

Papers of Hugh Dalton:
Original Manuscript Diary

Volume 20:
January - July 1939
(Folder of Loose Typescripts)

Reduction Ratio:

12 x

Dalton I 20 ①

Dalton I 20 ①

Report
Sullivan
Greenfield
Dallas
Walker

NOTE

19. 1. 39.

J.K.Kosina came to dinner. I had last seen him at the Empress Stadium after our demonstration during the Czech Crisis. He had then been going off to join his regiment on the Czech Maginot Line.

He says that the Germans are pressing the Czechs -

- (1) to pass anti-Jewish laws, which they are very disinclined to do because it is quite contrary to the Czech tradition,
- (2) to build two main roads; (a) from north to south, Breslau to Vienna. This road would be German territory and would be fenced on both sides and controlled by German police; (b) from west to east, right through Carpatho-Ukraine, to facilitate subsequent German troop movements eastwards.
- (3) to build an Oder-Danube canal through Czech territory.

The Czechs want neither these roads nor the canal, which are intended only to serve German purposes, but it is impossible to refuse. There is also strong pressure to bring C.S. into a customs and currency union with the Reich.

A press censorship has been set up in Prague by German instigation, and now, if they negotiate for coal - and they must import much from the transferred area, especially lignite - the Germans say "You want some more coal, but isn't it horrible that such and such a newspaper should have printed such and such an article?" In this way, constant pressure is exercised.

Hitler is now asking for 100,000 Czech workers to go to Germany, as he has a shortage of labour, and it will be difficult to refuse this. The Skoda Works are now surrounded by Germany, who wishes to obtain all aircraft and A.A.guns produced there and, in addition, to take over some of those now in the possession of the Czech Army.

When the new two-party system was formed, "we feared that the Labour Party would be stronger than the Government Party". This is a paradox. But it would have given a pretext to Hitler to invade the country and occupy it. So, too, in Slovakia. Derer and others could have overthrown the Hlinka Guard, but then Hitler would have marched into Bratislava. The Hlinka Guards receive money from Hitler and give a salute practically the same as the German.

The Czechs have now to be very cautious, to watch and wait for their opportunity. They are accustomed to this; this was their fate for centuries before their liberation in 1918. But personal liberty still exists in C.S. Men are not victimised because they are Trade Unionists or Socialists. Fascism is contrary to the deepest democratic instincts of the Czech people. The Slovaks are different, but "there are only two million of them and we could easily deal with them if the situation changed". Here a clerical pro-Hitler minority has got control.

Many forest villages, purely Czech, have been seized by the Germans because they want the timber. When they have cut down all the trees they will probably return these villages to C.S.

A map of "The Third Czechoslovakia, Middle Europe in 1939" is being circulated by German agents in Prague. It shows C.S. aggrandised at the expense of Poland, taking in Cracow and the surrounding region. Poland, on this map, has shrunk to a very small state round Warsaw. German propagandists are making the suggestion that Germany will soon deal with Poland and Soviet Russia and that it will pay C.S. to be on the German side.

The Ruthenian forests and forest villages are a very good refuge for Ukrainian terrorists, who can return to Carpatho-Ukraine from across the mountains after excursions in the Polish Ukraine or in Northern Rumania. Revaj, Ruthenian Minister, has said that in February the Polish Ukrainians will start a revolt and will call upon their brothers in Carpatho-Ukraine for assistance. This will be forthcoming with arms supplied by Germany. The Poles will then suppress this rising with their customary cruelty and the Ukrainians will then appeal to Hitler for help. They already speak of him as their saviour. Hitler will then offer Sudeten German troops to help the Ukraine to self-determination. Hitler now is so strong that he can always act as arbiter in any conflict in Central Europe.

Kosina is still in touch with the military, and trusted by some of the High Command, having worked in military intelligence and won their confidence immediately after the Crisis. He took British naval observers round the Frontier when the Germans were taking over. He told me that there were many cases of suicide, both among officers and men, when the retreat was ordered. One officer in command of a fort, when ordered to retire, said "A living soldier must obey orders; a dead soldier cannot", and shot himself. There was another officer holding a strong post with machine guns. When the Germans advanced, he opened fire upon them until he had exhausted all his ammunition, and then shot himself before they took over.

