that belligerent rights be granted to both parties when "the Non-Intervention Committee place on record their opinion that the arrangements for the withdrawal of foreign nationals are working satisfactorily and that this withdrawal has in fact made substantial progress."

The last-mentioned condition was the most unjustifiable. It was denounced by Mr. C. R. Attlee, M.P., Leader of the Opposition, in the House of Commons, July 15, 1937. He said it would be outrageous to grant belligerent rights to mutinous officers against the legitimately elected Government of Spain.

Similarly, M. Maisky on the Non-Intervention Committee also insisted that it would be contrary to tradition and law to grant belligerent rights to the Spanish insurgents.

However, the Italian, German and Portuguese representatives proposed that the question of granting belligerent rights should be discussed even before that of the withdrawal of volunteers.

In the course of a discussion on the subject at the Non-Intervention Committee, July 30, 1937, M. Maisky the Soviet Delegate, declared:

"If you desire to know where this or that Government stands with regard to genuine non-intervention, you have to ask for a straight and definite reply to the question: Are you prepared to accept the withdrawal of all foreigners from the firing line immediately and from Spain within a short specified time limit? And not the query: Are you prepared to accept the granting of belligerent rights to the Spanish Government and to General Franco."

And again at the session of the Committee on August 6, 1937, M. Maisky after pointing out that his Government accepted the main items in the British Plan, stated:

"The Soviet Government, however, cannot overlook the fact that a certain part of the British Plan dealing with belligerent rights has no connection whatever with non-intervention and is linked up quite artificially with the rest of the Plan. This part of the British Plan, moreover, if accepted, would change the whole basis of the Non-Intervention Agreement and constitute a virtual intervention in Spanish Affairs in favour of the rebels.

"Still, attaching great importance to the effective application of non-intervention and desiring to further the work of the Committee, the Soviet Government visualizes the possibility of examination at a later stage even of the part of the British Plan to which I have just referred, in the hope that an adequate solution of the matter might eventually be found."

Finally, M. Maisky put the specific and pertinent

question to the representatives of Germany, Italy and Portugal: "Were they prepared to state that their Governments agreed unconditionally to the withdrawal of all volunteers from Spain? Volunteers are the heart of the British Plan, and it is a question to which I must have an answer."

The three representatives avoided the question by declaring in effect that it had nothing to do with the British Plan.

Early in August, 1937, the Fascists resorted to a new, as they hoped, effective method of aiding Franco. Disguising their nationality submarines started to attack merchant vessels indiscriminately without warning. *The Times* in a leader, September 6, 1937, thus described these piratical acts:

"Ships which were merely using the Mediterranean as a highway to other than Spanish ports became the targets of the torpedoes of submarines, the shells of surface ships, and the bombs and machine-guns of aircraft. The *British Corporal*, a British tanker bound from the Persian Gulf to England, was attacked by aircraft off Algiers; the Russian steamer, *Timiryazev*, on passage from Cardiff to Port Said, was sunk by a submarine in the same waters; a Spanish merchantman met the same fate in Turkish territorial waters near Tenedoes; and the Russian *Blagoev*, bound for France with a cargo of asphalt, was sunk by a submarine off Skyros. Aircraft sank the Danish *Edith* and inflicted loss of life on the Italian *Mongioia*. The British *Woodford* was sunk without warning, after she had hoisted the non-intervention control flag, by two torpedoes discharged by a submarine of unknown origin. In no case were the crews given any opportunity of escape or any assistance after the destruction of their ships, nor was any previous examination of their cargoes and papers

made by boarding parties. Then came the unprovoked submarine attack on H.M.S. *Havock*, which was narrowly missed by a torpedo and retaliated with depth charges which may have caused the destruction of the offending submarine."

By a polite fiction the submarines which disguised their nationality were spoken of as "mysterious" or as of "unknown nationality". Actually, few had any doubt as to their identity, e.g., that they were Italian.

It may be remarked that, with the exception of the unproved case of the *Leipzig* (which reported that it had been attacked by a submarine, but suffered no damage), no Italian or German ship had been molested, much less sunk by submarines on the high seas.

These wanton attacks on neutral shipping in the Mediterranean at last provoked the long-suffering French Government and the complacent British National Government to take action. Here after all was not merely possible future danger to imperial interests which a Fascist victory in Spain would signify, but an immediate direct threat to naval interests in the Mediterranean.

Such a pro-Fascist paper as the *Daily Mail*, September 2, 1937, was roused and demanded that steps be taken to "unveil the identity of this marauding submarine" and to "track them down".

Said the Diplomatic Correspondent of the *Daily Telegraph*, September 3, 1937:

"There is no doubt in the minds of Ministers regarding the situation in the Mediterranean. Signor Mussolini's

declaration that he 'will not tolerate Bolshevism or anything like it' on the shores of the Mediterranean may perhaps be followed by an Anglo-French resolve not to tolerate piracy or anything like it upon Mediterranean waters."

The Fascists had overstepped the limit, hence the resolve to hold a conference of the Mediterranean and other Powers interested to devise ways and means of combating the menace of piracy in the Mediterranean, and to facilitate the participation of Italy, Nyon was chosen as the venue of the Conference instead of Geneva.

All the Mediterranean Powers except Spain, and all the Black Sea Powers, as well as Germany were invited. The invitation of Germany and the exclusion of Spain was a glaring and wholly unjustified concession to the Fascist Powers. The Soviet Union which had suffered as much if not more than any other country by these piratical attacks, knowing that it was Italian submarines which were guilty, and accustomed to call a spade a spade, sent a strong Note of protest to Italy on September 6, 1937.

The Soviet Note was attacked in many sections of the British Press because it was alleged that it might offend Italy, and as some of them put it, torpedo the Nyon Conference.

On the other hand, the *Manchester Guardian*, September 10, 1937, in the course of a leader, stated:

"It was certainly not to be expected that the blunt Russian method would lubricate discussion at Nyon, but those who have for many months suffered under the insulting make-believe of the Non-Intervention Committee

cannot but feel respect for Russia if, believing that she has convincing evidence against Italy, she practises this shocking unprecedented frankness."

And the *Daily Express*, in which common sense now and again gets the better of its isolationist and anti-Soviet prejudices, said quite frankly in its leader, September 9, 1937:

"Do not weep because Mussolini and Hitler are stopping away. If either of them had been there the conference would have come to nothing."

Foreign Socialist and "Left" opinion generally also welcomed the Soviet Note to Italy.

The U.S.S.R. accepted the invitation to the Nyon Conference, but in the course of its reply the Soviet Government stated:

"The Government of the U.S.S.R. on its part considers that the attacks of several, and in the first place Italian, warships on merchant vessels sailing under different national flags should be declared absolutely intolerable and in irreconcilable contradiction to the very elementary rules of international law and the fundamental principles of humanity. It is perfectly obvious that these aggressive actions perpetrated on the open sea routes and directed against the shipping of peaceful countries are creating a direct menace to European safety and universal peace. . . .

"Bearing in mind that in the said conference will be represented the Powers directly connected with the Mediterranean Basin, the Government of the U.S.S.R. requests the Governments of England and France, as the initiators of the Mediterranean Conference, to explain to it the grounds on which Germany, which, as is known, is not such a Power, has been invited to the Conference.

"At the same time the Government of the U.S.S.R. believes that the Government of the Spanish Republic also at this time should be called upon to participate in the Conference on September 10, both in view of the fact that Spain is a Mediterranean Power, and the more so because the interests of the Spanish Republic are violated most seriously by the aggressive actions of the piratic warships."

Italy and Germany refused the invitation to the Nyon Conference giving as an excuse the Soviet Note to Italy, at the same time suggesting that the question of the submarine attacks should be referred to the Non-Intervention Committee. Evidently so well satisfied were Italy and Germany with the result of the endless, practically fruitless talk on that Committee that they were even prepared to sit at the same table there with the U.S.S.R. whose presence they averred they could not tolerate at Nyon.

However, for once, France and Great Britain stood firm, and the Nyon Conference met on September 10, 1937, as previously arranged; Italy, Germany and Albania were absent.

Determined to obtain speedy practical results the Conference went to work in a business-like way and by the evening of September 11 agreement was reached.

In the course of a strong speech at the Nyon Conference, M. Litvinov said:

"I must express my regret at the absence of one undoubtedly Mediterranean State, the Government of which is recognized by all the States represented here, which has suffered most from the piracy we are here to

discuss, and against which this piracy is directed first and foremost, namely, the Republic of Spain. I consider that it is not yet too late to fill this gap; and thereby to add both to the significance of the initiative shown in calling the Conference and to the authority of the Conference itself.

"The facts of the piracy cannot be denied. The waves of the Mediterranean are engulfing one commercial vessel after another. Vast wealth is perishing, human lives are being lost. It has been exactly ascertained that the piratical activities in these cases are carried on by submarines with their names painted over, with their national flag concealed, with their crews in a disguised uniform. We thus are faced with a typical case of State piracy. Everyone knows the object of this piracy, and what State is pursuing that object: its name is on everyone's lips, even though it may not be pronounced in this hall. But those States which have directly suffered, or may suffer from the piracy cannot be denied the right of pronouncing that name. . . .

"When we speak of piracy, we should not only think of the activity of submarines in the Mediterranean. In the term 'piracy' should be included also the activities of surface vessels and aeroplanes which have held up and sunk several dozens in the Atlantic. The issue is one of safeguarding freedom of navigation in every sea."

On the initiative of M. Litvinov, supported by M. Delbos, the preamble of the "Arrangement" as the Agreement was officially designated made clear that no belligerent rights were conceded to either side in Spain. Briefly, the Arrangement provided that the naval forces of the participating Powers would counteract, and if possible, destroy, any submarine which attacked (contrary to the rules of international law as laid down by the London Naval Treaty of

1930) merchant ships not belonging to either party of the Spanish conflict.

They would take the same action in regard to any submarine encountered in the vicinity of a position where a merchant vessel had just been attacked in circumstances which gave valid ground for the belief that the submarine was guilty of the attack in question.

The British and French fleets were to police the high seas of the Mediterranean (Italy being offered the Tyrrhenian Sea); the other participating countries undertook to look after their own territorial waters.

The Arrangement undoubtedly had weak points. Litvinov drew attention to some of them in the following passages of his closing speech at the Nyon Conference:

"I am particularly glad that the Conference took our observations into account and registered in the agreement, in a form permitting of no misinterpretation, the refusal to recognize that any one enjoys belligerent rights and consequently the right to stop commercial vessels on the high seas, still less to sink them. We desire, it is true, that all such illegalities should be immediately penalized, even though the regulations laid down by international conventions intended for war-time might be observed. The reply made to me was that there could not be the same punishment for a thief and a murderer—that, as a matter of fact, the sinking of commercial vessels by submarines was in practice impossible if these rules were observed, and that if, nevertheless, piracy did not cease in spite of the present agreement, further measures would be discussed.

"I am prepared to be satisfied by this reply for the moment, I regret that in spite of our opposition the commercial vessels of the Spanish Government have been

excluded from the scope of the protection scheme because, as it was explained to me, such protection might be interpreted as intervention in the Spanish conflict.

"In order not to complicate the work of the Conference I abstained from comparing the scrupulousness with the methods of non-intervention practised by other States not represented here."

After saying that the Soviet Union would have liked to travel a few stations further along the road that they had followed together at Nyon, M. Litvinov said in conclusion:

"With you, gentlemen, the Soviet delegation has been anxious for the success of this Conference, the political importance of which is far wider than its possible practical results.

"At a time when aggression, international lawlessness, adventurist impudence have been accustomed to success, any action combating these phenomena which takes the form not merely of discussion, protests, and declarations but of practical steps must be particularly welcomed, while to-day we have before us an international agreement with very material backing."

And now that agreement was reached the consensus of opinion was that the U.S.S.R., so far from torpedoing the Nyon Conference, had been one of the most active forces ensuring its success. Said the Nyon correspondent of *The Times*: "M. Litvinov's part in the private discussion was, in fact, wholly businesslike and helpful." [September 13, 1937.]

And the *Manchester Guardian* Nyon correspondent, discussing the Soviet Note to Italy and its effect on the Conference, said:

"The prevailing opinion is that by so doing the Russian Government rendered a great service, for if Italy and Germany or either of them had attended the Conference it is doubtful if any agreement would have been arrived at and certain that if one had been arrived at it would have been much less satisfactory than the Nyon agreement." September 15, 1937.

Subsequently Italy made an attempt to hold up the Agreement by expressing her willingness to discuss her participation in the scheme. But the other Powers stood firm for the immediate application of the scheme whether Italy adhered to it or not and the result was a speedy cessation of the piratical submarine attacks in the Mediterranean. Subsequently Italy shared in the task of patrolling the Mediterranean trade routes.

Unfortunately, the firm attitude taken up on the question of submarine piracy was not maintained in regard to other questions. For instance, instead of carrying out their threat to take over the naval patrol in the zones vacated by Italy and Germany, France and Great Britain, on September 17, 1937, discontinued their own patrol in the zones assigned to them. Thus, the only part of the original control scheme put into operation at midnight on April 19–20, which remained was the provision for embarkation at specified ports of neutral observers by all ships flying the flag of non-intervention countries and bound for Spanish ports.

In the meantime nothing was done by the Non-Intervention Committee to bring the British Plan or a modification of it into operation and at the meeting of the Sub-Committee on October 16, 1937,

M. Corbin, on behalf of France, submitted a new plan which was a slight modification of the British Plan (which would seem to have been placed in cold storage). The French Plan envisaged the granting of certain belligerent rights to both sides in Spain after withdrawal had gone some way. The British Government supported the French Plan and the representatives of both the French and British Governments declared that their Governments would resume "full liberty of action" if no agreement was reached.

The German and Italian representatives returned non-committal replies. M. Maisky promised to submit the Plan to his Government. He stressed that the situation had been intolerable for months and continued:

"Non-intervention was from the very beginning violated by certain Powers, but lately, more especially during the last six or seven months, it has become a complete farce. Violations of non-intervention have finally reached such dimensions and have acquired such a flagrant nature that they have become an international scandal of the first magnitude."

M. Maisky protested vigorously against the delaying tactics of the German and Italian Governments and stated that the Soviet Government was willing to consider the question of the granting of belligerent rights when all foreign volunteers had been withdrawn.

The Sub-Committee reassembled on October 19, 1937 and again the attitude of the German and Italian delegates proved beyond a doubt that their aim was simply to waste time on the Committee

whilst their Governments went on with their intervention. Thus Count Grandi opened with a lengthy appeal to substitute the British for the French Plan, a plea manifestly out of order, as Mr. Eden, who presided, pointed out. Moreover, the Italians supported by the Germans returned to the demand that belligerent rights should be accorded before any volunteers had been withdrawn.

M. Maisky, participating in the discussion, once again showed that so-called non-intervention had worked exclusively in favour of the Spanish insurgents. He considered that the adoption of the French Plan (which was the one under discussion) would bring about no improvement in the position, at the same time he stated:

"I am authorized by my Government to declare that it regrets that, in view of the foregoing, it cannot take upon itself in the slightest degree the responsibility for such a policy which has already proved to a sufficient extent its worthlessness, and which at the same time has detrimentally and iniquitously reacted upon the interests of the Spanish people and its legitimate Government. If the French, British, and other Governments consider it necessary to continue this policy and still entertain some belief in the possibility of its success, the Soviet Government does not intend to create for these other Governments any difficulties with regard to such a policy, but declines any responsibility for same.

"In accordance with this, the Soviet Government reiterates its already declared consent to the evacuation in the shortest possible time of all non-Spanish elements participating in the military operations in Spain."

Italian insistence on the granting of belligerent

rights (which would, of course, have been of advantage to Franco) before the withdrawal of volunteers brought the Non-Intervention Committee to the verge of definite collapse.

When the Committee met the following afternoon (October 20, 1937) the Italians had thought again.

Quite naturally they did not want the Non-Intervention Committee to die, for so long as it remained in existence the embargo on imports to Spanish Government territory from Britain and France was fairly effective, whereas imports into insurgent territory from Italy, Germany, and Portugal went on almost unhindered in actual practice whatever the decisions of the Committee.

Accordingly, the Italians climbed down somewhat. Count Grandi was ready to discuss withdrawal of volunteers before the granting of belligerent rights and again suggested that there should be "a preliminary and immediate withdrawal of volunteers in equal number from each side."

Thus was proved once again the efficacy of a firm attitude by Britain and France. But it was obvious that the Italian suggestion of equal "token" withdrawals was grossly unfair to Government Spain, and M. Maisky, on behalf of the U.S.S.R. protested vigorously against it.

During subsequent meetings of the Committee it had been proposed by the Italians to send commissions to establish the number of foreign combatants on each side. Anxious to get a move on in the work of the Committee, however slight, the Soviet representative agreed to the immediate despatch of such commissions, but in order to avoid unnecessary delay he

demanded that a time limit—as short as possible—should be set for the presentation of the report of the commissions.

However, evidently afraid of what these commissions might report, M. Grandi, on October 22, blandly informed the Committee that the Italian Government, whilst approving the appointment of commissions to establish the number of volunteers on both sides, would not consider itself bound by the findings of the Committee. No wonder the *News Chronicle*, in the course of a leader on October 28, 1937, said:

"This turn of events is bound to make statesmen ask if there is any use in negotiating with Italy on this subject. Was Italy sincere, or was she not, in making Wednesday's offer? The fact that Count Grandi's words had barely died away before he contradicted himself in a vital respect can hardly fail to deepen the suspicion that Italy is seeking only to gain time, and has no serious intention of withdrawing her troops from Spain."

Count Grandi also manifested the real purpose of Italian participation in the Non-Intervention Committee by again insisting that control over the Spanish frontier along the Pyrenees should be restored immediately, but could see no reason at all why the coasts of Spain should be controlled!

Naturally, via the Pyrenees, the Spanish Government might get some arms and supplies, whereas the Italian Navy could see to it that the Government should get no arms and Franco all he required via the marine ports.

It should be noted that in connection with the

withdrawal of Germany and Italy from the Naval Patrol system, Portugal on June 26, 1937, had refused to maintain the facilities for the control over her frontiers and France had countered on July 13, 1937, by closing down control over her Pyrenees frontier, although it was declared that neither men nor supplies for Spain (Government Spain, of course) would be permitted to cross the French frontier.

During the long discussions that followed in the Non-Intervention Committee and its Sub-Committee, the Soviet Government insisted throughout that the question of granting belligerent rights had absolutely nothing to do with that of stopping intervention in the Spanish civil war by outside Powers, and that the withdrawal of foreign combatants should be in proportion to the number actually engaged on the two sides. As for the findings of the Commissions for establishing the number of combatants on each side, the Soviet Government insisted that all the members of the Non-Intervention Committee should agree to accept their findings as a basis for the ratio in which the withdrawals from the two sides should proceed.

However, when in an Anglo-French proposal on the subject of evacuation of foreign combatants, etc., the question of belligerent rights was included, M. Maisky, in order to facilitate agreement declared:

"We do not believe in the possibility of genuine non-intervention in the present circumstances, but you do believe in it; well, give it another trial. We cannot take responsibility for such an attempt, but we will not put obstacles in your way. We will not kill the British Plan by casting a negative vote, although certain parts of this Plan are unacceptable to us, but we will step aside and

abstain from voting on the controversial portions of the Plan, giving our blessing to the rest of it. Thus the door is not bolted. It is, in fact, open.

"Belligerent rights were completely irrelevant to non-intervention, but the Soviet Government might be prepared to grant them even before a 100 per cent evacuation of foreigners had taken place provided that the bulk had already been withdrawn and it was clear that there would be no renewal of intervention. But they reserved for themselves the right to decide whether, at a given moment, these conditions had been fulfilled."

Finally, on November 4, 1937, a lengthy resolution was adopted, which provided for the appointment of commissions to establish the numbers of foreign combatants on each side, the withdrawal of such combatants, "in accordance with the proportions of the numbers of non-Spanish nationals serving on each side", the restoration of observation on the Franco-Spanish frontier and Portuguese-Spanish frontier "simultaneously with the adoption of measures to strengthen the sea observation scheme" on the basis of the Van Dulm-Hemming report on a date "to be determined by the Non-Intervention Committee and which should shortly precede the commencement of the withdrawal of non-Spanish nationals from Spain". The resolution also provided for the conditional grant of belligerent rights when a substantial proportion of foreign combatants had been withdrawn.

Although disliking intensely some parts of this resolution, M. Maisky, at the session of the Committee, November 16, 1937, on behalf of his Government, declared:

"The Soviet Government in order to facilitate still further the Practical work of the Non-Intervention Committee for the withdrawal of foreign combatants from Spain, accepts the resolution of November 4 *in toto* without any reservations whatsoever leaving, along with the other Governments, its interpretation of the term 'substantial withdrawal' until the time when this question will come up for consideration in the Committee.

"I hope, Mr. Chairman, that my statement will assist you in guiding the work of the Committee towards a speedy realization of the withdrawal of foreign combatants from Spain."

However, the unanimous acceptance of the November 4 resolution by the Non-Intervention Committee was by no means synonymous with its honest application. In January, 1938, the Portuguese, Germans and Italians demanded that control on the Spanish land frontiers should be restored immediately on the departure of the Commission entrusted with the counting of the number of "volunteers" on both sides.

It was evident that although the amount of arms received by the Spanish Government via the French frontier was infinitely less than that received from Italy, Germany, and Portugal by the insurgents, the pro-Francoites feared that even this infiltration of arms to the Spanish Government might upset their cherished plan of a Franco triumph before the end of the summer of 1938.

Characteristically, at the session of the Non-Intervention Committee, March 31, 1938, the British Government played into the hands of the Fascist Powers by suggesting a "compromise", e.g., that

control of the land frontiers should be restored a few days after the arrival of the Commission on Spanish soil and should only again be raised if the withdrawal of volunteers had not actually started on the fifty-sixth day after the evacuation plan had been accepted by the Non-Intervention Committee.

This precious compromise would have meant a present of nearly two months to the insurgents to obtain all the arms they required, via the sea frontiers and clandestinely also via Portugal, whilst the Government would have been starved of arms at the most critical period of the struggle for its existence.

Another point concerned the method of counting volunteers for the purpose of their withdrawal. The U.S.S.R. had all along insisted that the withdrawal of volunteers should be by categories, so that it should be impossible for the Italians and Germans to withdraw their least valuable (to Franco) infantry, leaving intact their aviation, artillery, tanks, etc., forces with the insurgents.

This proposal, too had been adopted unanimously, but following the subsequent objection of Germany and Italy, Lord Plymouth, at the session of the Non-Intervention Committee, March 31, 1938, expressed the readiness of the British Government to adopt the demands of the Fascist countries and to agree that withdrawal should not necessarily be in accordance with categories. Both the British "compromises" were opposed by the Soviet representative, M. Maisky. The French, Swedish, Belgian, and Czechoslovak delegates gave no definite reply, but stated that they must consult their Governments.

Both the above points came up again for discussion on May 26, 1938, and the Soviet Delegate again fought strenuously for fair play for the Spanish Government. In the course of a speech on the restoration of observers on the land frontiers, M. Kagan, the Soviet Delegate, declared:

"In regard to the new version of paragraph R.8, which contemplates the timing of the restoration of observation on the land frontiers with the commencement of the count of non-Spanish nationals in Spain by the Counting Commissions, I am bound to say the following:

"The resolution of November 4, unanimously adopted by all the Governments represented on the Committee, explicitly provided that the date of restoration of observation on the land frontiers should 'shortly precede the commencement of the withdrawal of non-Spanish nationals from Spain.'

"Now the subject is revived again and we are invited to reverse the decision of November 4 and to agree that the date of restoration of land control should coincide with the date of commencement of the counting of volunteers.

"In the view of my Government the commencement of the counting of volunteers does not, by any means, predetermine that actual evacuation will in fact take place. We are invited, irrespective of whether evacuation will actually take place or not, to agree here and now to the closing of the frontier in order to cut off the Republican Government of Spain from any supplies while at the same time General Franco, due to the effectiveness and weakness of the sea control, will be receiving everything he needs.

"We, therefore, cannot take part in the strangulation of the Republican Government, and it is not for this purpose that the Non-Intervention Committee has been created."

Similarly in regard to the method of withdrawal, the Soviet Delegate fought hard for the adoption of a plan fair to both sides. In the course of a closely reasoned speech, M. Kagan said:

"The Soviet Government has always considered that the first important task of the Counting Commissions is not only to establish the total number of non-Spanish nationals fighting on the side of the Spanish Government and of the insurgents, but also to establish the number of non-Spanish nationals serving in each of the main categories of the armed forces (for instance: artillery, infantry, cavalry, tank formations, machine-gun units, military engineers, signal corps, air force, navy, etc.).

"The establishment of the total numbers, as well as the number of non-Spanish nationals in each of the various categories is essential in order to determine the necessary proportions in accordance with which the evacuation of non-Spanish nationals from the side of the Spanish Government and of the insurgents should be carried out in a manner which would prevent any advantage to one or the other side, and would, at the same time, provide for the equalization of sacrifice during the process of evacuation.

"This view was shared by other members of the Committee as well as by all the experts who have been engaged in examining the technical aspects of the problem of evacuation of volunteers, and was the basis on which all the discussions in the Chairman's Sub-Committee on this subject were carried on. It is only recently that the German and the Italian representatives have intimated at one of the meetings of the Chairman's Sub-Committee that they would prefer to have the classification and evacuation by categories abolished. I do not need to dwell upon my understanding of the reasons which may have prompted them to suggest that."

The desire of the Soviet Government to give some reality to the Non-Intervention scheme can also be seen from the speech made at the same session on the Sea Observation scheme. Here again the original proposals were toned down to oblige the Fascist Powers. After denouncing the suggested alterations, M. Kagan declared:

"No amount of verbiage will alter the fact that since the abolition of the naval patrol, the sea part of the Observation Scheme has been rendered worthless and has lost its signifiance even as a relative deterrent to violations of the undertakings of the Non-Intervention Agreement. The actualities of the situation since the abolition of the naval patrol reinforces still more the truth of this contention.

"The positive suggestions contained in the Van Dulm-Hemming Report might have been of some value as an improvement to the Sea Observation Scheme provided the very foundation of it had not been tampered with and destroyed by the abolition of the naval patrol, but, in the altered circumstances, could never be a proper and effective substitute for the latter. This has been realized not only by the British Government, which, in its plan of July 14, 1937, suggested to replace the naval patrol by observers in Spanish ports, but also by the Non-Intervention Committee as a whole which, in its resolution of November 4, 1937, unanimously agreed to accept all the nine points of the said plan, including the one suggesting the substitution of observers in Spanish ports for the naval patrol."

In regard to the withdrawal of volunteers it was finally decided that the side found by the Commission to have the smaller number of foreign volunteers should evacuate 10,000, while the other side should

evacuate a proportionately larger number. The Soviet Delegate fought hard to make the basic number 20,000 in order to make the withdrawal more rapid and substantial, but in order not to obstruct at least some progress finally accepted the figure of 10,000.

Similarly in the hope of getting something positive done by the Committee, the Soviet Delegate, M. Kagan, on June 2, 1938, finally accepted the, as he described it, "in some respects emasculated" British proposal to count foreign volunteers in accordance with only four main categories. At this session of the Committee, the Soviet Delegate accepted the French proposal to restore International Control over the Portuguese and French-Spanish frontiers once the Commissions to count the volunteers had started their work in Spain. M. Kagan on this point declared:

"Further, the Soviet Government does not object to the suggested date of restoration of control provided that if, after the expiration of thirty days plus ten days' grace, the actual withdrawal of 'volunteers' does not commence, the control will automatically lapse and no further postponements will be granted under any pretext. The Soviet Government must, however, categorically insist on the simultaneous enforcement of an effective control on the sea as well as on the land. The British proposal dealing with this most important subject does not provide any guarantee whatever for such an effective sea control. That it is so has been clearly shown by me in my statement on this subject at the previous meeting.

"The effectiveness of the sea control, in the opinion of the Soviet Government, can only be secured by the permanent presence of international observers in all the Spanish ports where unloading of cargoes and disembarkation of troops is possible. The Soviet Government

must, therefore, maintain and reiterate its proposal that international observers be permanently stationed in Spanish ports."

Another characteristic side light is thrown by the way it was proposed to meet the expenditure on evacuation.

The cost of the evacuation was calculated to amount to some £2,000,000, of which £750,000, estimated as the cost of transporting the "volunteers" home by sea, according to the proposal before the Committee, would be borne by the countries to which they belonged. The rest, from £1,000,000 to £1,500,000, the estimated cost of the work of the commissions of investigation and the maintenance of the "volunteers" whilst awaiting evacuation and their transportation to the coast, it was proposed should be borne by Great Britain, France, Germany, Italy and the U.S.S.R.

On the face of it this certainly seemed an iniquitous proposal.

No one would perhaps question that the expenses incurred by the Commission should be borne jointly by the Powers, although, in view of the fact that such a Commission was only made necessary by the flagrant violation by the German and Italian Governments of the international agreement for non-intervention in Spain, this really signified that other countries had to bear expenditure caused by the bad faith of the Fascist Powers. But that the non-Fascist Powers should actually have to bear a part of the expenditure of evacuating the German and Italian battalions after these had caused havoc among Spanish men, women

and children, to say nothing of murders of British seamen and the sinking of British ships, was simply to put a premium upon Fascist lawlessness and violence. We can only marvel at the light-hearted way, without a single expression of the injustice of such an arrangement, in which Lord Plymouth agreed that Britain would bear her share of these expenses.

The Soviet Government agreed to bear their share of the necessary administrative expenditure of the Commission organizing and supervising the withdrawal of volunteers, but when this subject was discussed on May 31, 1938, the Soviet Delegate said:

"In the opinion of the Soviet Government it would certainly be illogical and inequitable to burden other countries with financial responsibilities in regard to a very large body of so-called volunteers who happen to be in Spain through no fault or deed of these countries and thereby relieve the countries directly concerned of their responsibilities. In fact, it would mean penalising the overwhelming majority of the European countries in order to compensate those who have carried on, in a most flagrant manner, intervention in Spain against the Republican Government.

"The Soviet Government is certainly not prepared to pay for the maintenance in and transportation within and from Spain of the so-called Italian and German volunteers who are actually military units, and in Spain by order and with the connivance of their respective Governments. I am sure that other Governments will also show little enthusiasm for the prospect of having to carry the expense of feeding, maintaining, and transporting this large body of so-called volunteers.

"The Soviet Government is, therefore, of the opinion

that all the expenses involved in this section of the problem shall be borne by the respective Governments in proportion to the number of their nationals found in and evacuated from Spain, the Spanish possessions and the Spanish zone of Morocco."

At the meeting of the Sub-Committee, June 28, 1938, the Soviet Delegate, M. Kagan, gave an excellent summing-up of the activities of the Non-Intervention Committee in the following paragraphs:

"Scarcely any important decisions of the Committee survived and were not changed or annulled at the insistence of the interventionist Powers. . . .

"What was the fate of the comprehensive sea and land control scheme which was brought into force on April 9, 1937? Hardly a few months had elapsed before the interventionist Powers, by deliberate action, created a situation calculated to explode the sea part of the observation scheme, and the Committee, instead of frustrating this attempt acquiesced, and by abolishing the naval patrol rendered the sea observation scheme absolutely worthless, thus creating the circumstances desired by the interventionist Powers which they have exploited to the full to supply General Franco with vast quantities of arms and troops.

"What was the fate of the British Plan which was unanimously adopted by all the participating Governments on November 4, 1937? Hardly a few weeks passed when, under pressure of the interventionist Powers, one after another of the major component parts of the Plan began to be changed and emasculated: the proposal about observers in Spanish ports to replace the naval patrol was completely dropped and an innocuous paragraph inserted, very convenient for the interventionist Powers from the point of view of continuing or even increasing their inter-

vention in Spain; the decision about the date of restoration of land control was, under pressure of the interventionist Powers, completely changed and advanced to suit their designs; the decision about the counting and evacuation of the 'volunteers' by categories was not to the liking of the interventionist Powers and the Committee, with a speed deserving a better cause, hastened to suggest the abolition of categories.

"... During all this time considerable amounts of money were spent on the maintenance of observers on ships which, as a result of the whole sea observation scheme having been rendered worthless by the abolition of naval patrol, was spent uselessly."

M. Litvinov summed up the Soviet attitude towards the policy of so-called non-intervention in a strong speech in Geneva, May 11, 1938, in support of M. del Vayo's appeal to the League for the abandonment of the "non-intervention" policy in Spain. Amongst other things, M. Litvinov said:

"In spite of non-intervention we are now witnessing a war on a rather large scale; not an internal struggle, but a war between Spain and two other countries. And this policy may still engender future wars on an even larger scale.

"I believe the conception of non-intervention was faulty from the very beginning, in that both parties in the conflict were regarded as sides having a claim to equal right and to equal treatment. That policy was conceived, I would remind you, at the moment when the legal Spanish Government had control of nearly the whole territory of Spain, with the exception of a very small portion which had been seized by certain rebel generals and officers with the help of troops brought over from Morocco, and aeroplanes imported from other countries. But, in fact, there

were no such sides with equal rights. There was one side, the legal Spanish Government, which had the right to buy arms, food, anything necessary for the country; on the other side, were some rebels who had to be dealt with, not only by the Spanish Government, but by the rest of the world, as rebels upsetting the peace of Spain, and trying to upset the peace of the world.

"However, we were unable to persuade other Governments to follow a different policy, and we had to agree to a policy of non-intervention, into which we entered with very slight hope that perhaps it might at least bring about some real result. . . .

"If it were dependent upon its views, upon its desires, and upon its propositions the League of Nations would have fulfilled all its obligations to one of its members, Spain, and would have dealt with the question itself in a proper way, and it is not my Government who would be an obstacle to giving justice now to the demand formulated here by the Spanish representative."

However, when the special motion requesting the Powers to abandon the policy of non-intervention was put to the Council, Britain, France, Poland and Rumania voted against; the U.S.S.R. and Spain in favour. The other nine Members of the Council abstained—among these were New Zealand, whose delegate, Mr. Jordan, had spoken warmly in favour of M. del Vayo's plea, and China. These delegates stated that they were obliged to abstain because they had had no time to consult their Governments.

The result of the voting on that occasion was generally regarded as "a moral triumph" for Spain. Unfortunately this moral triumph did not stop German and Italian bombs from devastating Spanish towns and killing Spanish women and children.

The attitude of the U.S.S.R. to the activities of the Non-Intervention Committee was also put very clearly in a speech by M. Litvinov in Leningrad, June 25, 1938, in which he declared:

"From the very outset we did not have excessive faith in the signatures of the Fascist countries which openly mock at paper obligations and treaties, and hence we introduced into the Committee a proposal to guarantee effective control with the help of the French and British navies. I am convinced that the adoption of our proposal would not only have put an end to the war in Spain, without arousing any international complications, but would have brought a shattering defeat to the given aggression and to aggression in general.

"Unfortunately, those States whose interests, as I have pointed out before, are most threatened by the Italo-German intervention in Spain, preferred the tactics of conniving with the aggressors, and took the course of endless concessions to them. The aggressors do not wish such a control, then such a control is cancelled; they propose another system of control more advantageous to them, and this system is adopted. They demand the rights of a belligerent for Franco, and these rights are promised him.

"Under such conditions the Committee not only did not in the slightest degree succeed in ensuring non-intervention but it is listing more and more to Franco's side. Our role in the Committee now resolves itself to attempts to straightening out this list to the best of our ability and as far as possible, and at least to prevent the intervention of the Committee itself in Spanish affairs on Franco's behalf."

Finally, on July 5, 1938, the Committee adopted

a comprehensive resolution with a seven part annex laying down the details for counting the number of foreign combatants, the methods, financing, etc., of their withdrawal. The Governments also undertook to refuse permission to anyone to depart for Spain without giving a pledge not to engage in propaganda.

With regard to the granting of belligerent rights the resolution stated:

"The participating Powers agree that the International Committee shall have the authority to place on record their opinion that 'the arrangements for the withdrawal of foreign nationals are working satisfactorily, and that this withdrawal has, in fact, made substantial progress,' and to request the Chairman to notify both Spanish parties that each of the Government parties to the Non-Intervention Agreement recognizes that both of the parties possess a status which justifies them in exercising belligerent rights at sea in the manner indicated in Part 5 of the present document, when 10,000 volunteers have been evacuated from whichever party the Joint Commission find to have the smaller number of foreign volunteers, and consequently *when a proportionately larger number of foreign volunteers have been similarly evacuated from the party found by the Joint Commission in the report referred to above to have the larger number of foreign volunteers.*"

The latter paragraph is particularly important, and we have italicized it in view of the attempts made subsequently to regard the withdrawal of 10,000 volunteers by the Italians as providing a basis for the granting of belligerent rights.

The resolution also contained a paragraph in which the participating Governments agreed in principle on a system of air observation over the Spanish frontiers.

The text of the plan providing for the proportionate withdrawal of foreign combatants at a fixed rate under the supervision of an international commission on each side, and for the recognition of limited belligerent rights as soon as 10,000 combatants had left the side found to have the smaller number, was published, July 11, 1938. On July 26, the Spanish Republican Government, whilst criticizing some of the arrangements as unfair, nevertheless accepted it.

Franco, on the other hand, was in no hurry to reply. When at length he did answer on August 16, 1938, he accepted the figure 10,000 for withdrawal, but rejected the proviso of the proportional withdrawal of foreign volunteers. Moreover, he persisted in his former advocation of the withdrawal of an equal number of foreign volunteers "as the sole practicable procedure".

Further, he made any withdrawal dependent on the immediate grant of belligerent rights "in all fulness and not subject to conditions".

Franco further demanded the unconditional permanent closing of the land frontiers and rejected the proposed system of inspection in ports and the proposals for air observation.

No doubt in order to make it somewhat easier for Mr. Chamberlain to accept the rejection of practically the whole of the Plan which Britain had sponsored, Franco concluded his Note with a high sounding affirmation which really had nothing to do with the actual subject. He declared:

"National Spain . . . does not consent, and will never consent to the slightest mortgage on its soil, or on its economic life, and that it will defend at all times to the

last handful its territory, its protectorates, and its colonies, if anyone dares to make an attempt against them."

It is characteristic that Franco's reply was described both by the German and Italian press as "very conciliatory".

There the matter rested.

Franco, having rejected the Plan for the evacuation of foreign volunteers which the Non-Intervention Committee had drafted after so many weeks of discussion—what was to be done? The plain man would have said seeing that non-intervention had proved a pure myth, that it had merely become a blind for one-sided "intervention" by Italy and Germany on behalf of the Spanish insurgents, that the farce should be ended and that Franco should receive the one reply which might perhaps have made him revise his attitude towards the above-mentioned plan, e.g., Republican Spain should be granted the right to which it was entitled under international law, to purchase arms abroad for her defence. But such a solution would have been altogether too direct and too simple—above all it would not have met with approval by Germany and Italy and others who favoured Franco; accordingly resort was had to more delay.

Lord Plymouth, Chairman of the Non-Intervention Committee, promulgated an ingenious new idea for delaying action, viz., that Major Hemming, the Secretary of the Committee, should go to Burgos (and also to Valencia) to "explain" the plan. Really one might think what one likes of Franco's brutality and capacities as a soldier, but not his worst enemy

would accuse him of being such a nit-wit as to have been unable to understand the plan after having studied it for a couple of months. And if anything further were necessary to prove the anti-Spanish Government bias of the proposers of this precious scheme it will be found in the fact that in the memorandum submitted by Lord Plymouth to the other participants of the Non-Intervention Committee, the Spanish Government's acceptance of the Plan (providing it was applied without delay) and Franco's rejection were placed on an equality.

"Both replies," said the memorandum, "have raised a number of objections and criticisms which cannot be satisfactorily dealt with by correspondence."

The Soviet Government protested against this attitude, and also against the plan of sending Mr. Hemming on any commission of elucidation. However, in spite of the Soviet opposition, Mr. Hemming was sent on his mission to Burgos. As might have been expected, this "Mission" gave no positive results, heartless air raids on women and children in towns of no military importance and on British ships proceeded without cessation.

On September 21, 1938, the Spanish Republican Government announced its decision to withdraw immediately all foreign combatants from the ranks of its forces, and to ask the League to supervise the withdrawal. Dr. Negrin said they had thus refuted insinuations that they desired to provoke a general conflagration, an impertinent accusation deserving only to be ignored. The withdrawal would apply to all foreigners, including those who had acquired Spanish nationality since July 16, 1936.

In order to obviate any possible accusation that the evacuation of volunteers was not being carried out honestly, the Spanish Government requested the League of Nations to send a neutral commission to supervise the withdrawal. But even here an attempt was made by a number of delegates to side-track the subject by urging that it should be submitted to the Non-Intervention Committee. When the matter was discussed at the Political Committee of the League on September 29, 1938, M. Litvinov warmly supported the request of the Spanish Government and made in the words of the Geneva correspondent of the *Daily Telegraph*, "a fighting speech, in which he roundly denounced the failure of the London Non-Intervention Committee to do anything except hinder the supply of arms, munitions and foodstuffs to the legitimate Government of Spain."

M. Litvinov, amongst other things, said:

"One argument ought to carry conviction with those three delegations, an argument in fashion and in high honour in circles which were friendly to the Governments which those delegations represented and with which they collaborated—the right of self-determination of peoples. It was a democratic principle, one of the watchwords of the Russian Revolution, and by no means despised—when it served their purpose—by those who, at that very moment perhaps, were imposing their will upon the democracies of Europe.

"The Spanish people too were fighting for the right of self-determination, for its right to be master in its own house, for its right to set up the internal régime it pleased, for its right to have its own independent foreign policy, answering to the interests and ideals of the Spanish people,

for its right to dispose of its natural resources and its foreign trade. The purpose of armed foreign intervention in Spain was to challenge those rights. Those responsible for intervention had admitted as much. One of them had declared that he would not tolerate the establishment in Spain of an internal régime which did not answer to his own ideology and political interests. Another had declared he was intervening in Spain in order to impose upon the latter a commercial policy to answer his own economic interests. . . ."

"Despite the crying difference in the character of the volunteers on the two sides, the Spanish Government had made a noble and self-sacrificing declaration proclaiming that it was ready and determined to evacuate the volunteers on the Government side. Such a decision could only come from a Government relying on the boundless loyalty of its people and convinced of its strength and of the ultimate triumph of its just cause. All it asked was that the League should verify the evacuation of those volunteers. Could the League go so far now as to refuse even that request?"

After enumerating the failures of the Non-Intervention Committee, M. Litvinov declared:

"If the Non-Intervention Committee had anything to boast of, it was that it had genuinely interfered with the supplies for the legitimate Republican army and with the provision of food for the civil population in the territory occupied by the latter. The sea routes to rebel territory were controlled by no one, and the rebels and interventionists could and did receive all that they required by those and other routes, whereas most of the sea routes to Republican Spain were blockaded and the solitary land frontier was closed. The London Committee had throughout displayed an inclination to meet every possible demand of the rebels and the States which supported them, ignor-

ing the interests of the Republicans and how far might it not have gone along that road if the Soviet brake had not been applied in the Committee?"

Litvinov therefore found it quite natural that the Spanish Government preferred to deal with the League of Nations rather than the Non-Intervention Committee.

Finally, the Council of the League to which the question was referred agreed to the request of the Spanish Government, and on October 17, 1938, the League Commission for verifying the withdrawal of foreign combatants from Republican Spain arrived in Barcelona.

Early in October, 1938, Italy decided to withdraw 10,000 of the Italian troops who had served 18 months in Spain. This repatriation, Franco declared, would remove all reasons for withholding belligerent rights from him. The Italian Press also insisted that this "unilateral" (?) repatriation would provide Great Britain with an opportunity of bringing the Anglo-Italian agreement into force.

They evidently knew their Chamberlain and that he was waiting merely for *excuses* however weak and untenable, to come to terms with Italy at the expense of democracy in Spain. Needless to say, the removal of 10,000 weary Italian troops could not be considered as a real factor in reaching a settlement of the Spanish question; the more so since there was no guarantee that they would not be replaced by fresh levies and there was no promise that there would be a withdrawal of Italian arms, ammunition, aeroplanes, pilots and technicians.

As regards Franco's proud boast that he would not tolerate "a mortgage on Spanish soil" it may be remarked that Italy was hardly spending Italian money and lives merely because of Mussolini's love for Franco—she would require something in return. To what an extent Italy already regarded Spanish territory as, to put it mildly, within its orbit—and made no secret of it too—can be seen from the fact that when in June, 1938, the Spanish Government, goaded by the brutal air raids by the rebels on open cities and defenceless civilians, declared that they might be forced to take reprisals, particularly against the enemy air bases, the Italian papers at once raised a hullabaloo as though the Spanish Government had threatened to bomb Rome itself and—unkind cut at Mr. Chamberlain—they threatened immediate counter-action, "not with diplomatic notes of protest, but with guns", and they gave warning that they would take vengeance if the Spanish Government raided Majorca! Majorca, which is Spanish territory, where the Italian aeroplanes had no right to be at all.