DIARYAbout 20. 1. 39.

Vienot saw me in London. He said that he thought the story of Daladier being found drunk at Munich to understand what was going on was a fable. On the other hand, he had it from one of D.'s entourage that Hitler was very "abnormal" at M. and sat, during part of the conversations, with his back to the other three principal delegates making grimaces and biting his nails.

V. has always held that firmness was the only possible line to take with both Dictators. When Under Secretary in 1936/7 he proved this in the case of rumoured German troop movements to Spanish Morocco. He agrees with the resignation speech made by Duff-Cooper and the immense importance on Hitler's mind of the mobilisation of the British fleet.

V.'s view is supported by that of a civilised and important German which is communicated to me in the first week of February 1939.

(Rauschning)

At the beginning of August 1938 he felt that the situation was very serious indeed but not without hope. Weidemann was not "sent" by Hitler to London; he was allowed to go at his own request. He had no power. He was a rational, clear-thinking and honourable man. The Runciman Mission was bound to fail because Hitler intended this. When its failure became known, a most dangerous situation would arise. Before its failure became clear, a firm and open pronouncement should be made by the British Government jointly with France. This should be broadcast in German, for the German people are starved of truth and believe, for instance, that on May 21st, 1938, France and England strove to force a war on Germany and that only Hitler's skill saved peace. The announcement, therefore, should stimulate popular feeling in Germany against war and strengthen the position of the Generals whose views are opposed to Hitler's. H. believes that France and G.B. are bluffing, and that he can march into C.S. as he did into Austria, without encountering Anglo-French resistance. The firm Anglo-French pronouncement, to the effect that if H. attacks C.S. on any pretext they will meet force with force, should be followed about a fortnight later with a further statement, also broadcast, dealing with the "life problems" of Germany, i.e., colonies, Central Europe, currency in gold, freer trade and deseleration of armaments.

H. had in the past been sincerely a man of peace, but in the last twelve months there has been a great change. He now feels that he is a god. He is, in fact, mad. He takes advice now only from Himmler. War is a way out for a dictator in difficulties.

There is a growing feeling, even in the Party, that conditions are deteriorating; many now see that the leaders have feathered their nest. There will be a financial crisis at the end of 1938; this year's harvest is the best for six years; the growing feeling in England and elsewhere against maltreatment of Jews, is impelling H. towards war.

Himmler's power is growing. He will soon be virtually the master of Germany. He is a criminal type and his control of the S.S. and S.A. gives him immense power, in particular to put anyone he wishes out of the way. Goering has now no power with H. After May 21st he wanted to negotiate in London. H. refused and told him to get on with his job of preparing for war. Ribbentrop is a third-rate self-seeker. He is now attaching himself to Himmler. Goebbels is unimportant. On the other hand, the Generals and leading industrialists, who are much dissatisfied with H.'s internal economic policy, are an alternative source of power. H. would like to depose some more of the Generals and substitute his own men. But the position of the G.s is now stronger than in March. H. had been forced to admit to some 30 of them that he was wrong in accusing von Fritsch. If the British Government acted as suggested, the G.s could more than hold the fort. We could never reach an agreement with H. but we must pursue our policy as though we could. H. and his leading associates are all criminals. Maybe, a year hence there would be in Germany a more reasonable and liberal Government. If so, close Anglo-German co-operation would become possible, e.g., in the Mediterranean and the Far East, even to the point of jointly warning Italy and helping China against Japan. Thus, the peace of Europe might be assured for generations. The old antagonistic feeling between the German and the French people has almost entirely disappeared. But can we turn the "Hitler corner"?

Weidemann had been introduced to the British Government by Princess Hohenlohe, who was once Ellen Richter. She had recently been employed as a Nazi agent, and H., in recognition of her services to the Party, had given her the castle which once belonged to Max Reinhardt. She is either wholly or partly Jewish and "had a not too enviable reputation in Germany".

On Sunday, SEPTEMBER 11th, he thought the situation terribly grave but still not without hope, the key still in the hands of London. But the issue will be decided within the next ten days or at latest by the end of the month. H. is still determined on aggression in C.S. because he still believes that France and G.B. are bluffing. Many of the G.s, Schacht and leading industrialists have tried to dissuade him, saying that such action will mean war. H. still says that he can create a situation

whereby he can march into C.S. and achieve that conquest of territory on which he is determined without precipitating war, just as in Austria. The G.s, still believing H. to be wrong, have told him that if he can achieve this they are for the moment silenced, but if events should prove H. wrong, he will have to render account to them. To carry out his plan in C.S., H. "may do something really terrible", e.g., arrange the murder of Henlein, or even of Runciman, and then say that this proves that the Czechs cannot control the situation. (Runciman has now secretly left the Alcron Hotel and is sleeping in the British Legation; this is prudent).

Nazi leaders are a set of gangsters who recognise no law but their own. In years to come, the German people would look back upon this period of their history in amazement. H. has two distinct personalities, and we are now battling with the evil side of his nature. The witness against von Fritsch has now been shot. He was paid by Himmler to produce evidence against von F. Then Himmler felt that he was dangerous to him. Conditions in concentration camps are unbelievably shocking. If the German people knew the whole truth there would be a revolution against the regime. (I always doubt this sort of remark.) Goebbels is very clever, but even amongst his gangster colleagues he has lost caste. He will always try to find a place in any new regime.

The industrialists now realise that the onward march of National Socialism under H. will soon destroy capitalism. They will get even worse conditions for capital than under Communism.

The British Government must at once decide between all or nothing. If nothing, withdraw Runciman at once and say Britain is uninterested. This would do great harm to British prestige and to democracy everywhere, but it would be intelligible. If all, then summon British Parliament at once and dramatically. H. only understands and responds to this kind of technique. The P.M. should then make his firm and open pronouncement to Germany and the world. If any act of violence on the part of Germany in C.S., whatever be the alleged reason of such action, we shall oppose force with force. Britain and France will unite with all their resources. We hope that the U.S.A. will also assist in maintaining justice, law and decency. In view of Goering's speech at Nuremberg on September 10th which lacks regard for that mutual respect between Governments which is usual and to which we are accustomed, we withdraw our Ambassador, who has indicated our good will by his presence at Nuremberg, from Berlin. He will not return until we have a clear assurance that the British people and institutions will not further be maligned by officials of the German Government. We clearly hold that there is no reason for violence at all and that all outstanding questions can be settled by negotiation. We have tried several times to start negotiations with the German Government, e.g., through visits of Eden and

Halifax. These attempts, made in a spirit of good will, have produced no response. The German people have been led to believe that F. and G.B. will not give sympathetic consideration to the "life questions" of Germany. This is not true. On the contrary, the French, under Blum, made detailed proposals a year and a half ago to the German Government. We are prepared with France to negotiate on all these problems, including the Sudeten German question, in the best mutual interest of all; but only if there is a sincere desire in the German Government to guarantee a durable peace and to co-operate with all for the good of all in the spirit of the eternal moral code.

We know exactly the economic and financial conditions of Germany. Nobody can deceive us. This knowledge in itself would be a big inducement for us to go to war, if we did not passionately desire peace. We have the greatest respect for the character, kindness and sense of honour of the German people. This is the deep inner feeling of the British, but if the German Government, in spite of all this, is still determined on violence, we shall use violence too, and they must not complain.

If Parliament were summoned and such a pronouncement made before the end of this week, there would be no war. Either H. himself would abandon his present plan and keep the peace, or, if he was still determined on war, the G's would stop him. Alternatively, though much less good, the P.M. might communicate, through private channels, with the G.s who might then act against H. If war came, he was quite sure that France would honour her obligations and fight, and that within a few weeks Poland would come in on our side and attack East Prussia. Russia, he thought, would, at the start, only supply C.S. with aeroplanes and tanks.