The Times diplomatic correspondent put the position very unmistakably:

"Many foreign diplomatists here were surprised at the week-end references in the Italian Press—and, even more, in the German Press—to what was called the Italian determination to defend 'Italian interests' in Majorca. It was felt to be particularly unfortunate that the German Press should beat the big drum in a question which directly touches the Anglo-Italian Agreement, in view of the formal Italian assurances that no such interests are sought." [*Times*, June 28, 1938.]

The "diplomatic notes" so slightingly referred to by the Italian Press was a dig at the numerous protests which had been sent by the British Government to Franco against the continued bombing of British ships by his, or rather, by Italian planes.

In the desire of the British "National" Government to come to an understanding with Fascist Italy, they had not scrupled to betray the immediate interests of British shippers, not to speak of the lives of British seamen.

Since April, 1938, in particular, widespread indignation had been caused by the deliberate attacks on British ships carrying food and other non-military goods to Spain. *The Times* Diplomatic Correspondent, on June 24, 1938, stated:

"Everywhere in the Embassies yesterday the bombing of British ships was being discussed with fresh concern. The attacks of Tuesday were felt to be General Franco's reply to Mr. Chamberlain's announcement of Monday that British ships must continue to go into Spanish waters at their own risk. *Post hoc, ergo propter hoc* was the general conclusion; and many diplomatists were saying that, if it would be illegal for Great Britain to take action within Spanish territorial waters, it was a hundred times more illegal for the Nationalist airmen to attack merchantmen without warning in defiance of all international codes and all humanitarian scruples."

But all that our Prime Minister could say about it was that "it was not nice" to hear of British shipping being bombed and that he had made his displeasure known to General Franco. He could not see what effective steps could be taken to prevent these attacks!

We cannot help wondering whether he would have made equally helpless gestures if these murderous attacks on British ships and British lives had been made by Spanish Government planes.

To protect British ships and the lives of British seamen in Spanish territorial waters would be, according to Mr. Chamberlain, a departure from our policy of non-intervention.

There were strong protests both in Parliament and in the country generally by the Labour and Liberal parties, as well as by British shipowners, and as the Diplomatic Correspondent of the *Daily Telegraph* (June 27, 1938) said:

"In Rome, Berlin, and Burgos note has been taken, I gather, of the extremely restive state of British public opinion as reflected during Thursday's debate in the House of Commons."

And still more significant was the remark of *The Times* Rome Correspondent (*Times*, June 28, 1938.):

"The impression one has here is that Signor Mussolini is anxious that General Franco should use to the full the advantage which his superiority in the air confers on him; that *he had a moment of doubt whether British public opinion might not compel Mr. Chamberlain to take active measures to protect British ships from bombardment in Spanish territorial waters, but now that that doubt is removed Signor Mussolini intends that the advantage shall be pressed to the utmost.*" (italics ours.)

But the British Government, anxious to placate Italy, and by no means desiring to hinder a Franco

victory, did nothing except to send diplomatic notes of protest to which Franco, for the most part, did not even bother to reply, and British ships continued to be bombed at intervals throughout the war in Spain.

It had been proclaimed from time to time that the whole idea of the setting up of the Non-Intervention Committee was to prevent any possibility of the Spanish conflict leading to a European war.

Early in 1938, in his great zeal for appeasement, Mr. Chamberlain, against the advice of some of his own colleagues, in particular of the then Foreign Secretary, the Rt. Hon. Mr. Eden, concluded the Anglo-Italian Agreement, referred to in the chapter on Abyssinia.

However, the ratification of this Agreement by Britain was made dependent on "a settlement of the Spanish question". What was meant by a "settlement" was left vague, but on July 26, 1938, in reply to a question by Mr. Attlee, Mr. Chamberlain said:

"If His Majesty's Government think that Spain has ceased to be a menace to the peace of Europe, I think we shall regard that as a settlement of the Spanish question." [*Hansard*, July 26, 1938. Col. 2965.]

Naturally, it was assumed by most people that the removal of this "menace" and the resulting "settlement" would follow the withdrawal of all foreign combatants from both sides, and the setting up of a water tight control which would prevent the further entry into Government and Rebel Spain of any further volunteers or so-called volunteers, technicians, aeroplanes and arms.

But again the plain man made a mistake. So great was Mr. Chamberlain's passion for "appeasement" and readiness at all costs to kow-tow to the Italian Dictator that the withdrawal of 10,000 Italian war-weary and wounded troops was considered sufficient grounds for regarding the Spanish question as "settled" and as no longer constituting a menace to European peace. For the rest, Mr. Chamberlain, in the House of Commons, on November 2, 1938, made it clear he relied on Mussolini's promises and goodwill. Said Mr. Chamberlain:

"We have received from Signor Mussolini definite assurances, first of all that the remaining Italian forces of all categories will be withdrawn when the non-intervention plan comes into operation; secondly, that no further Italian troops will be sent to Spain; and thirdly—in case this idea had occurred to anybody—that the Italian Government have never for a moment entertained the idea of sending compensatory air forces to Spain in lieu of the infantry forces which have now been withdrawn. These three assurances, taken in conjunction with the actual withdrawal of this large body of men, in my judgment, constitute a substantial earnest of the good intentions of the Italian Government. They form a considerable contribution to the elimination of the Spanish question as a menace to peace." [*Hansard*, November 2, 1938. Col. 209.]

Is it at all conceivable that Mr. Chamberlain really believed this? He knew as well as anyone that Italian planes were continuing their nefarious bombings of open towns and their attacks on British ships. He knew that no Italian and German experts, engineers or war materials had been removed, that all the

facts proved that, on the contrary, more war material poured in and that Italian reinforcements to Franco were being dispatched.

In what way then had the position altered since say February or July, 1938? In nothing, except in the more open determination of the British "National" Government not to hinder a Franco, i.e., an Italian Fascist victory in Spain.

A flood of light is thrown upon the real attitude of the British Government and on the hypocrisy of the whole organization of the so-called Non-Intervention Committee by the statement of Lord Halifax, November 8, 1938:

"It has never been true, and it is not true to-day, that the Anglo-Italian Agreement had the lever value that some think to make Italy desist from supporting General Franco and his fortunes. Signor Mussolini has always made it plain from the time of the first conversations between His Majesty's Government and the Italian Government that, for reasons known to us all—he was not prepared to see General Franco defeated." [*House of Lords Report*, November 8, 1938. Col. 1628.]

If that is so and the Government were prepared to acquiesce, then why was the ratification of the Anglo-Italian Agreement made dependent on "a settlement of the Spanish question"? Why all the expense and bother, the drafting and redrafting of plans for stopping intervention in Spain?

To all this there can be but one reply—to throw dust in the eyes of the British public at home, to make a pretence of trying to stop intervention whilst at the same time doing nothing to prevent it. The

episode of the ratification of the Anglo-Italian Agreement and Lord Halifax's statement makes a true understanding of the work of bourgeois diplomacy absolutely clear.

As we pointed out in the chapter on Abyssinia, following the conclusion of the Anglo-Italian Agreement in April 1938, the French Government made repeated efforts to come to an understanding with Italy; the latter, however, treated these efforts with studied contempt, the Italian press making it quite clear that the questions to be discussed with France were different from those "regulated" in the Anglo-Italian Agreement, and that in any case the question of Spain had to be disposed of in the first place. Even when on June 20, 1938, the French Government agreed to close the Pyrenees frontier to the Spanish Government, the Italian press did not cease its anti-French agitation.

The culmination was reached on November 30, 1938, only two weeks after the French Government had formally recognized the "Ethiopian Empire" of Italy. On that date the conclusion of an address by Count Ciano at the opening session of the Fascist Chamber was greeted in the words of *The Times* Rome Correspondent "with loud shouts of 'Duce' and 'Tunisia' continually repeated from the Deputies, while spectators in the balconies joined in with 'Corsica' and 'Nice'." *The Times* correspondent further declared: "It was a demonstration deliberately planned to express a demand. The Press has been working up for it for some time, and there is no doubt that this was the reason for the elaborate publicity given to this particular sitting." [*The Times*, December 1, 1938.]

This view of the demonstration was corroborated by the correspondents of the *Daily Telegraph* and other journals. In spite of French protests the Anti-French cries in the Italian press subsequently became ever more strident and provocative.

It was evident that "Munich" had whetted the appetite of the Fascists and that Italy was now preparing to stake out her territorial claims against France, in spite of the fact that after the conquest of Abyssinia, Mussolini had declared that Italy was now a "satisfied" Power—no longer a "have-not." We cannot, of course, stop to discuss here the demands made by Italy on France, we only refer to it in order to indicate how hopeless it is to expect to "appease" the aggressor States by feeding them with successive chunks of other people's territory.

Although the British Government ultimately made clear that it would stand by France if the latter were attacked, the visit of Mr. Chamberlain and Lord Halifax to Rome was not cancelled, and it was generally feared in France and cautiously canvassed in Italy that Chamberlain might "do a Munich" on France in Rome. However, French insistence on no surrender (of French territory) to Italy had its effect, and there was a general sigh of relief when the British visit to Italy, January 11–14, 1939, ended with no positive results and without bringing about any further direct concessions to aggression.

The Italians, and probably Mr. Chamberlain himself, had hoped that by the time he visited Rome, Franco, who continued to receive aid from Italy and Germany would have gained a decisive victory, but as this had not materialized, a vague statement was

issued emphasizing the cordial relations which had marked Anglo-Italian conversations and "the spirit of friendship of the pact of April 16 was reaffirmed and the intention of the two countries to develop their existing friendship was also agreed upon." [*Daily Telegraph*, January 14, 1939.] It was also decided to continue the conversations at some future date.

Immediately Mr. Chamberlain left Rome, the attacks on France in the Italian press were resumed with, if anything, greater verve than ever, and fearful that the continued assistance given by Italy to the Spanish insurgents might perhaps result in some French help to the Spanish Government, Signor Gayda, often known as Mussolini's mouthpiece, with characteristic bald-faced impudence, made a vigorous attack on France for her "intervention in Spain," and on January 16, 1939, Mussolini threatened that if France, or for that matter Britain, gave assistance to the Spanish Government, Italy would resume her liberty of action. In regard to this communique *The Times* Diplomatic Correspondent remarked: "The Italian announcement that if any large-scale intervention occurred in favour of the Republican Government, Italy would regard the non-intervention policy as having failed, and would resume her liberty of action, has caused some surprise in London. It is not understood how, at a time when Italian troops are campaigning in Catalonia, Italy can talk of others failing to maintain the policy of non-intervention." [*The Times*, January 17, 1939.] At that time, the Italian press was boasting of the prowess of the Italian legionaries in Spain! The German press, needless to say, supported the Italian threats in the event of any

assistance being given to the Spanish Government. Both Italy and Germany were desperately anxious for a speedy Franco victory, and they knew that this could only be accomplished if the Spanish Government were denied arms and supplies from abroad. France and Britain could have saved the situation for the Spanish Government, but in the interests of "appeasement" Spain was thrown to the dogs of Fascism.

In the meantime, at the meeting of the League Council in Geneva, January 15, 1939, the report of the Commission supervising the evacuation of foreign combatants from Spain was discussed, and it was established that all the non-Spanish combatants had been withdrawn from combatant units. Speeches were made by the British, French and other representatives full of sympathy for the sufferings in Spain, and expressing thanks to the Spanish Government for the facilities it had provided for the counting and withdrawal of the volunteers. There were also strong pleas for the removal of foreign combatants from the insurgent forces. Said M. Bonnet (France), for instance: "The evacuation of foreign combatants from the Governmental zone must be acccompanied by the evacuation of those from the Burgos zone. Only then will it be permissible to speak of appeasement in the western part of the Mediterranean, where Spain is an essential element of the status quo." [*Manchester Guardian*, January 17, 1939.]

But the Fascists knew well enough the worthlessness of all this lip service to a good cause and they, particularly Italy, continued and indeed intensified their help to Franco enabling him to gain position

after position in Catalonia. Describing the struggle *The Times* Hendaye correspondent declared: "There may be plenty of reserves of men, but it is heavy war material that the Republicans lack, such as artillery, tanks and aeroplanes. A competent observer puts the superiority of Nationalist artillery and aircraft on the Catalan front at four to one in artillery and three to one in the air. The Republicans are well supplied with machine-guns, rifles, small mortars and ammunition, which are being manufactured in Catalonia." [*The Times*, January 18, 1939.]

And discussing the disbandment of the foreign combatants by the Government, *The Times* Perpignan correspondent said "But how far, it may be asked, has it penalized his [Negrin's] side in view of the accumulated evidence every day the battle affords of the part played by the Italians and their armaments? As one listened to the thunder of the guns, interrogated prisoners who had been extricated from crippled tanks or who had dropped by parachute from their aeroplanes, or watched the aeroplanes during the past four days pounding to pieces the Mediterranean rival of Genoa, it was impossible to shake off the feeling that the dice are heavily loaded indeed." [*The Times*, January 25, 1939.]

Although it was reported in the Italian press that during his Rome visit Mussolini had made plain to Mr. Chamberlain that he had no intention of ceasing intervention until Franco was victorious, the British and French Governments remained adamant to the numerous appeals made both in Britain and France for a restoration of the international rights of the legal Spanish Government to buy arms.

At length, the weight of metal, combined with the shortage of food, told, and on January 26, 1939, Barcelona fell. The event was celebrated in Rome by Signor Mussolini who from the balcony of his official residence, the Palazza Venezia, declared: "The splendid victory of Barcelona is a new chapter in that history of Europe which we are creating. The troops of Franco and our intrepid legionaries have beaten not only the Negrin Government but many others among our enemies are biting the dust. The word of order for the 'Reds' was 'They shall not pass.' But we have passed, and I say now that we shall pass."

Yes, they did pass, but only thanks to the treachery to the democratic cause by the capitalist governments, particularly the French and British Governments. And Mussolini was also right when he said that it was not the Spanish Government alone that was biting the dust—the Western democracies too had suffered a great defeat as a result of the blindness, cowardice and treachery of their Governments. One of Franco's first acts was to send a wire of thanks to Mussolini: "I appreciate the very brilliant efforts of the Italian legionaries, who in Barcelona will receive the laurels of triumph with their Spanish comrades." Other congratulatory messages passed between Mussolini and Franco at later dates.

By February 6, 1939, the rebel troops had reached the Pyrenees frontier and Catalonia was completely in Franco's hands. It is characteristic, as showing the value of Mussolini's repeated promises that he had neither territorial nor other ambitions in Spain, that on the morrow of the Franco victory in Catalonia, Signor Gayda stated in the *Voce d'Italia :*

"Besides a military victory there must be a political victory. In the interval between the two foreign influence will attempt to penetrate. Until the final and thorough clearing-up of Red troops in Spain and in contiguous territory . . . and until all other improper political intervention has been stopped the victory of General Franco cannot be said to be complete and secure."

The *Manchester Guardian* in the course of a leader, compared this with the paragraph in the Anglo-Italian Agreement which said that:

"If this evacuation has not been completed at the moment of the termination of the Spanish civil war all remaining Italian volunteers will forthwith leave Spanish territory and all Italian war material will simultaneously be withdrawn."

And the *Manchester Guardian* rightly declared:

"The 'termination' of the war has always been taken to mean the end of the fighting, Italy's spokesmen are now claiming to intervene in the political battle which they suggest may come with the peace, and meantime to keep their troops in Spain.

"A convenient haziness about what makes a conflict has been used with some success by Japan, and there now seems to be good cause for suspecting that Italy will use it to further her claims on France. The Italians in Catalonia must be set beside the cries of 'Tunisia! Corsica! Nice!' They can be used to apply pressure on France, and it is natural for Signor Mussolini to show no haste to withdraw them." [*Manchester Guardian*, February 7, 1939.]

The Spanish Government had admittedly suffered

a very serious defeat, but it still had a large army and extensive territory—the war was not over, and it declared its will to fight on.

Even after the fall of Catalonia a generous supply of arms and food to the Government would in all probability have saved Spain from a Fascist victory. No such help was, of course, forthcoming; on the contrary, as though only waiting for the signal, almost immediately on the fall of Barcelona, before the whole of Catalonia had been conquered, the French Government, on February 4, 1939, sent M. Leon Berard to Burgos, and this was generally regarded, and in fact turned out to be, the first step in the recognition of Franco. We had not very long to wait. On February 27, 1939, both Britain and France formally and unconditionally recognized the Burgos Government as the Government of Spain. The French Government agreed to hand over all the gold and other property of Spain in France to the Burgos Government. On March 2, Marshal Pétain was appointed French Ambassador to Spain and on March 3, Sir Maurice Peterson was appointed British Ambassador to Spain.

Thus whilst the Soviet Government, although its victory over the whole country was complete by 1920, had to wait till 1924 before it was recognized by Britain and France, and the former even then refused to send an Ambassador at once to Moscow, the Spanish rebel Government received full recognition even before its conquest of the country was completed, and Ambassadors were exchanged within a few weeks of recognition.

In the meantime, the British Government, after

consultations with the rebel command and without any such consultations and without indeed even informing the Spanish Government (as Chamberlain himself admitted in the House of Commons on February 13, 1939) a British cruiser the *Devonshire* took Franco's emissaries on February 8, 1939, to Minorca to "negotiate" the surrender of the island to the rebels. No doubt the arrival of the rebel leader on a British warship impressed the Minorcans with the force arraigned against them—in any case the island surrendered to Franco, whilst the *Devonshire* took off some 450 refugees from the island.

One idea underlying this mediation was evidently to prevent the occupation of Minorca, which is of great strategic importance, by Italian troops—although how this would be prevented once the island was taken over by Franco—only God and Chamberlain, or perhaps only God, knows. In any case the Italians were determined to show their hand in good time, and although the Franco authorites had promised the Commander of the *Devonshire* that there would be no aerial bombardment of Minorca, Italian planes actualy bombed the island during the negotiations !

At the same time there were persistent rumours that Britain and France were contemplating mediation between the two sides in Spain. With the fall of Catalonia, the one chance of either successful resistance or the conclusion of a more or less bearable peace, was to present Franco with a united front of the Spanish Government and forces—unfortunately, immediately after the recognition of Franco by Britain and France there was a revolt of generals in Madrid against the Negrin Government, as well as in Carta-

gena. In the case of the latter it was strongly rumoured that British agents lent a hand.

As regards Madrid, according to Mr. Philip Jordan in the *News Chronicle*, March 24, 1939, "there is strong reason to suspect that it was at the instigation of agents of the British Government that Casado and brave old Miaja (now a nervous and physical wreck) revolted against the Negrin-del Vayo Government." They thought, no doubt, that by dubbing the Negrin Government as "Communist" (which it was not) and by executing some of the Communist leaders, they would get into the good graces of Franco. In substance, the Casado Government laid down the same conditions for peace as the Negrin Government had laid down, e.g. the withdrawal of all foreign troops from Spain, no reprisals against opponents and freedom for the people to choose their own form of government.

However, Franco treated the "new Government" with contempt, and their British sponsors gained nothing but derision. Nor has Franco proved very grateful for the unconditional recognition given him by France and Britain. He has ignored all the British pleas for clemency to the Republican leaders, and he has affirmed time and again his loyalty to Italy and his gratitude for the help accorded him by that country and Germany, as Mr. Herbert Morrison, M.P., well said:

"Having done everything it could to ensure a triumph for General Franco, Mr. Chamberlain and his colleagues are now thoroughly frightened of the results of their own policy.

"They are trying to rescue General Franco from the clutches of Herr Hitler and Signor Mussolini, and are thereby earning the scorn and jeers of the German and Italian Press. It is a humiliating business and a dangerous business." [*Daily Telegraph*, 20 February, 1939.]

Fittingly enough, at Franco's triumphal review of his army in Barcelona, February 21, 1939, the Italian Commander, General Gamberra, with his Italian Legionary Army Corps was at the head of the parade.

Even when the Casado Government whittled down their demands for assurances by Franco that there would be no reprisals against certain of the Republican leaders, their suggestions were brushed aside by Franco. Finally, weakened by the Casado *coup d'etat,* starved and almost devoid of effective arms, Madrid surrendered, March 27, 1939, and the rest of Republican Spain a few days later. Thus ended an epic of two and a half years of unparalleled heroic resistance against tremendous odds.

Throughout the whole sorry business of "non-intervention," the U.S.S.R. fought hard for fair play for the Spanish Republican Government. Unfortunately for the most part they found very few supporters in the Committee. It may be asked, why did the U.S.S.R. join in the farce of the Non-Intervention Committee? The reason is clear enough. In the first place, had she kept out the whole blame for the failure of the policy of non-intervention would have been thrown on the refusal of the Soviet Government to co-operate. Secondly, by her presence on the Committee, she did assure that the Spanish Government

had one friendly voice to speak for it, she made the task of the direct interventionists at least somewhat more difficult, and was able to secure greater publicity for their nefarious acts and the condonation of these acts by other Powers.

CHAPTER VII

JAPANESE INVASION OF CHINA

THE present Japanese invasion of China may be said to have begun with an incident which occurred on the night July 7–8, 1937, at Wangping, about 30 miles West of Peking. The Japanese version is that in the course of simple field exercises they were making a sham attack on Marco Polo bridge when they were fired on by Chinese troops belonging to the 29th Route Army.

Competent observers in the Far East contend that the incident was deliberately provoked by the Japanese because the latter were well aware that the carrying out of such manoeuvres in a strategically important area could not but arouse deep suspicion in the minds of the Chinese authorites. A few days later the Japanese rushed thousands of troops to Tientsin and the outskirts of Peking. We cannot here go into the question as to the extent of treachery in the Chinese ranks, but by the end of July, Peking, together with its railway station, etc., were in the hands of the Japanese. To quote the *Bulletin of International News*:

"By the beginning of August foreign observers reported that for all practical purposes North China might now be classed with Manchukuo, so far as any political connection with Nanking was concerned. Plans are already far

advanced in Tokyo for the development and extension of Japanese industrial trade interests in the five Provinces, and, according to the American press, all new enterprises in the Peking-Tientsin area will be financed through the Bank of Chosen, whose notes will constitute the dominant currency of Hopei and Chahar."