SEYI

On Saturday, ~~OCTOBER~~ 15th, he had almost despaired of the "gospel of firmness" ever being adopted by London. His advice on September 11th had reached London, but the next day, September 12th, the P.M. had refused the second request of the Leader of the Opposition to call Parliament forthwith. The P.M. had not succeeded in discussing at any of his meetings with H. the German "life problems". At Munich the P.M. had shown no firmness at all, nor obtained any guarantees whatever. Up to the very last moment of Thursday, September 29th, H. was bluffing. The German Army was unprepared for a war on one front, much less on two. If these facts were not known in London, then our Ambassador in Berlin and our Secret Service must be seriously suspect. On Wednesday, 28th, Goering went to see H. with the Head of the German Army. As the door opened, he met Ribbentrop who was leaving. Goering violently brushed Ribbentrop aside with his arm and when the door was shut approached H. with his colleague and said "There must be no war. The people will not have it."

This was the day before the Munich Conference and followed the mobilisation of the British fleet and the realisation by those in high places in Germany that if H. had marched, G.B., F. and Russia would have gone to the assistance of C.S. Wednesday, 28th September, therefore, was the day when, if the P.M. had only stood firm, he would most surely have kept the peace and started by his firm action, supported as it would have been by the moral power of the world, the disruption of Hitlerism in Germany. But the great psychological moment was missed, through lack of leadership inspired by a moral purpose, and the very next day the British P.M. went to Munich and sold the democratic fort to the dictators. (This has to be set against the eleventh hour weakness of France, the unpreparedness of Britain for a prolonged general war, and the firm conviction in the mind of the P.M. that Germany was prepared and ready to wage a long war with a good chance of final success.)

There was no danger at any moment of a long war, because the G.s, the mass of the people, and most of those in the Party, were against it. If H., in face of this opposition had still persisted in his desire to use force, he would have been arrested by the G.s. Even if this had not happened, the reservists would, within ten days, have turned their weapons on the Nazi leaders. (I doubt this last estimate very much.)

The Gs. are purely fighting men with no political sense. This is true of all Gs. but especially of German Gs., owing to their special tradition of method and training. They view the problem of peace and war from the standpoint of their powers of offense and defence measured in men and machines. Therefore, because of their improved military position, as a result of what has happened in C.S., the Gs. now view war in the future with less fear than they did during the last critical days of September. Time is on the side of H. and Mussolini, so that the next six months represent absolutely the last span of time available to the British Empire in which to turn the tide against the dictators. H. will work to destroy the B.E.

H. and M. with Japan have a clear understanding as to their next steps:

- (1) Finish the War in Spain, which will then be dominated by M. and H.
- (2) Push Northwestwards from Libya. Gib. would soon be a small oasis in a desert of Fascism, with guns trained on it from all points of the compass. It could not then be held.
- (3) M. to stir up trouble in Palestine and surrounding Arab lands, thus drawing more and more British forces to that quarter.
- (4) Japan to attack Hongkong. Impossible for us to hold. And then A. and N.Z.

"2 left at 6- on 6-1/2 with date"

Ribbentrop said to H., after P.M. had left Munich, "He has to-day signed the death warrant of the British Empire." ←

Britain should now show the world that it is still prepared to take the lead to bring a new era based on the eternal moral code. "Spiritual rearmament". Also physical rearmament to the utmost. Then summon a small world conference - U.S.A., France, Germany, Italy, Japan - to cover "life problems" in politics and economics, including disarmament. Dictator powers must be asked to put on the table all their demands and questions. Then, if the worst should happen, the moral forces throughout the world, including Germany, would be on the side of the democracies. Perhaps now we cannot avoid war, but if it comes within the next six months it may be short. Germany is now experiencing inflation. Notes have risen from 7 milliard a year ago to 10 milliard now.

Ribbentrop must be in secret touch with some key people in this country who believe that H. is still a bulwark against Bolshevism.

H. would not understand P.M.'s willingness to go as far as Berchtesgaden. He has no tact not to go at least as far as Munich. (This man did not know that H. had first proposed himself to come to London.)

At the end of September there was not the slightest inclination for Italy to go to war on the German side. M. was too clever to have made such a false move. The King, the Crown Prince and Balbo were all strongly against Italy going to war. Only Ciano and his wife Edda who, some say, invented the Axis, were in favour. M. saw the danger and was moving towards reason, but the great success of the Munich bluff had increased the power of the extremists. He might be prepared to turn towards friendship with F. and G.B. if he sees that the Nazi method of blackmail and threats of war no longer succeeds.