Another incident occurred on August 9, 1937, near Shanghai. A Japanese sub-lieutenant was driving towards the Hungjao aerodrome and when challenged by a Chinese sentry refused to stop. Both sides opened fire (the Chinese claim that the Japanese fired first) and both the Chinese sentry and the Japanese sub-lieutenant were killed. This event in its turn was made the pretext for a large scale Japanese attack on Shanghai.

Both episodes could have been amicably settled, as many similar incidents had been settled, but the Japanese were bent not on a settlement but on an invasion of China.

The Japanese militarists were apparently convinced that their hour had struck. They had dreamed and plotted for years to drive all European influence out of China and turn that immense country with its huge industrious population into a colony of Japan.

The cowardice and constant retreats of the British and French Governments in the cases of Manchuria, Abyssinia and Spain had apparently convinced the Japanese militarists that the Governments of these countries would make verbal protests but would not take any effective steps to defend their own interests in China.

Great Britain was the country mainly concerned

because she was the principal foreign investor in China, as the following table shows:

FOREIGN INVESTMENTS IN CHINA, 1931
(*in £ millions*)

	Business Investments	Government Obligations	Total	Per Cent
Great Britain ..	198	46	244	49
Japan ..	74	46	120	24
U.S.A. ..	32	9	41	8
France ..	19	20	39	8
Belgium ..	8	10	18	4
Germany ..	15	3	18	4
Italy ..	1	9	10	2
Netherlands ..	2	4	6	1
Scandinavia ..	0.4	0.2	0.6	—
	349.4	147.2	496.6	

The U.S.S.R. has no investments in China. All the concessions extorted from pre-war China by the Tsarist Government were returned gratis to China by the Soviets. This did not prevent, in fact it followed as a corollary, that in a difficult time for China, the Kremlin held out the hand of friendship to menaced China. A Soviet-Chinese pact of non-aggression was signed between the two countries at Nanking, August 21, 1937, under which "the two high contracting parties solemnly reaffirm that they condemn recourse to war for the solution of international controversies, and that they renounce it as an instrument of national policy in their relations with each other, and in pursuance of this pledge they undertake to refrain from any aggression against each other, either indi-

vidually or jointly with one or more other Powers." The aims and hopes of the U.S.S.R. in concluding this pact were explained thus:

"The principle of the indivisibility of peace pronounced by the Soviet Union means more than a theoretical statement of the fact that the violation of peace in any section of international relations causes a menace of war to very different territories.

"The principle of the indivisibility of peace means that the Soviet Union is actively interested in the preservation of peace in all sections of international relations—in East and West, in Europe and Asia. Therefore the U.S.S.R. pays particular attention to the Far Eastern crisis and emphasises its friendly relations with China by signing the non-aggression pact." [*Izvestia*, August 30, 1937.]

"Concretely realizing the principle of collective security, the Soviet-Chinese pact gives a clear example of the practical application of this principle. The treaty shows all countries the way to struggle against the war menace which has grown up both in the Far East and in Europe, and represents a new instrument of peace and collective security." [*Pravda*, August 30, 1937].

The Pact was vehemently denounced not only in Japan, but also in Germany and Italy. *The Times* correspondent cabled from Tokyo:

"A non-aggression pact concluded when one of the contracting parties is at war with the avowed enemy of the other has more significance than ordinarily attaches to such documents, and the Japanese Press does not minimize the possible effects of the Russo-Chinese agreement. Most of the papers assume that it contains secret military clauses, but they are even more displeased by its political implications." August 31, 1937.

The same correspondent continued: "The *Kokumin* organ of the Military Group, declares that there are secret clauses which make the agreement virtually an offensive and defensive alliance. It sees in the pact the means by which a common understanding between Russia, France, England, and the United States may be developed, and it warns its readers that political pressure from those Powers has been brought nearer."

On the other hand *The China Review*, September, 1937, stated:

"Great Britain and the United States have done nothing to stop Japan. They have protested against the threat to their material interests. But as the audacity of the Japanese militarists increased by the success of their brutality the position of Great Britain and the United States in the Pacific became more precarious. They are either unwilling or unable to protect their material interests, not to say to maintain the balance of power established by the Washington Conference of 1922. The return of Russia to the Pacific scene will redress the balance so violently upset by Japanese brigands and by the silent renunciation of British and American claims."

The Japanese, on August 25, 1937, declared a blockade of the Chinese coast and on September 5, the Japanese Commander at Shanghai proclaimed a further extension of the blockade, despite the fact that war had not been proclaimed.

Dr. Wellington Koo raised the subject at the Assembly of the League of Nations, September 15, 1937. After pointing out that Japan had a definite programme for expansion on the mainland of Asia,

he appealed to the League "to condemn the Japanese invasion of China and the bombing of Chinese civilians and to declare illegal the blockade of the Chinese coast". He concluded with a warning:

"To-day Japan still bemoans the fact that her national resources are unequal to her appetite for conquest and invite her also to be the war lords of Asia.

"If the day should come, which God forbid, when she will be able to lay her hands even on a great part of what China possesses in man-power and natural resources, then she would feel herself so much stronger as to challenge the rights and territorial possessions of Europe and America in the South Seas and the Pacific as well as on the mainland of Asia."

By this date the Chinese had been compelled to withdraw north of Shanghai in order to be out of reach of gunfire from Japanese warships.

M. Litvinov, not for the first time, brought the Assembly face to face with realities. In the course of a speech, September 21, 1937, in which he dealt with the whole question of resistance to aggressors, he said, among other things:

"On the Asiatic continent, without a declaration of war, without any pretext or justification, one state is attacking another (China), flooding it with armies of hundreds of thousands of men, blockading its coasts, paralysing trade in one of the largest commercial centres of the world. And, evidently, we are just at the beginning of these actions, the duration and end of which cannot yet be forecast."

What of the aggressors? Was their displeasure so

powerful that one dare not challenge it? M. Litvinov continued:

"I am convinced that the League of Nations even in its present composition can render to Spain as well as China even stronger assistance than that which these countries modestly ask from it, and by this it will not only not increase, but reduce the chances for new international complications. We are only risking evoking the displeasure, maybe even great displeasure, of those responsible for the present international chaos, to become the subject of attack on the part of their unbridled press. I know that many are rather sensitive to the opinion of this press, which is just as provocative and aggressive in its methods as the governments which are giving it orders. However, I prefer to do something in order to spare the lives of scores and hundreds of thousands of victims of the eventual extension and continuation of aggression rather than spare the aggressors' feeling of pride."

There were some faint hearts. The speaker averred:

"I know that there are political wiseacres who think that in the case of aggression also the best way to get rid of it is by yielding to it. They reproach the Spanish people for the heroic resistance which they are putting up to the rebel generals and the countries standing behind them. They consider that even China would act wisely if it would yield without battle to the ultimatum of the aggressor and would willingly become his vassal."

What was the League's duty?

"However, it is not to give such advice that the League of Nations is in existence, nor would the existence of the League be justified even if the League, while refraining

from giving such advice, would itself remain passive, making references to its weakness, to its insufficient universality, to the non-participation in its discussions of those guilty of aggression, those who do not wish to abide by its decisions. This path has already been tried and it led to a situation which all the speakers on this platform have deplored. This path has led to the loss by some states, members of the League, of enormous territories with tens of millions of population, and by others to the loss of their very existence as a state."

Referring to the recent past, M. Litvinov declared:

"It may now be considered an axiom that the passivity of the League during the Manchurian conflict had as its consequence the attack on Abyssinia a few years later. The insufficient activity of the League in the case of Abyssinia encouraged the Spanish experiment. The fact that the League has not taken any measures to help Spain encouraged the new attack on China. Thus, we have four aggressions in the course of five years. We observe how aggression, not being stopped, spreads from one continent to another taking on each time ever greater and greater dimensions."

Then came a plea of courage. The speaker stated:

"On the other hand I am firmly convinced that a resolute policy of the League in one case of aggression would save us from all other cases. And then and only then would all the states become convinced that aggression does not pay, that aggression should not be undertaken.

"Only as a result of such a policy will the former members of the League of Nations knock at our door and we will say to them joyously: 'Come in'. We are not going to ask them about their world outlook, about the

internal regime prevailing in their land, for the League of Nations recognizes the peaceful co-existence of any existing regimes, and then our common ideal of a universal League preserved as an instrument of peace will be accomplished."

The Commissar concluded:

"However, we cannot attain this ideal by sending out questionnaires, but will attain it only by a collective rebuff of aggression, collective defence of peace, which is necessary to all of us and the benefits of which we shall all enjoy."

There was no response to the appeal for resolute action but the Far Eastern Advisory Committee appointed by the League (the Committee of Twenty-Three) adopted a resolution on September 27, 1937, declaring that:

"The advisory Committee, taking into consideration the question of aerial bombardment of open towns in China by Japanese aircraft:

"Expresses its profound distress at the loss of life caused to innocent civilians, including great numbers of women and children as a result of such bombardments.

"Solemnly condemns such acts, and declares that they have aroused horror and indignation throughout the world."

Dr. Koo, to quote *The Times* (September 28, 1937) report: "brought up-to-date—with fresh examples of aerial barbarity—the statement which he had given to the Assembly a fortnight ago. Since then, he said, Japanese troops in China had been reinforced to

850,000. More towns had been bombed, and Japan was revealing more and more openly her real aim, which was the complete subjugation and conquest of China. Given peaceful intentions by Japan, every incident could have been settled by peaceful means. But Japan was bent on war."

Dr. Koo continued:

"If the League cannot defend Right in the face of Might, it can at least point out the wrongdoer to the world. If it cannot stop aggression, it can at least denounce it. If it cannot enforce international law and the principles of the Covenant, it can at least make it known that it had not abandoned them. If it cannot prevent the ruthless killing of innocent men, women and children, and wanton destruction of property by the illegal and inhuman methods of aerial bombardment, it can at least make clear where its own sentiments are, so as to reinforce the universal desire of the civilized world for its immediate abandonment.

"In the moral and juridical field there is nothing that prevents the League from discharging its obligations under the Covenant." [ibid.]

Lord Cranbourne, then British Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, speaking in support of the resolution said:

"Words cannot express the feeling of profound horror with which the news of these raids had been received by the whole civilized world. They are often directed against places far from the actual area of hostilities. The military objective, where it exists, seems to take a completely second place. The main object seems to be to inspire terror by the indiscriminate slaughter of civilians." [ibid.]

The Assembly of the League on October 6, 1937. endorsed the resolution of the Far Eastern Committee,

The scene next changed to the Brussels Conference, to which all the Powers having interests in China, including Japan and the U.S.A. were invited. Germany and Japan refused to attend, the latter declaring that the conflict in China could only be settled by direct negotiations between herself and China.

M. Litvinov, who was present in the early days of the Conference was apparently apprehensive that that gathering would not face up to the dangers of the situation. Speaking at the afternoon session, November 3, 1937, he warned:

"Recent years have enriched international life with highly valuable experience, and this experience compels us to turn our attention to those dangerous gulfs and pitfalls which lie in the path of international conferences. The said experience teaches us that international conferences, committees and other organizations called upon to serve a definite purpose, particularly in cases of prolonged existence, are sometimes prone to forget their direct purpose, their serviceable role, and begin to live their own life, guided by their own interests. They begin to concern themselves chiefly with preserving their existence, with morally gratifying the initiators and organizers of these conferences, with their own outward successes which do not always coincide with the successes of the cause for which the conference was called to life."

Sometimes they become the unconscious tools of aggressors:

"Moreover, there sometimes arises even a divergence between these various interests; there even comes a

moment when the conference or committee, which should strive to eliminate and overcome aggressive phenomena, themselves imperceptibly become the tool of the aggressor, who uses them as a screen and an aid for his aggressive actions.

"This happens when international organizations come into contact with the aggressors themselves in attempts to get them to change their position. In the process of negotiations connected with consistent concessions to the aggressor it is possible to overstep the line on which persons, undoubtedly inspired by the best intentions, slip, without noticing it themselves, into the viewpoint of the aggressor, commence to speak in this language, actually justifying and encouraging his actions."

Under such circumstances apparent success may be in reality failure:

"When it is a question of an aggressive assault by one state against another, given a certain success of such assault, there is nothing so easy for the international organization, in order to achieve success, as to say to the aggressor: 'keep the booty you have seized by violence, and peace be with you', and to the victim of aggression: 'love your aggressor and do not resist evil'. However, this can be an outward success for the conference but not a triumph of peace, not a triumph of peace-loving countries. Such successes can merely give rise to further cases of aggression and create a need for new conferences, and so on *ad infinitum*."

The Foreign Commissar concluded: "Deeming it necessary to warn against those dangers which any conference might encounter under present conditions, I express the wish that the Brussels conference and the proposals which we shall probably hear from

the powers which have issued the invitation might be successful. I am confident that the new conference will avoid the dangers I have pointed out, and that the proposals will pursue the aim not only of restoring peace in the Far East, but of restoring a just peace, a peace which will not unleash but will leash aggression in the future in other parts of the world as well."

Unfortunately, M. Litvinov's apprehensions were only too well founded and his warning fell on deaf ears.

The Conference, at its final sitting, November 24, 1937, weakly adopted a declaration and then adjourned indefinitely. The *Daily Telegraph* correspondent cabled:

"The declaration consists of twelve paragraphs. In none of them is there any concrete suggestion made. It is merely urged that hostilities in the Far East be suspended. Resort to armed force is criticized in general, and it is stated that no satisfactory solution for the present conflict can be reached by direct negotiation between the two parties alone.

"Finally it is explained that the conference has adjourned 'to allow time for participating Governments to exchange views and further explore all the peaceful methods by which a just settlement of the dispute can be attained'." [*Daily Telegraph*, November 25, 1937.]

Dr. Koo was bitterly disappointed. He stated "that China regarded swift and common action by the Powers interested in the Far East, in the form of positive aid to China and restrictive measures against Japan, as a vital necessity if Japanese aggression were to be checked." [ibid.]

Viscount Cranborne, on behalf of Great Britain

"admitted that the results achieved fell far short of expectations. He acknowledged and expressed understanding for the objections advanced by Dr. Wellington Koo, but considered that nothing of a more practical nature could have been accomplished at the present juncture." [ibid.]

Japan was quick to draw definite conclusions from the impotence of the Brussels Conference and four days later Prince Konoye, the Japanese Prime Minister, in an interview with the press declared that "Japan might at a suitable time propose either the revision or abrogation of the Nine-Power Treaty. This should have been done some years ago when Japan announced that Far Eastern Affairs should be settled without Western intervention, but it was not a matter of immediate concern."

On the same day, the Japanese authorities took over control of the Chinese telegraph and wireless stations and offices in Shanghai and established their own censorship; in addition by this date, despite protests from London, Paris and Washington, the Japanese had assumed control of the Shanghai customs. But they protested that this was only a temporary measure.

Whilst it would probably be an exaggeration to state that Japan now felt that she had nothing to fear from the Western democracies, and the U.S.A., she certainly had much less fear of incurring their active displeasure, and she was steadily encroaching on their interests. The importance of Shanghai to foreign interests can be gauged from the fact that about two-thirds of all foreign investments in China are situated in Shanghai.

By the end of 1937, Nanking had been evacuated by the troops of the Chinese Central Government, and the new Chinese capital had been transferred to Hankow; about 30 million Chinese were destitute; Japan had carried out countless air raids not only on undefended Chinese towns and villages, but she had shown scant respect for the property or lives of foreign nationals. In the occupied areas the Japanese were acting as though China was a Japanese colony and were treating with thinly veiled contempt the protests of the British, U.S.A., and French Governments. It was estimated that up to the end of December, 1937, the "Chinese incident" had cost Japan £254 millions.

In the first three months of 1938, the Japanese authorities continued their high-handed policies *vis-a-vis* foreign interests. They enforced a censorship on all cables from Shanghai; they established a control on non-Japanese shipping proceeding up the Yangtse; they altered the tariff rates to the detriment of all non-Japanese trade; they instituted a system of large-scale smuggling, with a view to hampering all trade other than their own, and in this way they seriously affected the receipts of customs earmarked for the service of foreign loans.

It is true that Tokyo, perhaps fearing that if Japan went too far and too rapidly she might invoke some joint serious action by the interested Powers, did make a pretence of observing legal formulae. For instance, the Japanese Foreign Minister, M. Hirota, speaking in the Diet, March 23, 1938, declared that negotiations concerning the future of the Shanghai Customs would be conducted in the final stage between the interested Powers and the new regime in Central

China. Such a regime, as Tokyo declared on many occasions, would have to be one of which they approved, which in effect meant not that there would be negotiations but that Japan would lay down decisions. Also in the course of these three months the Japanese military machine continued its attacks upon the poorly armed Chinese troops, on unfortified towns and on unarmed fleeing women and children.

Despite the resolutions of the League of Nations denouncing Japanese aggression, which justified other countries in aiding China, the only country which not only did not quibble or apologize about doing so was the U.S.S.R. On April 4, 1938, the Japanese Ambassador in Moscow protested against the military help which he declared the U.S.S.R. was rendering to China. M. Litvinov firmly replied that his country was not violating the principles of international law in selling arms to China, but he denied that his Government had sent any individual persons or detachments to that country. On the other hand, when on June 15, 1938, the spokesman of the Japanese Foreign Office accused the French authorities of permitting the passage of munitions through Indo-China to the Yuman frontier, which they were quite entitled to do, the French Embassy officials in Tokyo meekly replied that there was no truth in the allegation.

The whole subject again came before the League Council on May 14, 1938, when a resolution was adopted declaring "that the members of the League should do their utmost to give effect to previous resolutions of the Assembly and Council in respect

of the needs of Chinese national defence, and should take into serious and sympathetic consideration any request the Chinese Government might make in conformity with them. The resolution expressed sympathy with China in her heroic struggle against the Japanese invasion and in the suffering inflicted upon her." [*Times*, May 16, 1938.] Supporting the resolution Lord Halifax stated "that the British Government had done their best 'within the limits which the situation in the United Kingdom imposes upon them', to implement to the full their obligations to China under these resolutions, and they would continue to give such requests their serious and sympathetic consideration". [ibid.]

M. Litvinov accepted the resolution but emphasized that it did not go far enough.

The interested Powers paid dearly in China for their meekness in Geneva. On May 14, 1938, the British representative in Shanghai, and on the follow-day the U.S.A. representative, were compelled to protest against the ill treatment of their nationals and the destruction of their property by Japanese soldiery.

The Japanese authorities continued to heap iniquity upon iniquity, crime upon crime in their policy towards the Chinese people. Between May 28 and June 8, 1938, Canton was continuously raided and the number of civilians killed in this city alone between these dates was estimated at 3,000.

On June 9, 1938, General Chiang Kai-shek appealed to the Powers to fulfil their contractual obligations towards China by applying the resolutions adopted by the League. He declared that China would fight

on, whether it was a question of months or years, until Japanese aggression was defeated.

At Geneva, June 13, 1938, the U.S.A. representative speaking to the Advisory Committee on the traffic in opium, accused the Japanese authorities of flooding China with opium as one of the means of destroying Chinese resistance. The Japanese delegate denied this, but added that his Government considered that the Korean raw opium export trade was a legitimate business.

The U.S.A. delegate returned to the charge, June 21, 1938, with considerable detail. He stated that an armed Japanese vessel had landed in all over 2,000 cases of opium at Macao, Shanghai and Formosa.

Meanwhile Tokyo realized that the "Chinese incident" was not an incident, but a first-class war. The Japanese Foreign Minister told his people May 7, 1938, that the country must be prepared for enormous sacrifices, human and material. In addition, Germany and Japan had drawn closer together. On May 12, 1938, the Reich recognized the Government of Manchukuo, and on the 23rd it was announced that the German military advisers were to be withdrawn from Hankow. Germany extracted her *quid pro quo* partly at the expense of foreign interests with which we shall deal later.

During the next two months, July and August, the Japanese, in addition to pursuing their military objectives (in the course of which, among other things, they bombed the French cathedral at Canton) also pursued their other objective, viz., placing a stranglehold on British, French and U.S.A. commerce and industrial activities in China.

The Japanese requested the British and U.S.A. Consuls to withdraw their nationals from Hankow, a request which was firmly refused because these nationals knew from experience that if they vacated their premises, etc., they would never be permitted to re-occupy them.

The Japanese refused to allow foreign nationals, other than their own, to return to Northern China or to Nanking and other towns along the Yangtse. They declared, however, that this exclusion was only temporary. On August 2, 1938, it was learned that an oil monopoly had been granted in North China to a local company under Japanese control; and on August 26, 1938, despite British protests, the Japanese spokesman in Shanghai claimed the right to censor both commercial and press messages.

The U.S.A. business community in Shanghai were under no illusions as to what all this meant for them, and on September 2, 1938, they sent an appeal to their Government urging it to prevent the Japanese from ruining American commercial interests in China by means of restrictions, monopolies, etc.

On the following day, a Foreign Office spokesman in Tokyo declared that Japan "rightly aspires to a leading position in the Far East".

The League of Nations made another attempt to bring the conflict to an end. The President of the Council, September 19, 1938, under Article 17, sent a cable to Tokyo inviting Japan "to accept the obligations of membership of the League for the purposes of the dispute between herself and China, and to send a representative to the Council".

Three days later Tokyo replied that the Geneva

method "cannot bring about a just and adequate solution" of the issues in dispute between herself and China.

Since the "Munich settlement", Japan has been more truculent than ever *vis-a-vis* foreign interests in China. On the day following this "settlement" the Tokyo Cabinet approved the setting up of a China Board to co-ordinate the activities of all Japanese institutions operating in China. The aim was explained by the *Hochi* that it would "translate into action a forcible China policy, while, with General Ugaki's resignation, Japan will break once for all with her pro-British policy and make efforts to strengthen the Anti-Comintern Triangle".

This declared policy was followed by swift action. Up to the time of the "Munich settlement", on the authority of the German Press, Japan had hesitated to invade the districts surrounding Canton because of the important British interests situated in this area. After Munich, the militarists got the upper hand in Tokyo and on October 11, 1938, Japanese forces landed at Bias Bay, and began a general advance on Canton which they occupied on October 21, and Hankow four days later.