In Italy the workings of the German Gestapo are much resented. Himmler, when in Rome, tried to secure high Italian decorations for 50 of his men. This caused much amusement. Italy's financial position was bad and she was short of raw materials.

Schacht in November was in a desperate mood, knowing the financial chaos immediately ahead. He has often offered his resignation. Schacht proposed (a) an immediate return to a balanced budget and (b) the same steps as were taken in 1923 against inflation. (a) would mean stopping rearmament, Labour Service

and all big constructive works, rebuilding Berlin, stadiums at Nurenberg, autoroads, etc. (b) would mean complete panic, for the German people have been through this before and the bitter memory still lingers among middle aged and old people. H. will not accept either (a) or (b). He has, during the past month, become convinced that he is a genius in strategy greater than Napoleon. He has spent many weeks writing a book about the Art of Fortification and the Methods of Conquests. H. designed himself every detail of the Rhine fortifications. He did this without consulting the General Staff, aided only by three young Nazi officers. When the Gs. told H. that the conquest of C.S. would take at least six weeks, he laughed and said "You are wrong. I know better. Read my book. We will do it in three days."

Ribbentrop since June has always approached H. with one opening sentence: "Two or three small wars, mein Fuhrer, and the German Empire is then founded for thousands of years, but every great hero of history, like Caesar, Alexander and Napoleon, had to get his final baptism through war. These, your wars, will go (1) towards C.S., (2) towards the Black Sea, and (3) towards Turkey, and then on to India. There is no danger that any Western Power will interfere. My connections in England guarantee this." H. likes this, but is not always quite convinced by it. In September he was made uneasy with so many warnings that he was on the wrong track. On September 26th and 27th the strongest representations were made by Conservative friends, the Gs., Goering, von Neurath and a number of the Gauleiters. H. said to Goering "You may be right, and I will kill myself if I fail". Ribbentrop, Streicher and Himmler encouraged him to go on. H. constantly said "Just give me two more days. I still hope that Chamberlain and Daladier will be so impressed by my methods that they will accept my terms". The exact words used by Ribbentrop after Munich, when Chamberlain had left for England, were: "Meine Herren, die Todes Anzeige Englands ist ein^{ge} Trofen" ("Gentlemen, the obituary notice of England is on the table").

Munich has enormously strengthened the extreme Nazis. H. said, soon after Munich, "What do I need colonies for when in a year's time Belgium and Holland will be mine and soon afterwards England".

If anyone anywhere still believes anything that H. promises, he is an utter fool. e.g. the Naval Agreement. Who in England thinks that this is being kept? Ribbentrop and Ciano are a good pair. Italy will threaten France and Germany England. All present and future opponents of Nazi and Fascist methods in France or England will be denounced as war mongers and accused of conspiring with Communists. If a democracy dared to appoint any

of these people to a responsible position the blackmail threat of war would be immediately applied.

It is possible that after the conquest of Spain M. will demand Tunis, control of the Suez Canal, Corsica and most of the French colonies on the Mediterranean, while H. will ask for Spanish Morocco, all the old colonies of Germany, parts of the Congo, etc. War will be threatened and when excitement and fear in London and Paris reach their peak there will be sent a secret message opening the way to a peaceful solution in the following form. M. and H. would promise to postpone their demands for ten or perhaps for 20 years if (a) all their debts are paid, (b) large credits for the future are opened, and (c) raw materials and markets are put at their disposal. Germany might demand four thousand million pounds and Italy two thousand million pounds.

M. might still be won over to a policy of constructive peace, but with H. there is no hope. He is entirely in the hands of the extremists, who have warped and changed his nature beyond redemption. He to-day is broken morally and this will soon be revealed by his future actions.

H. now has designs on Belgium, Holland and Switzerland.

DIARY15. 2. 39.

Albarda, Buset and de Man came to my flat to meet Dallas, Baker, Walker, Gillies and me. This was to be not a Conference but a Conversation. Nothing minuted nor reported.