Tokyo now felt itself strong enough to state the Japanese aims not only frankly, but provocatively. M. Shiratori, the Japanese Ambassador to Italy, in an interview with a German journalist declared, "that, while Japan had no intention of sharing her victory with the Western Powers, the rights of foreign Powers would continue to be respected. Their financial co-operation was desired. German technicians and industry and German trade would be able to

work on a preferential basis. But although Japan would be generous to the foreign Powers, the British predominance in Eastern Asia had been ended for all time to come." [*Times*, October 28, 1938.]

A month later *The Times* Correspondent cabled from Tokyo: "It is significant that Mr. Arita, the Foreign Minister, on assuming office, omitted for the first time to give foreign Ambassadors the customary assurances that Japan will adhere to the 'open door' policy, and the Press teems with articles showing that the Nine-Power Treaty is obsolete." [*Times*, December 1, 1938.]

In the spring of 1939 the Japanese invasion of China continued on its bloody course. Japan maintained and even advanced her grip on the ports and principal cities, and set up puppet administrations, but their control did not extend outside the large centres of population, and many towns changed hands again and again. The Chinese army maintained itself intact and the guerillas became increasingly active.

"Reports published in Changking claimed that in January guerrilla forces in Shansi had been in action against the Japanese 38 times and had destroyed several miles of railway track. In Hopei also they had fought 150 actions and captured many small arms, lorries, and tanks, as well as damaging the railways round Peking." [*Bulletin of International News*, 25 February, 1939. p. 19.]

The Japanese authorities are finding it increasingly difficult to persuade and bribe Chinese of any repute to serve in the "Governments" of Canton, Hankow, Peking, etc., and some who have succumbed to Japanese

blandishments have been assassinated by their enraged fellow-countrymen.

M. Arita, the Foreign Minister, speaking in the Japanese House of Peers, January 26, 1939, stated:

"As a result of Soviet assistance to the Chiang Kai-shek Administration, the Sino-Japanese conflict might develop into a world war.

"The Japanese Government has not relaxed its watchfulness concerning Soviet assistance to Marshal Chiang Kai-shek since the outbreak of the incident. It will leave nothing undone to meet any situation arising from such assistance." [*Daily Telegraph*, 27 January, 1939.]

The U.S.A. Government, on December 15, 1938, gave a guaranteed loan of 25 million dollars, and the British Government, on March 5, 1939, a loan of 10 million pounds, to aid China economically. Small as these sums were they were heartily welcomed by the Chinese Government on moral as well as on material grounds, but Tokyo bitterly attacked the U.S.A. and British Governments on the grounds that the loans will prolong the "China incident."

Without any warning, and in flagrant violation of the French–Japanese Agreement of 1907, Japanese troops landed on Hainan on February 10, 1939. This island, which has been called the "Majorca of the East," is of immense strategical importance. On the day of its occupation the *Daily Telegraph's* correspondent at Hong-Kong cabled–

"This island is within the French sphere of influence and its strategic importance is even greater than that of Formosa.

"Observers here predict serious repercussions with

France, particularly in view of Japan's repudiation of the 1907 agreement between the two Powers.

"Moreover, the new move by Japan constitutes a menace to British and French trade routes commanded by Hainan.

"The immediate consequence will be an aggravation of the food shortage in Hong Kong, already rendered serious by the capture of Canton and the consequent cessation of supplies from the interior. Since Canton fell Hainan has been the principal source of livestock and fresh foods imported to Hong Kong." [*Daily Telegraph*, 11 February, 1939.]

The *Observer*, February 19, 1939, commented on the episode thus:

"The Japanese capture of the island of Hainan would in normal circumstances have been an event of outrageous interest. To-day it passes with a mere ripple of comment. By the Convention of 1907 with France, Japan undertook not to do what precisely she has now done. For the past eighteen months she has assured France that she would not do it. Not only is Japan engaged upon a perhaps epoch-making enterprise in the Far East. She is also serving the purposes of Germany and Italy by a deliberate embarrassment of France. Yet she makes little progress in her real objective of conquering China. These things are historic in their magnitude. Yet the world has become callous, and hardly notices them."

Protests were made to Tokyo, but merely evoked the perfunctory explanation that the occupation was only "temporary," and was dictated by military considerations.

Meanwhile the Japanese continued their policy of

making life in the foreign concessions intolerable. At times food was prevented from reaching them, on other occasions barricades were erected around them. Protests were made in Tokyo by the representatives of Britain, France and the U.S.A. After a time the restrictions were somewhat relaxed, but later re-imposed in one form or another. The great inland waterway of China, the Yangtse, was and at the moment of writing is, kept closed to all but Japanese shipping. The aim of Tokyo in all this is quite clear: to put a stranglehold on all British, French and U.S.A. commerce in China.

It is true, as quoted on previous pages, that Japanese Ministers have repeatedly declared that they have no intention of excluding British, French and U.S.A. interests from participation in the future development of China; such statements have been prompted by the fact that they realize the importance of these countries and their Colonies as markets for Japanese goods. At the same time the Japanese have hit on a new device to exclude these countries from future trade with China and to destroy the value of their investments in that country.

The correspondent of the Press Association cabled from Shanghai, March 27, 1939.

"The anti-British campaign which has recently been waged by Chinese newspapers under direct or indirect control of the Japanese in the 'occupied' areas of China is being intensified.

"The Nanking paper, *Hsinpao* prints the following headlines in heavy type across its front page:

"Destroy the British flag, Boycott British goods. Confiscate British property in China. Recover all British

concessions. Drive every Briton in the country from our borders. Swear not to co-operate with Britons.'

"The *Sinshunpao* of Shanghai, declares: 'In order to save China the whole country should devote itself to an anti-British movement. We are living the life of slaves under the iron heels of British imperialists, as are our fellow-countrymen in Singapore, Hong Kong and Burma.

"'Not only should we overthrow the British imperialists but we must expel the British people from China. We should shout these mottoes—"Britain is the enemy of China." "Britain is the enemy of all nations in East Asia." "All China must unite to resist Britain." "East Asia should unite to drive the British people from the Far East."' [*Manchester Guardian*, 28 March, 1939].

The Times correspondent supplemented: "The spokesman of the Nanking regime who has again denounced Great Britain as one of the 'public enemies' of China, is reported to have urged that priority should be given to Germany and Italy when Japan reopens the Yangtse. Other puppet officials are urging that Chinese rivers should be permanently closed to British shipping." [*Times*, March 28, 1939.]

Perhaps the only encouraging reports which are now coming from China and Japan are that the first signs of war-weariness are showing themselves in Japan, but that on the other hand the determination to pursue the war to a successful conclusion is stronger than ever throughout China. The Japanese Militarists are hated even more in the occupied than in the unoccupied areas of China.

It is not out of place to recall that the results of the policy pursued in China by Japan, as they have affected British interests ever since 1931, prove beyond

a doubt the futility of the policy of "appeasement" in dealing with Fascist Powers. On the other hand, the policy advocated consistently by the U.S.S.R. of joint action to resist the aggressive Fascist Powers has been abundantly justified.

CHAPTER VIII

THE SOVIET-JAPANESE INCIDENT RESPECTING CHANGKUFENG

On July 15, 1938, the Japanese *Domei Agency* sent out a report from Hsinking (the capital of Manchukuo) that on Tuesday (July 12) Soviet troops had penetrated two miles into Manchukuo territory and occupied Changkufeng, a mountain of strategic importance, which overlooks Rashin. This port is the terminus of a railway to Hsinking, built since the Japanese occupation of Manchuria in 1931, which is the quickest and most important route for troops from Japan to the heart of Manchukuo.

Changkufeng also commands an extensive view of Possiet Bay, a large sheltered Soviet harbour adjoining the heavily fortified port of Vladivostock, which lies at the southern end of the Soviet maritime provinces, close to Korea. The report gave details of the activities of Soviet soldiers at Changkufeng.

The Japanese Foreign Office stated at the same time that the Japanese Government had lodged a strong protest, in the course of which they demanded the immediate withdrawal of Soviet troops from Changkufeng and a guarantee that Soviet troops would not again be sent into that area.

A Reuter message also stated that according to the Hsinking correspondent of the *Asahi* newspaper, troops in Manchukuo, in co-operation with the Kwan-

tung Army—Japan's mainland force—might take action if Moscow failed to accept the demand.

On the same date, July 15, the Soviet Foreign Commissariat, basing itself on the Chungchung Sino-Russian Treaty of 1869 and the maps attached thereto, pointed out that the territory in question belonged to the U.S.S.R. and rejected the Japanese protest.

On July 18, the Tokyo correspondent of the *Daily Telegraph*, in a message dated July 17, said:

"The Japanese Government is worried by the crossing of the Manchukuo frontier by Soviet soldiers, who have been entrenching themselves at Changkufeng, the important strategic mountain dominating the port of Rashin in Korea. Moscow has rejected Tokyo's protest, but a second and stronger one is expected.

"Officials describe the incident to me as the gravest since the Soviet and Manchukuo frontier forces clashed on the Amur River, during which a Soviet gunboat was sunk at Senukha Island, in June last year."

The Moscow correspondent of the *Daily Telegraph* on the other hand, stated that "Observers here are, however, not inclined to take the present conflict too seriously".

On July 20, the "second stronger" protest materialised. The Japanese Ambassador in Moscow, in an interview with M. Litvinov, stated that his Government, having studied the facts in the possession of the Manchukuo Government, had come to the conclusion that the area in question belonged to Manchukuo. He added that Manchukuans had stated that the mountain of Changkufeng had been used by them for religious purposes. The Soviet Government,

continued the Japanese Ambassador, had always manifested a desire for peace, and the preservation of the *status quo* in the frontier area, but now they are responsible for the violation of the *status quo*. The Japanese were not demanding the immediate delimitation of the Soviet-Manchukuo frontier, and only demanded the immediate withdrawal of the Soviet troops from the area in question, in order that peace and calm may be maintained.

In reply to this the Soviet Commissar for Foreign Affairs pointed out that the Soviet rejection of the Japanese demand was based on precise documents and maps showing the exact line of the frontier and demonstrating that the area in question was clearly in Soviet territory, and therefore, with the presentation of these documents the question cannot but be considered closed.

M. Litvinov expressed astonishment that as against these historical documents the Japanese Ambassador brought forward vague alleged facts and statements of anonymous Manchukuo individuals, none of which could be verified. The fact that the Changkufeng mountain is in Soviet territory is indisputable. Troops and war supplies have been sent there when necessary, also on other occasions.

M. Litvinov continued:

"The Soviet Government alone is competent to decide the movement of troops on Soviet territory and no interference and demands by other States can be permitted.

"Soviet troops in the area in question have no other aim than the maintenance of the *status quo* on our frontier. In contradistinction to other States, the Soviet Union maintains its army, not for the purpose of invading other

countries, but exclusively for the purpose of defending her own frontiers. The Red Army is fully aware of its responsibility to guard the Soviet frontiers against their violation. .... There is complete calm on the frontier and this calm can only be broken by the Japanese Manchurian side which alone will be responsible for the consequence. The Soviet troops do not threaten foreign territory on any of our frontiers."

M. Litvinov concluded that should the Japanese Government present the facts which Manchuria is stated to have in her possession, the Soviet Government would gladly examine them.

In reply, the Japanese Ambassador, M. Shigemitsu, expressed the view that the Japanese Government would not be satisfied with the reply of the Soviet People's Foreign Commissar. He, in particular, belittled the Soviet thesis in that it was based on "maps which had never been published". It was essential, he declared, to take steps to restore quiet on the frontier and to cool the atmosphere there, otherwise Japan would be driven to the conclusion that force would have to be applied. M. Shigemitsu also protested against the shooting of a Japanese policeman by Soviet soldiers.

Again replying to the Japanese Ambassador, M. Litvinov expressed amazement that an experienced diplomat like M. Shigemitsu should speak so contemptuously about official maps defining the frontiers between States. The question as to whether they had been published in no way affected their validity. He continued:

"It is strange to hear such a declaration on the part of

the representative of a Government which by no means regards it as obligatory to publish all the agreements which it concludes. The Japanese Government hardly considers that the secret agreements it had concluded are invalid merely because they have not been published. The demand, based on no documents whatever, to withdraw our troops is inacceptable. The Japanese Government would itself scarcely agree to alter the disposition of its army on such baseless demands.

"As for the threat to use force the Ambassador may perhaps consider it good diplomatic tactics to use such threats . . . some countries may be frightened and surrender to them, but he should surely know that such tactics will not succeed in Moscow."

As for the shot Japanese policeman, concluded M. Litvinov, he was on Soviet territory at the time where he had no business to be.

Other incidents were also touched on at this interview.

On July 24, 1938, it was reported by the *Daily Telegraph's* Tokyo correspondent that in spite of a number of other incidents, the position was much calmer, and on July 25, 1938, the same correspondent sent the following significant cable:

"A staff officer of the Korean garrison, who has returned to Seoul, the capital, after a week's inspection at Changkufeng and other areas on the Soviet-Manchukuo frontier, stated to-day that the situation was not so serious as had been reported.

"It was true, he continued, that the Soviet was fortifying Changkufeng and strengthening its armed forces in that area, 'but,' he added, 'it did not appear to be making any war preparations.'

"Developments of the last two days, and a more reassuring tone in the Press reports on the situation are leading the Japanese people to believe that danger has been averted. This belief has created a feeling of relief."

Two instructive circumstances cannot but strike one in the whole incident: (1) the dropping by Japan of all pretence of the independence of Manchukuo; (2) the demonstration once again of the effectiveness of using the only language which the Fascists understand, e.g., firmness in maintaining one's rights and the treatment of their threats with contempt.

In connection with the Japanese blustering threats, it is interesting to note that on July 17, 1938, a number of international news agencies received and spread reports that Siberia was under martial law and that troops were being sent to Eastern Siberia from other parts of the U.S.S.R. A similar report, for instance, was printed in the *Daily Express* on July 19 from their Warsaw Correspondent.

Actually, there was not a word of truth in this report, and subsequently it became known that it was communicated from Berlin to London and purported to come from the Berlin branch of an important American news agency. The Berlin branch stated that their report was based on a telephone wire received by them from their Moscow correspondent. However, according to the Soviet Press, the American journalist in question had sent no such report to his agency.

The Soviet Press quite justifiably expressed their amazement as to how it came about that the Berlin

branch of the American Agency accepted such a sensational report in good faith and without verification, and sent it to London as a report from its Moscow correspondent!

It is evident that whatever the exact details of the fabrication of this falsehood, some dirty provocative hand had been at work.

What was the object? Was it the hope that if such sensational "news" reached Japan it might raise the war fever and so perhaps provoke hostilities on a large scale in the Far East, which would serve the double purpose of interrupting the peaceful progress of the U.S.S.R. in the construction of Socialism, and at the same time divert the attention of the European countries from the nefarious preparations which Germany was at that time making for an attack on Czechoslovakia?

Pravda, of July 22, 1938, commenting on this and similar fabrications, declared:

"It is necessary to stress that all this constitutes a great danger to the general peace. European and American readers when they see a disturbing report in a journal or from an agency which has a so-called solid reputation, do not suspect that this report has been fabricated from beginning to end by some agent of the German or Japanese Intelligence Service.

"False information forms one of the most essential instruments in the preparation for war. Lying propaganda and provocative inventions was one of the most widespread methods used by the capitalist Intelligence Services in the last war for undermining the position of the other side. . . . But the Fascist organizers of a new war are utilizing lying and provocative propaganda on a far

larger scale than did the Intelligence Services of the belligerents in 1914 to 1918.

"We know it is not alone against the U.S.S.R. that this poisonous propaganda of the aggressors is being directed. It is but necessary to recall the recent Berlin fabrication about mobilization in Czechoslovakia, which was put into circulation almost simultaneously with the inventions regarding Soviet mobilization.

"This time the slanderers have been caught red-handed, but it is necessary to watch most attentively their further manoeuvres."

Fierce fighting took place for the possession of the hill Changkufeng, until an armistice was finally negotiated. Here it is not our intention to go into the details of the ebb and flow of the battle, the attacks and counter-attacks. A brief outline will be sufficient.

Japan, on August 2, 1938, "showed her might" to the Soviet Union. *The Times* Tokyo correspondent cabled:

"It was learned to-night that, as a demonstration of strength, Japanese aircraft had flown during the day along the eastern frontier of Manchukuo. It was emphasized that the machines did not pass over Soviet territory, did not engage in any hostile action, and were not challenged. The number of aircraft which took part has not been disclosed." [*Times*, August 3, 1938.]

If the Japanese thought that this demonstration would weaken Soviet determination they were soon disillusioned. The correspondent in the same cable laconically added: "Soviet troops launched an attack

at nightfall in the disputed Changkufeng and Shatsaoping area."

A Reuter reporter cabled from Yuki (Korea), August 9, 1938:

"To-day, from a shell-torn railway station two miles from the battlefield, I watched the Soviet heavy artillery mercilessly tearing up the countryside along the entire four-mile border front.

"The position in the front line was obscure, but it was clear that the Soviet artillery completely dominated every height in Japanese hands, from Shatsaoping, on their left flank, to 'Hill 52', on their right.

"The bombardment was accurate and methodical. Soviet guns ranged from height to height, spreading devastation.

"It was noticeable, however, that the crest of the hill was neglected by the gunners, which suggested that it had already been evacuated by the Japanese." [*Daily Express*, August 10, 1938.]

Whilst the fighting raged and the Soviet artillerymen showed their mettle and revealed to Tokyo that superiority of equipment was certainly not on the Japanese side, as it was in the Russo-Japanese war of 1904–5, diplomacy was at work trying to settle the dispute.

The Japanese Ambassador in Moscow, M. Shigemitsu called on M. Litvinov on the afternoon of August 4, 1938, and on behalf of his Government proposed "the cessation of hostilities in the disputed zone—on condition that the Soviet accepted in principle a solution of the conflict by diplomatic means. Japan, he stated, would then be ready to

discuss in special negotiations the question of Soviet claims in this particular zone." [*Daily Telegraph*, August 5, 1938.]

He added: "Tokyo would then try to formulate concrete proposals for demarcating the Soviet-Manchurian frontier as a whole, preferably by means of a mixed commission representing the three interested States—Japan, Manchukuo and the Soviet Union—which would examine all the data in their possession." [ibid.]

The representative of Tokyo was faced with the iron determination of the Soviet Government. M. Litvinov replied: "If the Japanese Government really had peaceful intentions, the acts of the Japanese military authorities are not in harmony with them. Japan's night attack on a Soviet frontier post, supported by artillery fire, could be called peaceful activity only ironically. The present incident arose solely as a result of these acts, without which there would never have been any frontier incident at all." [ibid.]

The Soviet Commissar continued: "If the Japanese now cease attacking Soviet territory and recall their troops remaining on that territory, then the Soviet troops would no longer have any reason to go on fighting, and the Soviet will be ready to discuss such proposals as the Japanese Government may make." [ibid.]

However, added, M. Litvinov, "the inviolability of the Soviet frontier, as fixed by the Russo-Chinese Treaty of Chunghung, 1869, and the maps annexed thereto, must be established." [ibid.]

No agreement was reached, but M. Shigemitsu

again communicated with his Government. The Ambassador's report would seem to have convinced Tokyo that Soviet nerves were not in the slightest affected by bluff and bullying. At any rate on the following day the *Daily Telegraph's* Tokyo correspondent cabled: "I am authoritatively informed that the reply by M. Litvinov, the Soviet Foreign Commissar, to Japan's proposal for a truce in the disputed frontier zone of Changkufeng is considered here to be "roughly acceptable". Tension is greatly eased in Tokyo, despite the continuance of sporadic fighting at Changkufeng to-day. A spokesman of the Japanese Government informs me that the prospects of a cessation of hostilities are now much brighter." [*Daily Telegraph*, August 6, 1938.]

Such conciliatory sentiments sounded very strange on official Japanese lips. One can imagine the oft humiliated diplomatic representatives in Tokyo, of Great Britain, France and the U.S.A., exchanging meaning looks and muttering, "if only our Governments had the grit of the Soviets."

Again on August 7, 1938, M. Shigemitsu called on M. Litvinov and proposed that a mutual cease-fire order should be issued and that both sides should continue to occupy the positions held at the moment of the truce. This offer M. Litvinov also rejected and declared that hostilities would cease when Japan agreed to recognize the frontier established in the Sino-Russian Treaty of 1869.

"The Soviet Foreign Commissar," cabled the *Daily Telegraph's* correspondent, "formally warned Tokyo that 'the Kwantung and Korean armies must be compelled to respect existing frontiers'. Otherwise,

the Soviet would take 'severe measures'." [*Daily Telegraph*, August 8, 1938.]

On the same day, Sunday, August 7, 1938, Reuter's correspondent sent the following cable from Moscow:

"Japanese troops have been driven from Soviet territory on the Manchukuo border, according to an Army communiqué issued to-day.

"It alleges that the Japanese launched an offensive on Friday, the day after the Japanese Ambassador had made his 'peace' proposal. Japanese artillery is stated to have been silenced after a duel lasting three to four hours, followed by the Soviet forces counter-attacking with the use of 'planes, and 'firmly' occupying border posts claimed by the Soviet Union." [*Manchester Guardian*, August 8, 1938.]

This victory of the Soviet troops, in the opinion of some observers, taught Tokyo an additional salutary lesson. "Foreign observers believe," cabled the *Daily Express* correspondent, from Moscow, "the new Soviet military victory changes the entire aspect of the situation, and that a peaceful solution will soon by found." [*Daily Express*, August 8, 1938.]

The same journal's Tokyo correspondent cabled on the following day: "To-day's fighting coincided with the dismaying news that Moscow has again rejected the peace offers of Japan." [*Daily Express*, August 9, 1938.]

On the other hand, nerves were calm in the Soviet Foreign Office. On the same day, August 8th, a representative of the *Daily Telegraph* in Moscow cabled:

"But on the whole M. Litvinov appeared to show

supreme confidence—not only because of his resolute personal qualities in such discussions, but because he probably felt that the Soviet's diplomatic and military positions on the Changkufeng front were strong.

"I was personally struck by the more confident tone the Soviet Commissar showed yesterday, when he threatened to bomb from the air any Japanese units violating the Soviet frontier. It was also worth noting his apparent present readiness to wait, basing his case on the Treaty, for the Japanese to make a satisfactory offer for an armistice." [*Daily Telegraph*, August 9, 1938.]

Meanwhile, in Berlin, Japan was testing the value of the anti-Comintern Agreement. The Mikado learned if he had had any illusions on the matter that the Nazis have a healthy respect for the fighting forces of the Soviet Union.

The Berlin correspondent of *The Times* cabled from that city, August 9, 1938:

"The Foreign Minister, Herr von Ribbentrop, who is on holiday at his country house at Freienwalde, near Berlin, last evening received an unexpected visit from the Japanese Ambassador, Mr. Togo. A general discussion took place with particular reference to the threatening situation on the Soviet-Manchukuo frontier, and the position of Germany as a member of the 'Anti-Comintern Triangle'.

"It is understood that Herr von Ribbentrop, while assuring the Ambassador of moral support in the event of a Japanese conflict with Russia, gave no indication that the scope of Germany's present obligations would be extended." [*Times*, August 10, 1938.]

The correspondent added the significant words: "While it is earnestly hoped here that the present

incident may not develop into a serious struggle between Russia and Japan, there are evident signs of pessimism." [ibid.]

Meanwhile fighting continued around Changkufeng, but the Soviet forces held the recaptured ground.

The exact position on August 10, 1938, according to a Moscow communiqué was: "Soviet troops are now holding a line which coincides with the frontier, except in the area of Bezymyani Hill, where the Japanese have a wedge 200 metres wide into Soviet territory. On the other hand, the Soviet troops hold a salient extending for some 300 metres into Manchurian territory." [*Manchester Guardian*, August 11, 1938.]

That was the military position on August 10, 1938. At midnight on the same day a truce was signed, which came into operation at 1.30 p.m., August 11, 1938, under which "both the Soviet and the Japanese troops remain on the lines they occupied at 12.0 midnight on August 10, 1938," which meant that the strategically important Hill Changkufeng remained in the possession of the Soviet troops.

A few days later the *Journal de Moscou* declared: "Changkufeng Hill remains and will remain in the hands of the Soviet."

The Journal continued:

"Japanese militarists will have to recognize facts, no matter how unpleasant they may be for them. Japanese attacks in the region of Lake Hassan (where the hill is) were repulsed and Japanese militarists were compelled to consent to preserve the location of troops as stipulated in the agreement.

"The events in the Far East have revealed not only the power of the Soviet Union and the unpreparedness of Japan for war against her, but also that the Japanese hopes for practical assistance from Germany were nothing but an illusion."

Foreign reactions to the episode are instructive. "The armistice between Russia and Japan," cabled the Berlin correspondent of the *Daily Telegraph*, "has been heartily welcomed in official circles here."

"The armistice," cabled the same journal's Moscow correspondent, "is, on the whole, a great success for Moscow."

Editorially *The Times* commented: "Close study of the war communiqués issued in Moscow and Tokyo suggests that the Russians have probably had the best of it on the whole. . . . Whatever the final outcome of her tilting match with Russia, its immediate results can only be adverse for Japan." [*Times*, August 12, 1938.]

And as regards Japan—"All the newspapers publish leading articles to-day on the agreement," cabled *The Times* Tokyo correspondent. "The sentiments expressed are relief and gratification that the Soviet Government have seen the light." [*Times*, August 13, 1938.]

The episode taught the Japanese Government several salutary lessons and at the November 7, 1938, celebrations in Moscow a stern warning was given to Tokyo that what they received in the fighting around Changkufeng was only a slight foretaste of what they would get should they attempt a large-scale attack on Soviet territory. Said M. Voroshilov, the Commissar for War:

"It is now clear to everyone that the messieurs, the Japanese generals from the Korean and Kwantung armies, dreamed of 'gaining the reputation of a big bully without too much fighting'. They thought they would easily, quickly, and cheaply get a piece of Soviet soil and loudly shout of their prowess and the weakness of the Red Army to the whole world.

They erred badly. The Red Army beat them severely. It should be remembered that Messieurs the Japanese generals, who obviously had already been dreaming of rewards, did not, of course, want to be beaten and they exercised all their persistence and threw their large, picked forces against Red Army troops, but, notwithstanding this, they were smashed and completely routed.

"We do not know, however, how good is the memory of these gentlemen, how well they learn their lessons. But if the object lesson at Lake Hassan is insufficient, if the enemy is capable of forgetting the crushing force of Soviet arms and the heroism of the Red Fighters and their commanders, we must tell them: gentlemen, what you have received at Hassan are only the 'blossoms', but the 'fruits', the real 'fruits', are still ahead."

The Commissar gave an additional warning. He continued: "Let those whom it behoves not to forget, remember that we are not at all obliged always to limit the actions of our troops to the district which the enemy stealthily and impudently attacks. On the contrary, it is more handy and easier for us to smash the enemy on his own territory. And so it will be—we shall answer any attack and blow by triple blows of the entire might of our valiant Red Army."

How does the U.S.S.R. stand to-day militarily *vis-a-vis* Japan? That authoritative U.S.A. publica-

tion *Foreign Policy Report* in its issue dated February 1, 1939, stated:

"At the opening of 1939 the U.S.S.R. occupies a stronger position relatively to Japan than at any time since the recent era of disorder began in East Asia on September 18, 1931. The intervening years have enabled the Soviet Union to overcome the glaring disabilities which it faced in the 1931–3 period. Japan alone can no longer compete on equal terms with the scale and tempo of Soviet industrialization. The mechanical equipment of the Far Eastern Army as demonstrated at Changkufeng is superior to that of the Japanese armed forces. The special character of the hostilities at Changkufeng, moreover, where the Russian troops carried a line of hills by frontal assault with little room for manoeuvring, tend to discount the widely expressed belief that the morale of the Soviet Army has been seriously impaired by executions and replacements in the ranks of its officers. Japan's main advantages have been its nearness to the scene of action and its ability to rapidly mass superior numbers for attack. To-day, however, nearly a million Japanese troops are dispersed over wide areas of China from the Great Wall to Canton. In addition the Soviet Far Eastern Army possesses a more self-sufficient economic base in Eastern Siberia, while new railway construction has brought this region into closer contact with European Russia. There is finally a highly developed Soviet fortification system along the Amur salient, as well as the undisclosed potentialities of an air offensive against Japan's industrial nerve centres."

The report concludes: "These factors should serve to reduce the likelihood of war between Japan and the U.S.S.R. in the near future."

CHAPTER IX

THE ANNEXATION OF AUSTRIA

THE international status of Austria was thus explained in *The Bulletin of International News*,[1] March 5, 1938:

"In the first place, the Treaty of Versailles (Article 80) and the Treaty of St. Germain (Article 88) laid down that the independence of Austria was inalienable except with the consent of the Council of the League of Nations, and by the latter Treaty Austria undertook 'to abstain from any act which might directly or indirectly or by any means whatever compromise her independence. . . .' Further, in Protocol No. 1 of October 4, 1922, whereby the economic reconstruction of Austria was carried out under the auspices of the League, the Austrian Government reaffirmed the provisions of Article 88 of the Treaty of St. Germain. Finally, the same obligations were once more recognized in the Agreement of July 15, 1932, whereby the Governments of Belgium, France, Italy, and the United Kingdom guaranteed a further loan to Austria."

In addition there was the general obligation to defend the independence of Austria arising for Members of the League who, by their signature of the Covenant, have undertaken under Article 10, "to respect and preserve as against external aggression the territorial integrity and existing political independence of all members of the League."

[1] Published by the Royal Institute of International Affairs.

From the date of the establishment of the Nazi Government in Germany it became known throughout Austria, and for that matter throughout the world, that unless all the peace-minded Powers in Europe jointly declared their determination to resist a German violation of Austria's frontiers, Austria sooner or later would be absorbed by the Reich.

The Nazi Government had developed to a fine art the method of uttering soothing assurances whilst preparing for a lightning military stroke. As mentioned on an earlier page, an Austrian-German Agreement had been concluded on July 11, 1936, under which Germany recognized the full sovereignty of Austria and pledged herself not to intervene in her internal affairs. Immediately after the conclusion of this Agreement there may have been some falling off in German subsidized agitation in Austria, but it was in full blast some months later, so much so that the Austrian Government, March 19, 1937, issued a strong protest in which it declared that the leading German newspapers, acting on official instructions, "constantly attacked Austria, interfere daily in Austrian domestic affairs, encourage opposition activities in Austria, exaggerate political or economic difficulties or record them with satisfaction, give undue prominence to mishaps which might happen anywhere in the world, and do not shrink from calumny and lies." [*Times*, March 20, 1937.]

Later the Austrian official press pathetically sent out signals of distress and made appeals for help to the Western democracies, but these signals and appeals did not lead to any effective action on the part of Britain and France.

In August, 1937, Berlin compelled Vienna to permit the sale of *Mein Kampf* throughout Austria, and during the rest of the year the Nazi official press continued their inflammatory attacks against the Austrian Government.

It was not difficult to see where all this was leading, but that did not prevent Hitler when he met the diplomatic corps, January 11, 1938, from talking peace. He solemnly told the assembled diplomats that the Government of the Reich was working for conciliation, peace and prosperity in internal affairs and that its foreign policy was governed by similar considerations. He declared:

"We are therefore willing to collaborate honourably and trustingly with all nations and States that share this opinion; and we are willing to give practical expression to this endeavour. The German people will prefer peace endeavours that are truly constructive in the service of general progress to any destructive warfare. . . . The German national and State leadership looks forward confidently to such sincere understanding between nations." [*Times*, January 12, 1938.]

Hitler's actions soon belied his words. In the second week of February, the Austrian Chancellor, Dr. Schuschnigg, was peremptorily ordered to present himself to Hitler at Berchtesgaden; on February 12, 1938, Schuschnigg did so and was told that he must include several Austrian Nazis in his Government and, in particular, place one of Hitler's nominees in charge of the police. Three days later German troops began to mass near the Austrian frontiers.

In the early hours of February 16, 1938, the Austrian

Cabinet was reconstructed in accordance with Hitler's demands.

These included, cabled the *Daily Telegraph* Correspondent from Vienna:

"Placing the control of police and other security services in the unfettered hands of the pro-Nazi, Dr. Seyss-Inquart.

"Promotion of Dr. Schmidt, the Germanophile Foreign Under-Secretary, to be Foreign Minister, free from the control of Dr. Schuschnigg, the Chancellor, who has hitherto held the portfolio." [*Daily Telegraph*, February 16, 1938.]

The Correspondent added: "Austria has surrendered to the demands of Herr Hitler, and thereby virtually sacrificed her independence."

Next Hitler compelled the new Austrian Government to repatriate 5,000 of the Austrian Nazi Legion who had fled to the Reich after the assassination of Herr Dolfuss in 1934. The aim of this demand was to enable these people to return to Austria and stir up trouble so as to provide Hitler with an excuse for invading that country "to restore order".

The hard pressed Austrian Government turned to the Western democracies and Italy. The last named was powerless, Britain and France gave verbal sympathy, and even that was tardy, but nothing more. As late as on February 22, 1938, the British Foreign Secretary, Sir John Simon, informed the House of Commons that he was not in a position to make a statement regarding Austria.

However, M. Delbos, the French Foreign Minister, speaking in the French Chamber, February 26, 1938,

declared: "The independence of Austria is an essential element in the maintenance of European peace", but he gave no indication as to what his Government intended doing to preserve this "essential element".

These soft words found no response in Germany, on the contrary, they called forth more threats and bombast. General Goering in a broadcast speech to the German people and the German Air Force, on March 1, 1938, obviously referring to Austria and Czechoslovakia, said:

"The Fuehrer proudly proclaimed that we would no longer tolerate the oppression of 10,000,000 Germans beyond our frontiers. You soldiers of the Air Force know that, if need be, you must stake your lives in support of the Fuehrer's words." [*Daily Telegraph*, March 2, 1938.]

On the following day the British Prime Minister, Mr. Neville Chamberlain, informed the House of Commons that "His Majesty's Government obviously cannot disinterest themselves in events in Central Europe" and that it "will continue to watch what goes on in Austria with the closest possible attention and interest."

This hesitant and ambiguous answer naturally encouraged the more reckless elements in the German Government.

Chancellor Schuschnigg, with the object of strengthening the hands of his Government in its dealings with Germany, announced on March 9, 1938, that a plebiscite would be held on the following Sunday which would give the country an opportunity of showing to the world that it desired "a free and independent Austria". Hitler and the Nazis generally

were furious, he and they knew that an honest plebiscite would give an overwhelming majority against an Anschluss. Next day the *Daily Telegraph* correspondent cabled from Vienna:

"Violent disorders broke out throughout Austria yesterday, following Dr. Schuschnigg's announcement on Wednesday night that a plebiscite was to be held on Sunday on the question of a 'free German Austria.'

"The Nazis, furious at the Chancellor's action in suddenly taking them at their word, organized demonstrations in every big town. The demand for a plebiscite has been the first point in their programme for four years." [*Daily Telegraph*, March 11, 1938.]

On the same day as these happenings were taking place throughout Austria, the British Foreign Secretary had a long conversation in London with the German Ambassador, Herr von Ribbentrop, in the course of which the latter, so it was reported, was warned that His Majesty's Government took a very grave view of Germany's policy towards Austria. On the evening of that day, whilst the final arrangements were being hurried forward in Germany for an invasion and annexation of Austria, Herr von Ribbentrop was entertaining the British Prime Minister and other members of the British Government at the German Embassy in London.

The Times, March 11, 1938, reported: "Yesterday evening the German Foreign Minister and Frau von Ribbentrop gave a large farewell reception at the German Embassy. The guests included Mr. and Mrs. Chamberlain, other members of the British Cabinet, and almost the whole of the Diplomatic Corps."

Next day, March 11, the German Government sent two ultimatums to Vienna. The first demanded the cancellation of the plebiscite and the resignation of Dr. Schuschnigg. The second demanded that Dr. Seyss-Inquart should become Chancellor and that the new Cabinet should have a two-thirds Nazi majority. The Austrian Government was helpless, because German troops were waiting on its frontier, and the "fifth column" was equipped and ready within its frontiers.

The British Minister strongly protested to the Wilhelmstrasse:

"On instructions from His Majesty's Government the British Ambassador in Berlin, in reference to the contents of the second German ultimatum, registered a protest in the strongest possible terms against such a use of coercion backed by force against an independent State in order to create a situation incompatible with its national independence.

"Such action, it was pointed out, is bound to produce the gravest reactions, of which it is impossible to foretell the issue." [*News Chronicle*, March 12, 1938.]

A protest in similar terms was lodged by the French Minister.

Whilst these episodes were happening in Austria and Germany the British Prime Minister and Mrs. Chamberlain were entertaining Herr von Ribbentrop and his wife to lunch at 10 Downing Street. Regarding this function we read: "But when other guests left shortly after 3.30 p.m. Herr von Ribbentrop remained in conversation with the Premier, Lord Halifax, and Sir Alexander Cadogan, Permanent Under-Secretary

at the Foreign Office, for twenty minutes' discussion, in which the British views on Austria were expressed." [*Manchester Guardian*, March 12, 1938.]

The German Government regarded these protests as mere perfunctory jabberings, and treated them with ill-concealed contempt. Schuschnigg resigned. In his farewell message to the Austrian people he said: "We yield to force because we do not want to spill German blood." At 10 p.m. the same day German troops crossed the frontier. On March 13 the Anschluss was announced and on the following day Hitler entered Vienna with the applause of the Nazis, native and imported.

An indication of the terrorism imposed on Austria by its new masters may be gauged from the following extract sent to *The Times* from its Vienna Correspondent two days later: "The roll of suicide, most of which are not reported here, grows daily longer."

Next Hitler summoned the German Reichstag to hear his report on the annexation of Austria, and without a blush on his cheek told that august body on March 18, 1938, that "Germany only wants peace. She does not want to add to the sorrows of other nations."

However, every serious student of international affairs knew that Czechoslovakia was next marked down for destruction.

CHAPTER X

THE BETRAYAL OF CZECHOSLOVAKIA

THE Czechoslovak State (as it existed up till the Munich "Agreement") came into existence on October 28, 1918, and was formally recognized by the Allied and Associated Powers by the Peace Treaty, September 10, 1919, known as the Treaty of St. Germain.

The population of the Republic consisted of 9,688,700 Czechoslovaks, 3,231,688 Germans, 691,923 Hungarians, 549,169 Russians, 81,737 Poles, 186,642 Jews, 49,636 others, and 249,971 aliens.[1]

Under the Treaty and the Constitution equal rights were guaranteed to all citizens without distinction of nationality and the minorities were assured the maintenance of their own schools.

It is true that at various times spokesmen of the minorities asserted that the rights guaranteed them under the Contitution remained often unfulfilled in practice, and there can be no reasonable doubt that this was the case, but there was a consensus of opinion among competent foreign observers that not one of the States which had come into existence as a result of the post-war Peace Treaties treated its minorities with such comparative fairness and consideration as the Czechoslovak Republic. It is an unchallengeable fact that little was heard of the woes of the Sudeten-

[1] Authority: *The Statesman's Year Book*, 1937.

Deutsch, the German minority in Czechoslovakia, until the Nazi Government was in a position to threaten to invade the country.

The Czechoslovak-German crisis may be said to have made its definite appearance on the European horizon when Hitler speaking February 20, 1938, said that there were 10,000,000 Germans living in neighbouring States who had been prevented from uniting with the Reich, and that the human political and philosophical freedom of these Germans was a duty which devolved on the new Reich.

It was clear that one of the States he had in mind was Czechoslovakia. The Czechoslovak Prime Minister, referring to this speech at a joint session of Parliament, March 4, 1938, replied that, "It is an historic fact that more than 3,000,000 Germans have their homes in Czechoslovakia. Surely the Peace Conference could not do otherwise than confirm a situation which had been in existence many centuries. It is but natural that Czechoslovakia emphasizes—I say this fully conscious of the importance of the statement—that her frontiers are absolutely inviolable. He continued: "Czechoslovakia guarantees equal rights to all her citizens without distinction of nationality, and looks after their interests with their own co-operation."

On the following day President Benes said that in the matter of education they had done more for the German minority than was demanded under the treaties. He admitted that as regards employment in the State services, owing to the difficulty of finding suitable men with a knowledge of both languages, there was leeway to be made up, but he was certain that this difficulty could be overcome. It is incon-

testable that a reasonable adjustment could easily have been worked out had Berlin so desired.

On March 11, 1938, German troops crossed the Austrian frontier, and two days later Austria was declared a State of the German Reich. Was Czechoslovakia next marked down for destruction?

Competent observers had no illusions on the matter. Others, like Mr. Neville Chamberlain, apparently had. M. Maxim Litvinov was one of the observers who had no illusions. On behalf of his Government, on March 18, 1938, he sent a Note to the Governments of Great Britain, France and the U.S.A., proposing a meeting of representatives of the four Powers to consider collective measures for preventing further aggression. Among other things, the Note stated:

"The present international situation puts before the peace-loving countries, and, in particular, before the big Powers, the question of their responsibility for the future fate of the peoples of Europe and elsewhere.

"The Soviet Government is conscious of the obligations devolving on it from the Covenant of the League, the Briand-Kellogg Pact and its treaties of mutual assistance concluded with France and Czechoslovakia.

"I am, therefore, in a position to state on its behalf that it is prepared, as hitherto, to participate in collective action, the scope of which should have as its aim the stopping of the further development of aggression and the elimination of the increased danger of a new world slaughter.

"The Soviet Government is prepared to begin immediately, together with other States in the League of Nations or outside it, the consideration of practical measures called for by the present circumstances.

"To-morrow it may be too late, but to-day the time has

not yet passed if all the States, and especially the Great Powers, will adopt a firm and unequivocal stand in regard to the problems of the collective saving of peace."

The subject was discussed in the House of Commons, March 24, 1938, and the Prime Minister, Mr. Neville Chamberlain airily replied that the Soviet "proposal would appear to involve less a consultation with a view to settlement than a concerting of action against an eventuality that has not yet arisen."

In the same speech the Prime Minister refused to join with France in guaranteeing the independence of Czechoslovakia and naïvely added that "So far as Czechoslovakia is concerned, it seems to His Majesty's Government that now is the time when all the resources of diplomacy should be enlisted in the cause of peace. *They have been glad to take note of and in no way underrate the definite assurances given by the German Government as to their attitude.*" [*Hansard*, March 24, 1938. Col. 1409 (italics ours.).]

It is no exaggeration to say that that speech sealed the fate of Czechoslovakia as a sovereign State, sealed the fate of France as a first-class Power, and perhaps sealed much more as well.

Is it really possible that the Prime Minister, when he made these pronouncements, did not visualize how they would be interpreted in Berlin?

It is credibly reported that on the following day a member of the diplomatic corps in Berlin met a high official of the Wilhelmstrasse and asked him, "How do you interpret the British Prime Minister's speech?" The German replied, "It is quite clear. The British

bull-dog will bark, but he won't bite. Chamberlain has muzzled him securely." This reply, in our judgment, accurately reflected the reactions of the Nazi Government. The rejection of the Soviet offer meant that there would be no staff talks and therefore no action. Words? Yes! Protests? Yes! But action? No! Emphatically no! The German plans for the dismemberment and subjugation of Czechoslovakia were now pushed forward, albeit step by step, always with a watchful eye on the reactions in London and Paris. Germany was being psychologically prepared. Articles appeared in the Nazi Press describing the "Czech terrorism" in the Sudeten lands, and declaring that the Government was incapable of maintaining order in these districts.

The Czechoslovak military review *Branna Politika* published statistics demonstrating that during the two months ending July 21, 1938, the Nazi wireless service had insulted the army on 100 occasions; had disparaged the local authorities and legal institutions on 172 occasions; had denounced the Czechoslovak Government on 194 occasions; and had made statements which amounted to interference on behalf of the Sudeten-Deutsch on 336 occasions.

The German Minister in Prague, May 27, 1938, made a protest to the Government, alleging that between May 12 and 24, Czech military aeroplanes had flown over German territory. Prague countered by a protest to the Wilhelmstrasse to the effect that German aircraft had flown over Czechoslovak territory on 22 occasions, and that the number of the German machines far out-numbered those of Czechoslovakia. Prague was always willing to investigate such charges

and make reasonable amends, but Berlin treated all such protests with contempt.

Many methods were being employed by the Reich Government to intimidate the non-Nazi population of the Sudeten districts. For instance, towards the end of June, 1938, the Czech police discovered that the Sudeten Nazi secret police had compiled a list of 1,200 Socialists and Liberals marked down for persecution.

Meanwhile, within Czechoslovakia, other developments were going forward rapidly. The Government was more than anxious to come to a settlement with the Sudeten Germans so long as the sovereignty of the country was preserved; at the same time the diplomatic representatives of Great Britain and France acted as henchmen of the Nazi Fascist Governments in urging Prague to go to the extreme limits of concession.

The Government, which was a coalition of several parties, and therefore had many internal adjustments to arrange, was busy drawing up a Nationalities Statute and it invited the Sudeten Nazis to tabulate their demands. This the latter did in a memorandum dated June 7, 1938. The proposals were such that their acceptance would have destroyed Czechoslovakia as a sovereign State. In brief, the memorandum demanded that the Republic should be split up into national groups and that each group should have quasi-sovereign power, including control of the police, education, pre-military training and local finance. It is not difficult to imagine how easily—had these conditions been granted—a local Nazi Government could have been established in the Sudeten lands and

an excuse found to invite German troops to march in.

Despite these facts the Government agreed to accept both the Nationalities Statute and the Sudeten Memorandum as a basis for discussion.

It was announced in Prague, July 25, 1938, that the British Government had suggested and the Czechoslovak Government had agreed to accept Lord Runciman as a standing adviser to the Government, and even as late as this date the Sudeten Nazi Leader, Herr Henlein, declared, "I absolutely rule out war as a possible solution of our Sudeten difficulties, no matter how the negotiations turn out. There will be no war as far as we are concerned. We do not want our borderland homes converted into battlefields." He added, however, that nothing short of complete local autonomy would satisfy his party and that they were only prepared to leave to the Central Government matters of defence and foreign affairs.

Lord Runciman's arrival was apparently welcomed by the Government parties and certainly by the Sudeten Nazis; moreover it is significant that the Deutsche Diplomatisch-politische Korrespondenz declared that Lord Runciman's mission would be "to expose the Czech subterfuges". Certainly from the date of His Lordship's arrival the conduct of the Reich Government and the demands of the Sudeten Nazis became more truculent. We would add here that the Czechoslovak Government, August 7, 1938, in a statement declared that since May 20, 1938, German aeroplanes had violated their frontiers no less than 74 times. These flights were intended to serve a double purpose; to intimidate the population and to gather military information.

Lord Runciman met representatives of all parties and nationalities and, thanks to his efforts, a meeting took place, August 17, 1938, between the Political Committee of the Cabinet and five delegates from the Sudeten German Party so that the latter could state their views respecting the Nationalities Statute and cognate matters. The meeting was without positive results. Herr Kundt, during the course of the discussion said that there was an "unbridgeable gulf" between the two parties. That made the prospect look rather hopeless, but apparently the Wilhelmstrasse was determined to kill what little hope still existed for a settlement which would preserve Czechoslovakia as a sovereign State.

London, Paris and Moscow were naturally following closely what was happening and warnings were issued from all capitals. Sir John Simon, speaking at Lanark, August 27, 1938, declared:

"In the case of Czechoslovakia . . . the position of Britain has been fully and accurately declared in Mr. Chamberlain's speech in Parliament on March 24 of this year. That declaration holds good to-day. There is nothing to add or to vary in its content.

"As a Government we have recognized in Czechoslovakia a real problem which urgently needs to be solved. And we are convinced that, given goodwill on all sides, it should be possible to find a solution which is just to all legitimate interests. . . . For in the modern world, there is no limit to the reactions of war. This very case of Czechoslovakia may be so critical for the future of Europe that it would be impossible to assume a limit to the disturbance that a conflict might involve." [*Times*, August 29, 1938.]

The French Foreign Minister, M. Bonnet, on September 1, 1938, received the German Ambassador and warned him that France was determined to honour her obligations to Czechoslovakia in the event of an unprovoked attack by Germany.

As to the attitude of the U.S.S.R.—there was certainly no dubiety. The *Daily Telegraph's* correspondent cabled from Moscow, September 5, 1938:

"The Soviet will, foreign observers believe, honour her signature on her pact of mutual assistance with the Czechs and go to their help in the event of unprovoked German aggression, provided France does the same.

"She will, it is held, help them and the French by 'every possible means'. That is the formula used by M. Litvinov, Foreign Commissar, in all diplomatic conversations.

"He has, I understand, given assurances to this effect to France and Czechoslovakia and has also made the Soviet attitude quite clear to Germany." [*Daily Telegraph*, September 6, 1938.]

According to the correspondent, M. Litvinov's actual words to the German Ambassador were: "The Soviet Union has promised to help Czechoslovakia. She will keep her word and do her best." [ibid.]

It would appear, however, that Berlin was steadily becoming more certain that the solemn warnings of London and Paris would never be translated into action. At any rate, Herr Henlein, after a visit to Berchtesgaden, in the course of a speech at Karlsbad, September 14, 1938, declared that "only an immediate and full realization of the Karlsbad programme could bring any improvement."

The spirit of the Karlsbad programme was summed up in Henlein's own words as follows:

"We solemnly and openly declare that our policy is inspired by the principles and ideas of National-Socialism. If Czech statesmen want to reach a permanent understanding with us Germans and with the German Reich they will have to fulfil our demand for a complete revision of Czech foreign policy, which up to to-day has led the State into the ranks of the enemies of the German people."

During all this the Czechoslovak Government never lost its *sang froid*, and on September 6, 1938, Dr. Benes received the leaders of the Sudeten Party and handed them a new set of proposals, the "fourth plan". The pro-Government press and many of the Government's supporters thought that Dr. Benes had gone too far in meeting the Sudeten Party's wishes, but he did not draw back, he stood by the plan. The Sudeten leaders were now intensifying the strained atmosphere by deliberately creating incidents and then exploiting them against the Government. Anti-Government demonstrations were organized at which seditious speeches were made, the Nazi salute was given, the police were challenged and defied, weapons of all kinds were run across the frontier from Germany and when the Government in the process of restoring order, or preventing the gun-running, hurt any of the demonstrators or conspirators, the Sudeten Party vehemently protested against "police brutality".

Hitler, in a speech at the Nuremberg rally, September 12, 1938, gave the signal to his followers for more illegalities and disturbances within the Czechoslovak frontiers. After accusing the Czechoslovak Govern-

ment of aiming at the slow extermination of the three and a half millions of Germans within its frontiers, he continued: "This is not a matter of indifference to us, and I say that if these tortured creatures cannot obtain rights and assistance by themselves they can obtain both from us." These words had scarcely left Hitler's lips when there was a violent outbreak of rioting throughout the Sudeten areas and the rioters were armed with hand-grenades, rifles and machine guns. Foreign observers on the spot were agreed that all this occurred in accordance with a pre-arranged signal. The Government replied with the only possible answer in the circumstances, by declaring martial law, and it is significant that on September 15, 1938, the Government could announce with truth that order had been restored in all districts. On the same day, Herr Henlein in a declaration stated that his party policy now was Union with the Reich, and two days later he called on his followers to arm themselves, and issued an order for the formation of Freikorps along the frontiers to be composed of Sudeten Germans who had crossed the frontier into Germany, and S.S. men from the Reich.

It is worthy of note that on the following day, September 18—despite the fact that Henlein spoke and acted as though his policy was backed by all the Germans living in the Sudeten areas—a joint proclamation was issued by representatives of the Social Democrats, Agrarians, and Clericals (all German parties in Czechoslovakia), appealing to "all peace-loving Germans" to form a representative Council which would negotiate with the Government on the basis of the "fourth plan".

Meanwhile much had been happening in Western Europe. Mr. Neville Chamberlain met Herr Hitler at Berchtesgaden on September 15, 1938, returned to London next day, reported to his Cabinet and consulted in London, September 18, 1938, with M. Daladier and M. Bonnet. At the end of the meeting the following communiqué was issued:

"After full discussion of the present international situation the representatives of the British and French Governments are in complete agreement as to the policy to be adopted with a view to promoting a peaceful solution of the Czechoslovak question. The two Governments hope that thereafter it will be possible to consider a more general settlement in the interests of European peace."

The British and French Ministers present at this meeting behaved with studied and cynical contempt towards Czechoslovakia. Despite the presence of the Czech Minister in London he was not called into consultation whilst the fate of his country was being decided. Again the U.S.S.R. had been completely ignored, and again the Government of that country made it clear that it intended honouring its pact with Czechoslovakia. That was the definite reply returned by the Soviet delegation (including M. Litvinov) at Geneva, when the question was put to it on September 20, 1938.

The terms arrived at at Berchtesgaden and approved of by the British and French Governments were at once submitted to Prague. The unfortunate Czechoslovak Government was helpless. Undoubtedly they were told by London and Paris that they had either to accept the plan without modification or fight alone.

Finally, the Prague Government, September 21, 1938, accepted, but issued a communiqué stating that they did so only "under the strongest pressure from Great Britain and France", and the Government naturally assumed that "the French and British Governments will guarantee the new frontiers during their formation".

The bitterness of the Czechoslovak people was expressed in semi-official statements, such as "our best friends have betrayed us"; sacrifices have been demanded from us "in a way without parallel in history"; "we shall not reproach those who have left us in the lurch, history will judge these", etc.

The "Agreement" though now accepted by Czechoslovakia was not yet in force, and there was still just a possibility that it would not come into force. One of the terms of that so-called settlement was the eventual denunciation by Czechoslovakia of the Czech-Soviet Pact.

Speaking, as matters then stood, on September 23, 1938, at the Political Committee of the League of Nations, M. Litvinov said:

"Czechoslovakia, after she had already accepted the German-British-French ultimatum, had asked the Soviet Government what would its attitude be; in other words, would it still consider itself bound by the Soviet-Czechoslovak pact if Germany presented new demands, if the Anglo-German negotiations were unsuccessful and Czechoslovakia decided to defend her frontiers with arms? That second enquiry was quite comprehensible since, after Czechoslovakia had accepted an ultimatum which included the eventual denunciation of the Soviet-Czechoslovak Pact, the Soviet Government had undoubted-

ly also had the moral right to renounce that Pact. Nevertheless, the Soviet Government, which, for its part, did not seek pretexts for evading the fulfilment of its obligations, had replied to Prague that in the event of France granting assistance under the conditions mentioned in the Czechoslovak enquiry, the Soviet-Czechoslovak Pact would again enter into force."

How different from the attitudes of Great Britain and France!

Mr. Neville Chamberlain returned to Germany, this time to Godesberg, with the head of Czechoslovakia on a charger, but the modern Herodias was not satisfied. He had tasted blood, his appetite had been whetted by his easy victory, and he wanted more.

The British Prime Minister saw Herr Hitler on September 22 and 23, 1938, but the latter proffered him no vote of thanks. On the contrary, he calmly informed him that the Berchtesgaden terms were no longer sufficient.

At 10.20 p.m. on the latter date, September 23, the Czechoslovak Government issued a general mobilization decree. It stated: "Citizens, the decisive moment has arrived. Keep calm, be brave and faithful. Your struggle is for justice and your Fatherland. Long live free Czechoslovakia."

General Sirovy, who was now Prime Minister and Minister for War, in an appeal to the nation, stated:

"Citizens! In this critical hour for our country and people we ask every one of you to stand at his post—the soldier at his arms, the farmer at his plough, the workman in his shop and factory, the clerk in his office. The Army is charged with the security of the Republic, and it can

fulfil its task only if the nation is firm and united. Show your mettle in your work for the State. . . ."

The effect throughout the country was electric. *The Times* correspondent cabled:

"At ten minutes to the hour the city seemed as usual; the Wenceslas Square seemed as bright and as busy as the Haymarket. Then came the sudden warning from the loudspeakers; the call to the colours of most classes of men under 40; the appeal for steady nerves. There was a long shout of approval from the crowd, and a sudden stirring in the traffic. In 10 minutes the whole face of the streets was changed." [*Times*, September 26, 1938.]

And describing the situation some forty-eight hours later the correspondent said:

"Czechoslovakia is standing to arms. It has been a week-end without parallel in all the month of tension and crisis; and the end of it finds men under 40 fully mobilized, either already at the frontier forts or moving up in long troop trains that push out from Prague in all directions." [ibid.]

Meanwhile Mr. Neville Chamberlain had returned to London. It looked for the moment as though the British and French Governments would be prevented by their Cabinets and the force of public opinion in their respective countries from retreating further. Now, as zero hour approached, the British Government revealed, albeit indirectly, that it had never doubted the U.S.S.R.'s readiness to honour its bond.

On the night of September 26, 1938, the following officially inspired statement was issued in London:

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

"It is not too late to stop the great tragedy and for the people of all nations to insist on settlement by free negotiation."

The *Daily Mirror's* commentary is well worth quoting:

"It is authoritatively stated, at this end of Europe this morning, that, if a German attack is made upon Czechoslovakia the immediate result must be that France will be bound to come to her assistance and that Great Britain and Russia will certainly stand by France.

"'And Russia'.

"Please note the reference to the enormously powerful ally hitherto hardly mentioned in these days of acute anxiety.

"It hasn't hitherto been considered 'quite nice' —so it has seemed—to mention Russia. But Russian aeroplanes can be useful in a crisis even if Russia isn't considered quite respectable by the best people in the most exclusive circles." [*Daily Mirror*, September 27, 1938.]

Shortly before midnight on the day on which this statement appeared in the press, mobilization of the British Navy "purely as a precautionary measure" was announced by the Admiralty. Mr. Chamberlain met the House of Commons, September 28, 1938, and reporting to that Assembly Hitler's change of

terms between the Berchtesgaden and Godesberg meetings, said:

"I had been told at Berchtesgaden that if the principle of self-determination were accepted Herr Hitler would discuss with me the ways and means of carrying it out. He told me afterwards that he never for one moment supposed that I should be able to come back and say that the principle was accepted. I do not want Hon. Members to think that he was deliberately deceiving me—I do not think so for one moment—but, for me, I expected that when I got back to Godesberg I had only to discuss quietly with him the proposals that I had brought with me; and it was a profound shock to me when I was told at the beginning of the conversation that these proposals were not acceptable, and that they were to be replaced by other proposals of a kind which I had not contemplated at all." [*Hansard*, September 28, 1938. Col. 20.]

Next day, September 29, the Prime Minister flew to Munich and at that town at 12.30 a.m., September 30, an "Agreement" was reached between Mr. Chamberlain, Herr Hitler, Signor Mussolini and M. Daladier, which on paper was a compromise between the Berchtesgaden and Godesberg terms. On the same day, the terms were communicated to the Czechoslovak Government through the British Minister in Prague, and it was intimated that an immediate answer was expected. The betrayed Prague Government had no alternative but to accept, to quote its own words, the decisions taken at Munich "without and against them". The independence of Czechoslovakia, as the sequel will show, was at an end.

The Prime Minister, speaking to the House of Commons, October 3, 1938, made the most of the

paper differences between Godesberg and the Munich terms. Here we cannot go into them, and it would be a waste of time because, in practice, the terms agreed on were never adhered to. However, it is worth recalling Mr. Eden's remarks in that debate regarding them:

"I have tried, as the House has in the short time available, to study the White paper which has been issued to us. My right hon. Friend maintained, and, I thought, maintained with success, that there was definitely some modification in these Munich proposals as compared with those which had been given to him with what we might call the second ultimatum. But it is extremely difficult for anyone not conversant with the details to pass judgment.

"I suggest that the maps in the White Paper are in themselves somewhat deceptive—inevitably deceptive, but I think a word of caution should perhaps be uttered. If we compare the two maps, the House will be struck by the very much smaller area of the Munich map as compared with the Godesberg map. But, of course, the Munich map, again through no fault of the Government, does not contain the fifth area, which is to be occupied before 10 October; nor does the second map contain the plebiscite areas, because they have yet to be defined. In consequence, one is bound to some extent, and I am sure my right hon. Friend will take no objection to this, to reserve judgment as to these proposals in detail until we see how they work out from the reports of the Commissions concerned. [*Hansard*, October 3, 1938. Col. 85.]

The dismemberment of Czechoslovakia proceeded apace, and only two days after Mr. Chamberlain's laboured attempt to demonstrate the difference

between the Godesberg and Munich terms *The Times* correspondent cabled from Berlin:

"While the exact limits of the so-called Fifth Zone designated by the International Commission for occupation by German troops by October 10 are not yet known, the Official News Agency to-night gives details of the zone, as coming from a well-informed source, which, if correct, would indicate that after the occupation of this zone the area held by German troops *would not differ materially from the area Herr Hitler demanded in his Godesberg memorandum.*" (Our italics.) [*Times*, October 6, 1938.]

Next day, the *Daily Mail's* correspondent cabled from Prague:

"With the disclosure of the full extent of the fifth zone to be ceded to Germany, dismay and dejection is being expressed on all sides here.

"The boundaries of the zone were marked out by the International Commission sitting in Berlin, and details were submitted to the Czech Government more or less in the form of an ultimatum.

"The Government, I learn, had no other course but to accept the zone as mapped by the Commission.

"It is felt here that the whole of what remains of Czechoslovakia is paralyzed by German domination.

"Zone Five cuts through important railway communications in Slovakia and the strip of land remaining in Central Moravia, barely 40 miles wide, is entirely within range of German long-range guns, either from the Austrian side or the present Zone Four in Upper Silesia.

"Prague itself is within range of German guns at Libechov, 22 miles to the north." [*Daily Mail*, October 7, 1938.]

As to the human problem—the *Spectator's* summary is, if anything, an understatement: "The tragedy of Czechoslovakia, where, according to eye-witnesses, the regular Nazi mechanism of victimization, proscription and persecution is already in operation, is carried one step further by the resignation of President Benes, as sequel to the foul campaign of vilification directed at him in the German Press and Herr Hitler's speeches. Dr. Benes was the one man who could have held the remainder of Czechoslovakia together, so he goes—maintaining to the end that dignity and courage which have marked his demeanour from the first day of the crisis—at German dictation." [*Spectator*, October 7, 1938.]

All this was not the end—*The Times* correspondent cabled from Berlin, November 21, 1938:

"The Commission of Ambassadors established under the Munich Agreement to-day took note of and formally confirmed the final frontier between the Reich and Czechoslovakia as delimited by a Czech-German Commission.

"The Czech-German agreement, which was signed yesterday, pushes the German frontier beyond the October 10 line to include districts in the north-east and in the neighbourhood of Taus with a total population estimated at between 20,000 and 30,000. Some concessions have also been made to the Czechoslovak Government, and the official statement speaks of the 'evacuation and occupation of the territories required of both parties' to take place on Thursday." [*Times*, November 22, 1938.]

This district was bitterly referred to by the Czechoslovaks as "the Sixth Zone". By this date the

"Commission of Ambassadors" on which Great Britain and France were represented, had been degraded to the level of a mere rubber stamp for giving British and French approval to the terms dictated by Germany.

There was still more to come. The same day the *Daily Telegraph's* representative cabled from the German capital: "The Czechoslovak Government has ceded a corridor, which will become a part of Germany, cutting in half what is left of the Republic. This corridor will be about 40 miles in length and 64 yards wide.

"Germany will bear the entire cost of construction. The road will be the property of the Reich Autobahn Gesellschaft which, for the first time, extends its operations outside Germany.

"Work will be begun within the next few days and be completed by 1940." [*Daily Telegraph*, November 22, 1938.]

What was the aim? "The new motor highway is expected to prove the start of a great German road, running right down the Balkans towards Asia Minor. It may be the first stage of the Berlin-Baghdad road —German all the way, if this dream is realized. Czechoslovakia will have no control over this German corridor." [ibid.]

As to the Republic's losses in population, a *Times* cable from Prague, dated December 7, 1938, declared:

"The Statistics Bureau states to-day that after the last corrections of the frontiers of Czechoslovakia the Republic has lost to Germany, Poland and Hungary altogether 4,922,440 inhabitants—almost exactly a third of its former population.

"Among these are 2,853,858 Germans, 591,544 Hungarians, 77,580 Poles, 60,332 Jews, 36,880 Ruthenians, and 1,161,616 Czechs and Slovaks." [*Times*, December 8, 1938.]

Small wonder that such a staunch and loyal supporter of the "National" Government as the *Daily Telegraph* felt compelled editorially to comment: "Events have undoubtedly taken a course which is disconcertingly contrary to expectation. What was hoped for was a relaxation of the tension that reached its climax at Munich. Instead the last two months have, in several unexpected directions, seen new causes of tension breaking out." The article continues: "When Mr. Chamberlain signed the Munich Agreement he can have had no reason to anticipate that it would so soon be followed by the ruthless anti-Jewish purge, which has so shocked Europe by its severity and embarassed Europe by its consequences. Nor can the Prime Minister have been forewarned of the peremptory demand by the Germans of Memel for reunion with the Reich. It seems difficult to reconcile such a development with the assurances that, after the absorption of the Sudetens, Germany had no further territorial ambitions." [*Daily Telegraph*, December 12, 1938.]

It has been suggested that in the course of the conversations between Mr. Chamberlain and Herr Hitler, the latter's interpreter misunderstood the British Prime Minister, when Mr. Chamberlain used the word "appeasement" the interpreter thought he had used the word "appetizer". At any rate, the "Munich Agreement" has certainly acted as an "appetizer" for Nazi Germany and has brought

nothing in the form of "appeasement" for the rest of the world.

Was there an alternative to the "Munich settlement" which would have prevented an outbreak of war? The answer is emphatically "Yes". We cannot do better here than quote three authoritative declarations. Mr. Winston Churchill, in the height of the crisis, September 26, 1938, stated: "There is still one good chance of preserving peace. A solemn warning should be presented to the German Government in joint or simultaneous Notes by Great Britain, France, and Russia that the invasion of Czechoslovakia at the present juncture would be taken as an act of war against these Powers. The terms of this Note should be communicated to all neutral countries, some of whom may be balancing their actions, and most particularly to the Government of the U.S.A."

He continued: "If such steps had been taken a month ago it is improbable matters would ever have reached their present pass. Even at the last moment clear and resolute action may avert the catastrophe into which we are drifting. Not only the German Government, but the German people have a right to know where we all stand."

Mr. Attlee, speaking the same evening said that, "a strong and united stand by the three Great Powers, France, Britain and the U.S.S.R., backed as they would be, by the overwhelming opinion of the civilized nations of Europe and by opinion in the United States, could yet prevent war." [*Manchester Guardian*, September 27, 1938.]

There has been time for reflection since, but that has strengthened and not weakened the soundness of

the convictions contained in these declarations. Mr. Lloyd George, replying to the Prime Minister, in the House of Commons, December 19, 1938, stated: "I venture to say, what anyone who has made a study of the armies of Europe knows, that knowing the German army, knowing the French army, and knowing the Russian army and the British navy—the information is all available, and especially to the Government—Herr Hitler, if he had known there was a combination of that kind possible against him if he took any aggressive line against Czechoslovakia, would not have been backed up by his army to begin with. They were against it, they were frightened of it, and he is a shrewd, sensible man in the long run—of course, if you agree that his purposes are sound. He would never have taken any step." [*Hansard*, December 19, 1938. Col. 2551.]

Another important fact which would have helped to maintain peace was the attitude of the German people. There was universal agreement among foreign correspondents in Germany at that time that no words can express the dread with which the German people looked on the prospect of war. The *News Chronicle's* special correspondent who returned to London from Germany, September 28, 1938, wrote: "I am convinced that Germans in the mass are unready for war. Thousands are fiercely against it. Catholics, ex-Service man, members of the Confessional Church, and an unknown number of secretly anti-Nazi Germans form the bulk of this potential opposition. More vital still, I am informed that many Nazis also dislike the venture and that Hitler's leading lieutenants are by no means unanimously

for war. 'We have the choice of war—or revolution' a Nazi admitted to me in Berlin last week. Germany may get both." [*News Chronicle*, September 29, 1938.]

He continued: "But Germany as a whole will fight —if it comes to fighting—with only half a heart. Average Germans do not hate the Czechs—not even President Benes. Nor are they interested in their 'Sudeten brothers'. Millions are bored by the very words. They are fearful of war and what it means."

Comparing Germany with France, he concluded: "In France I found calmness and confidence. Here was none of the hysterical enthusiasm or the wistful fears I had left in Germany. Hitler will have a hard fight if he goes through with this."

Similar reports from competent journalists could be multiplied indefinitely.

As the weeks passed, German attempts to make of Czechoslovakia a dependency in all but name increased. Political opposition parties were, on Germany's demand, dissolved, and their journals closed. Known supporters of the Benes regime were removed from office and political power in Czechoslovakia was concentrated in the hands of the most reactionary elements. Jewish doctors, lawyers, university professors, etc., were dismissed. German exiles in Prague were threatened with extradition to Germany. The Czechoslovak export trade was arranged wholly in favour of Germany. Czechoslovakia was compelled to agree to bear part of the cost of the motor road from Breslau to Vienna. The Czech Government was also compelled to agree to share the cost of the construction of the proposed canal between the Danube

and Oder. Both these constructions would, of course, be of direct benefit to Germany alone.

On January 27, 1939, it was announced that an agreement had been reached whereby German troops were to be permitted to travel through Czechoslovak territory from one part of the Reich to another without previous notification. True, this agreement was stated to be reciprocal—but whether this was meant to be ironical or as a serious sop to Mr. Chamberlain, we cannot say.

Later, under German pressure, Czech citizens of German descent were exempted from military service and German newspapers and books published in Czechoslovakia were exempted from Czechoslovak censorship. Germans were permitted to fly the Swastika flag, etc. etc., in general it could be said, without exaggeration that the German minority was more and more becoming a highly privileged class in Czechoslovakia. The very small minority of Germans in Czechoslovakia demanded, and indeed obtained, exceptional treatment.

At the same time the local autonomy promised to Slovakia and Ruthenia by the Prague Government, October 6 and 8 respectively, was embodied in bills adopted by the Prague Government, November 19, 1938—some details remained to be defined—but there can be no doubt whatever that if left to themselves all the outstanding questions would have been solved in a very short time. However, Hitler had other ideas on the subject; accordingly Nazi agents and Nazi money were used freely to instigate and stimulate separatist agitation both in Slovakia and Ruthenia. The Vienna wireless was used freely for

agitation against the Prague Government and both on the wireless and in the German press there was a constant stream of abuse against the Czechoslovak Government as a menace to the security of the Reich! and of stories retailing the alleged sufferings of the German minority in Czechoslovakia.

When on March 10, 1939, the Prague Government dismissed Father Tiso, the Slovak Premier, and other Ministers because of their separatist activities, Herr Karmasin, the leader of the Germans in Slovakia characterised this as menacing the interests of the German minority in Slovakia, and declared that "these interests must be protected." M. Sidor, on the other hand, who took over the premiership of Slovakia, declared that all the differences between Bratislava and Prague could be liquidated within 24 hours. But the Vienna wireless continued its onslaughts on the Prague Government, and Nazis provoked disorders in Slovakia.

At the same time proposals made by the Prague Government for settling the dispute with the Slovak separatists were refused by the latter and with the assistance of the German Nazi Government they continued to arm. In order to lessen the probability of clashes, the Prague Government withdrew their Czech troops from Bratislava. But this by no means lessened the tension, on the contrary, both the Vienna wireless and the Berlin press made violent onslaughts on the Prague Government and spoke of Czech terror in Slovakia, etc.

Finally, on March 13, Dr. Tiso accompanied by Herr Karmasin, the German leader, was summoned to Berlin. Tiso was received with full state honours

and the German press shrieked itself hoarse with accusations of brutality, bloodthirstiness, etc., against the Czechs, whilst M. Durcansky, one of the Slovak Ministers in the former Tiso Government, broadcasting from Vienna, declared that they (the Slovak separatists) put their "trust in Hitler." All this was accompanied by German troop movements.

On the evening of March 13, Hitler presented Prague with an ultimatum demanding, amongst other things, complete independence for Slovakia and Ruthenia. The following day M. Sidor resigned, and after Dr. Tiso had reported on his talk with Hitler the Slovak Diet adopted a declaration of so-called "independence". Tiso became Prime Minister, Sidor Minister of the Interior and Durcansky Foreign Minister. Within a few hours of the proclamation of its "independence" German troops occupied a number of important industrial and strategic areas of Slovakia.

It is characteristic that, replying to a question in the House of Commons, on March 14, 1939, as to the guarantees of the Czechoslovak frontiers given in the Munich Agreement, Mr. Chamberlain blandly remarked that "no aggression had yet taken place" and the guarantee to Czechoslovakia was only valid if aggression against her was "unprovoked".

On the same day, March 14, 1939, the Ruthenian (or as Germany preferred to call it Carpatho-Ukraine) Government also declared its "independence" and when Hungary which had always demanded the cession to her of this Province, marched her troops into Ruthenia the Prime Minister of the latter, Father Volosin, appealed to Hitler for help. But in this case Berlin was deaf to the appeal. Hitler had

more important matters to attend to and he left his vassal, Hungary, to subdue Ruthenia—should he later require Ruthenia for the German Reich, Hitler knew well enough that Hungarian occupation would be no obstacle.

The more important matters were the talks which Hitler and Goering were conducting with the President of Czechoslovakia, Hacha, and the Foreign Minister, Chvalkovsky, who had been called to Berlin. These talks were prolonged till far into the night whilst German troops were being concentrated on the borders of Czechoslovakia. It was reported on reliable authority that Hitler after setting out his views as to the failure of the Czechoslovak State to settle satisfactorily the minorities problem demanded the immediate surrender of Bohemia and Moravia, all that now remained of the former Czechoslovakia; in the event of a refusal he threatened to bombard Prague and reduce it to ashes. Under such circumstances Hacha and Chvalkovsky accepted Hitler's terms and the Prague Cabinet which met March 15, acquiesced under *force majeure.*

The German troops (some 19 divisions) marched into Bohemia and Moravia in the early hours of March 15, 1939, the Provinces were placed under command of German military governors and the Czech troops were disarmed. A notorious Fascist adventurer, General Gajda, was proclaimed "Fuehrer" of the Czech people and was appointed head of a national committee to create cordial relations with Germany. In the evening of March 15, Hitler entered Prague.

Needless to say, the German troops were met with

hostility by the Czech population—but they were powerless to resist—and were received with orderly but sullen silence.

On March 16, Hitler issued a formal proclamation declaring Bohemia and Moravia as German Protectorates. There followed the arrest by the Gestapo of thousands of political suspects as well as Jews, there was also the wave of suicides which has always followed Nazi conquests. The Nazis immediately secured control over the Czechoslovak National Bank and its stock of gold and of the foreign currency held by Czech private banks and individuals. Germany also, of course, secured control over the important Czech heavy industries, particularly her first-class armaments works, as well as of good reserves of industrial raw materials, etc.

At the same time Slovak "independence" did not last very long, for on the same day, March 15, Tiso wired to Hitler: "In strong confidence in you, the Fuehrer, and Chancellor of the Great German Reich, the Slovak State places itself under your protection. The Slovak State asks you to take over this protection."

Herr Hitler, replying from Prague on March 16 stated: "I confirm the receipt of your telegram of yesterday, and take over herewith the protection of the Slovak State."

On the afternoon of March 15, in the House of Commons, Mr. Chamberlain made an astonishingly calm, detached statement on the destruction of Czechoslovakia. He recounted the steps in the dismemberment of this unhappy country and affirmed that the separation of Slovakia had been affected by an act of "internal disruption" which put an end to all

the obligations undertaken at Munich towards the integrity of Czechoslovakia! He expressed regret for what had happened and said that he did not believe that what had taken place had been contemplated by any of the Munich signatories (not even Hitler?), but Mr. Chamberlain did not utter a word of sympathy for the sufferings of the Czechs, and he even found it possible to declare that: "I have so often heard charges of breach of faith bandied about which did not seem to me to be founded upon sufficient premises, that I do not wish to associate myself to-day with any charges of that character." [*Hansard*, March 15, 1939. Col. 442.]

The Prime Minister announced that for the time-being no more payments would be made to Czechoslovakia on account of the £10,000,000 which had been placed at the disposal of the Czechoslovak Government and he also said that the visit of the President of the Board of Trade to Berlin had been postponed.

World opinion, however, was shocked. Even those in this country who had defended the Munich Agreement as inevitable were indignant at this blatant breach of faith. Thus the *Daily Telegraph*, March 16, 1939, in a leader said:

"'A monstrous outrage' is the mildest term that can be applied to yesterday's events in Central Europe. The tale of them has sent a thrill of horror and indignation throughout the civilized world. Germany has besmirched her name with an infamy which will live as long as the Nazi regime lasts. . . .

"Even if it were true that the 'German comrades' were being terrorized it would be sufficiently remarkable if

no other method of protecting the rights of 250,000 Germans could be found than to extinguish the rights of 7,000,000 Czechs. But in fact the German comrades were enjoying privileges for which it would be necessary to go back to the days of the Turkish capitulations to find a parallel. . . ."

Referring to Mr. Chamberlain's unwillingness to convict Herr Hitler of wilful bad faith, the *Daily Telegraph* declared:

"Has he, then, forgotten Herr Hitler's assurance (which we have on the latter's own authority) that once the problem of the 'other' minorities was settled he would 'have no further interest in the Czech State'? Has he forgotten Herr Hitler's declaration on September 26 that 'we want no Czechs'? In another passage Mr. Chamberlain stated that the 'manner and method' of Herr Hitler's proceedings of yesterday were 'not in accord with the spirit of Munich.' That, surely, is pushing under-statement to the point of irony."

The Times of the same date was somewhat more restrained, but it too averred in its leading article:

"For the first time since Nazism came to power German policy has moved unequivocally and deliberately into the open. Hitherto it has felt its way over ground that was at least debatable; but there is nothing left for moral debate in this crude and brutal act of oppression and suppression. The German Government have scarcely troubled to veil it. Their propaganda department was only required to conduct a contemptuously brief and gross campaign of conventional lying, and no attempt was made to lend conviction to the short, sharp, burst of familiar atrocity fables. Surrounded on all sides, and threatened immediately by irresistible military weight, the unhappy

Czechoslovak President, Dr. Hacha, surrendered at discretion in Berlin. His capitulation, which does him no dishonour, figures by a facile and repulsive touch of hypocrisy, as a crowning act of self-determination by the Czech people. The world is invited to believe that the Czechs have voluntarily yielded to an alien race the most precious of all their possessions—their national independence. This last flight of cant at least might have been spared to a people crushed but, as their demeanour yesterday proclaimed, not yet abject under this load of humiliation and spiritual misery."

As we have no room to give other quotations the above will suffice, for the Labour and Liberal Press were, if anything, even louder in their denunciations of this last act of Nazi piracy.

The Soviet Press denounced the act in vehement terms.

Similar views were expressed in many other foreign journals, although the French *Temps* guardedly declared that international guarantees should not be applied in the case of a State which collapsed from within, resigning itself to complete surrender, but the *Temps* also noted that the doctrine of racial unity on which the whole Nazi regime was founded had been abandoned, and replaced by that of "vital space" for the development of German economy.

Mr. Chamberlain could not ignore the universal cry of horror at occurrences in Central Europe, still less could he pass by the dismay of his own followers at his cold capitulatory speech in the House of Commons, March 15, 1939; accordingly on March 17 it was announced that the British Ambassador to Germany was being recalled to London to report on

the situation, and in the evening of the same day, in a speech to the Birmingham Conservative Association, Mr. Chamberlain whilst still defending his Munich policy excused himself for the dryness of his speech in Parliament on the 15th and roundly condemned the Nazi policy of brute force in Czechoslovakia. Mr. Chamberlain recalled that Hitler had told him at Berchtesgaden that the Sudeten provinces of Czechoslovakia "was the last of his territorial ambitions in Europe and that he had no wish to include in the Reich people of other races than German." [*Daily Telegraph*, March 18, 1939.]

And asked Mr. Chamberlain: "How can these events which happened this week be reconciled with those assurances which I have read out to you? Surely as a joint signatory of the Munich Agreement I was entitled, if Herr Hitler thought it ought to be undone, to have the consultation which is provided for in the Munich declaration. . . ." [ibid.]

"According to the proclamation read out in Prague yesterday, Bohemia and Moravia have been annexed to the German Reich. Non-German inhabitants who, of course, include the Czechs, are placed under the German protector in the German protectorate.

"They are to be subject to the political, military and economic needs of the Reich, they are called self-governing States, but the Reich is to take charge of their foreign policy, their Customs and their Excise, their bank reserves and the equipment of the disarmed Czech forces.

"Every man and woman in this country who remembers the fate of the Jews and the political prisoners in Austria must be filled to-day with distress and foreboding.

"Who can fail to feel his heart go out in sympathy to

the proud and brave people who have so suddenly been subjected to this invasion, whose liberties are curtailed, whose national independence has gone?" [ibid.]

Mr. Chamberlain ridiculed the claim by Hitler that Czechoslovakia menaced the peace of the Reich and roundly declared that if there were disorders in Czechoslovakia they had been "fomented from without" and asked:

"Does not the question inevitably remain in our minds —if it is so easy to discover good reasons for ignoring assurances so solemnly and so repeatedly given, what reliance can be placed upon any other assurances that come from the same source?" [ibid.]

This speech was a great improvement on the House of Commons speech but in the first place the Prime Minister still only questioned whether this (the subjugation of Czechoslovakia) was "the last attack upon a small State" or whether it was "in fact a step in the direction of an attempt to dominate the world." Secondly, the speech lacked one important element, an indication of what concrete measures were to be taken to stop Hitler's subjugation of the smaller States of Central Europe step by step.

Lord Halifax, the Foreign Minister, made a similarly striking but indefinite speech so far as concrete proposals were concerned, in the House of Lords, on March 20, 1939. He denounced in scathing terms tinged with irony, Hitler's assertions that the Germans in Czechoslovakia had been oppressed; that Czechoslovakia was menacing Germany and that the Czechs had "voluntarily" given up their independence.

Finally, Lord Halifax gave a very cautious, indeed

super-cautious hint, that collective security might after all have to be sought:

"But if and when it becomes plain to States that there is no apparent guarantee against successive attacks directed in turn on all who might seem to stand in the way of ambitious schemes of domination, then at once the scale tips the other way, and in all quarters there is likely immediately to be found a very much greater readiness to consider whether the acceptance of wider mutual obligations in the cause of mutual support is not dictated, if for no other reason than the necessity of self-defence. His Majesty's Government have not failed to draw the moral from these events, and have lost no time in placing themselves in close and practical consultation, not only with the Dominions, but with other Governments concerned upon the issues that have suddenly been made so plain." [*Official Report.* Cols. 318–19.]

The lack of concrete proposals was the more important since in his proclamation on March 16, 1939, Hitler no longer relied on the principle of self-determination but took as his basis self-preservation (for the Reich—not for others) nor did he make any bones about his determination to establish a complete German hegemony over Europe. In his proclamation he declared:

"Bohemia and Moravia have for thousands of years belonged to the *Lebensraum* (living space) of the German people. Force and unreason have arbitrarily torn them from their old historical setting. . . . Sooner or later the Reich, as historically and geographically the Power most interested in that region, would have to bear the heaviest consequences. It is in accordance, therefore, with the principle of self-preservation that the Reich is resolved

to intervene decisively to re-establish the bases of a reasonable Central European order. . . . For in its long historical past it has shown itself, through the greatness and qualities of the German people, as being alone fitted to fulfil these tasks." [*Bulletin of International News*, March 25, 1939.]

The Berlin wireless rubbed it in by declaring "the time of the Western democracies is over. The Fuehrer has written finis to the furnace of Bolshevism that was Czechoslovakia. Germany is the greatest Power in Central Europe, and responsible for the maintenance of peace in that part of the world. She is entitled to take whatever measures seem to her expedient." [ibid.]

On March 15–17, 1939, the German Government notified the British, French, Soviet and U.S.A. Governments of the assumption of a Protectorate over the Provinces of Bohemia and Moravia. None of these Governments agreed to recognize this rape of Czechoslovakia.

The Soviet Government sent their reply to the German Government on March 19th. Litvinov did not mince his words and declared:

"The political and historical conceptions expounded in the introductory part of the German ordinance [announcing the establishment of the Protectorate] as grounds and justification for it, and in particular the references to the existence of the Czechoslovak State as a source of constant unrest and menace to European peace, to the lack of vitality of the Czechoslovak State and to the resulting necessity for particular care on the part of the German Empire, cannot be considered as correct and corresponding to the facts known to the whole world.

"In actual fact, after the first world war the Czechoslovak Republic has been one of the few European States where internal tranquillity and a peaceable foreign policy were really secured.

"The Soviet Government is not aware of any State Constitution that entitles the head of a State to abolish its independent existence as a State without the consent of his people.

"It is difficult to admit that any people would voluntarily agree to the destruction of their independence and to their inclusion in another State, still less a people that for hundreds of years fought for their independence and for twenty years maintained their independent existence.

"In signing in Berlin the Act of March 15, Dr. Hacha, President of Czechoslovakia, had no authority from his people for doing so, and acted in manifest contradiction with Articles 64 and 65 of the Czechoslovak Constitution.

"Consequently the aforesaid Act cannot be considered legally valid.

"The principle of self-determination of nations, not infrequently referred to by the German Government, presupposes the free expression of the will of the people, which cannot be replaced by the signatures of one or two individuals, however high the positions they may occupy.

"In the present case there was no expression of the will of the Czech people, even in the form of such plebiscites as took place, for example, in determining the fate of Upper Silesia and the Saar region.

"In the absence of any expression of the will of the Czech people, the occupation of the Czech provinces by German troops and the subsequent actions of the German Government cannot but be considered as arbitrary, violent, and aggressive." [*Bulletin of International News*, March 25, 1939.]

The Note made it clear that the Soviet view, as

expressed above, also applied to the new status of Slovakia and Ruthenia and concluded:

"In the opinion of the Soviet Government, the actions of the German Government, far from eliminating any danger to universal peace, have on the contrary created and enhanced such danger, violated political stability in Central Europe, increased the elements of alarm already previously created in Europe, and dealt a fresh blow to the feeling of security of the peoples." [ibid.]

As from April 22, the U.S.A. imposed penalty duties on subsidized German goods. Further, Czechoslovak balances in British, French and American banks have been blocked for the time being.

After the subjugation of Czechoslovakia (according to an official communique issued in Moscow, March 21, 1939):

"The British Government informed the Soviet Government of the existence of weighty reasons to fear an act of violence over Rumania and inquired about the possible position of the Soviet Government in such an eventuality.

"In reply to this inquiry the Soviet Government put forward a proposal for calling a conference of representatives of the States most closely interested—namely, Great Britain, France, Poland, Rumania, Turkey and the Soviet Union.

"In the opinion of the Soviet Government such a conference would give the maximum possibilities for the elucidation of the real situation and the position of all the participants at the conference. The British Government, however, found this proposal premature." [*Manchester Guardian*, March 22, 1939.]

The Moscow Correspondent of the *Manchester Guardian* pertinently commented:

"The proposal is almost identical with that made by the Soviet Union last year after Herr Hitler's seizure of Austria and is in line with the Government's consistent advocacy of collective action against aggression.

"Apparently the British Government is still unwilling to accept this policy, but the reason given—that it is premature—is held to be unconvincing in the light of the British Government's assertion of the imminent danger towards Rumania." [*Manchester Guardian*, March 22, 1939.]

Finally it may be recalled that Soviet foreign policy has been laid down very clearly by Stalin in his speech in Moscow on March 10, 1939, when he proclaimed:

"We stand for peace and the strengthening of business relations with all countries. That is our position; and we shall adhere to this position as long as these countries maintain like relations with the Soviet Union, and as long as they make no attempt to trespass on the interests of our country.

"We stand for peaceful, close and friendly relations with all the neighbouring countries which have common frontiers with the U.S.S.R. That is our position; and we shall adhere to this position as long as these countries maintain like relations with the Soviet Union, and as long as they make no attempt to trespass, directly or indirectly on the integrity and inviolability of the frontiers of the Soviet State.

"*We stand for the support of nations which are the victims of aggression and are fighting for the independence of their country.*

"We are not afraid of the threats of aggression and are ready to deal a double blow for every blow delivered by instigators of war who attempt to violate the Soviet borders."

Whilst ready to join in effective action for collective security M. Stalin, however, made it clear that the Soviet Government would be cautious and not permit their country "to be drawn into conflicts by warmongers who are accustomed to have others pull the chestnuts out of the fire for them".

In conclusion, in order to define once again the attitude of the Soviet Government on the position arising from the seizure of Czechoslovakia, it may be well to quote a few extracts from the *Journal de Moscou* (a French journal published in Moscow) which frequently accurately reflects the views of the Soviet Foreign Office. In an article strongly criticizing the dilatory tactics of the British and French Governments the *Journal de Moscou* very pertinently declared: "The collaboration of the European non-aggressor States can be strengthened only by deeds, not by words. . . . The position of the U.S.S.R. an indefatigable fighter for peace, is absolutely clear. It is only necessary that other Governments plainly declare whether they are ready to struggle efficaciously to check a European catastrophe. It is not the proper time to resort to ambiguous and irresolute formulas."