ALBARDA said that Holland is now in the Oslo Group. She cannot leave the Group nor act independently of the others. There is considerable fear in Holland of a German attack, and they have done a good deal to improve their defences, though they have no Maginot Line and cannot afford to build one. Holland cannot defend herself alone, but he thinks that if Germany attacked, Holland would resist, nor would she agree to an ultimatum demanding either a right of passage through Holland for German troops, or the surrender of Dutch Colonies. He would like to see a re-establishment of Collective Security in Europe and deplores Sandler's initiative in persuading the small ex-neutrals in Europe to return again to neutrality and to aim no higher than keeping out of war. A. thinks that it would be more effective to try to join the forces aiming at the prevention of war.

DE MAN gave a lucid and intellectually impressive analysis of the present situation. (I had never met him before but had a respect for his pioneer work in practical Socialist planning on the Continent. He speaks English perfectly and was an interpreter with the British Army during the War. He is said by some to be anti-Semitic and it is noted that he has never publicly denounced either Hitler or Mussolini or their regimes. On the contrary, he has recently travelled in both countries and collected information. In so far as he desires, as a Belgian, that, if war should come, Belgium should not be once more devastated, one cannot but share his point of view. He has, however, antagonised some, including the opponents of Spaak in Belgium. He is very emphatic that the Second International must be cleaned up, its scale of activities greatly reduced, if possible Adler got rid of, and the staff, which now consists of Austrian Jews, diversified. He would prefer it to remain in Brussels, but on no account to go to Paris. London would be much better. He is for eliminating the Refugee Parties. Indeed, he says many things on this subject which I have been saying for a considerable time.)

Germany will not attack Holland except as an incident in a general war. In such circumstances, an attack on Holland is

attractive for the following reasons:

- (1) Not much resistance by the Dutch is possible.
- (2) There is much cattle and gold to be taken.
- (3) The Dutch Colonies would fall to Germany if Holland fell.
- (4) If Holland is occupied, Germany has a very strong position for an attack on England, both from submarine and air bases.
- (5) German occupation of Holland would keep England occupied and apprehensive and prevent her from intervening strongly elsewhere.
- (6) The Maginot Line could be turned through Holland, and this danger would make the French mobilise heavily in the north and reduce French forces available against Italy.

Italian Army is very weak, though the Navy is much improved, and the Air Force may be stronger than the French. But if Germany and Italy are to strike together, Italy needs as much relief as Germany can possibly afford her in the North.

No German-Italian military plan has yet been drawn up and we have lately passed through a dangerous period in which Italy was putting forward big demands which might have dragged Germany into war. In the last week or two, therefore, there has been an Italian brake in Berlin and a German brake in Rome.

Both have struck snags in the East, Ciano in Belgrade and the Germans in Warsaw. For the moment, neither Berlin nor Rome will let the other fellow do anything. Both are waiting to see what happens in Spain. The Italians fear that, if they don't carry out their pledge to Chamberlain, they may have trouble with Franco. But the situation may grow critical at any moment. (de Man and others both mention March 15 as a date now talked about for the simultaneous presentation of exorbitant demands; March 31st is also a date much mentioned in this country by which various defensive tasks must be completed.)

As to the Oslo policy, no change in this would effect the main position, which is determined by the Great, and not by the Small, Powers. No increase of Dutch armaments would appreciably affect the position, but a clear statement by Britain that she would regard an attack on Holland as a casus belli might save Holland.

What is important is to strengthen the peace parties in the Dictator States. These are not pacifists, but persons who realise the risks of war to the Dictatorships. In Germany they include the older Generals, the big industrialists, and, three quarters of the time, Goering. Even Hitler, until lately, was on this side and inclined to be prudent. Recently, his successes have gone to his head and the influence of Himmler and, to a lesser extent, Ribbentrop, is for risking war. In Italy, Starace and Farinacci are for war, but they do not count for much. Ciano is unimportant and only a listening post for the Duce. Here, too, most of the senior Generals are against war. The personal attitude of Mussolini is uncertain.

A general settlement should not be regarded as impossible, and it might include an arms truce. (This last suggestion was critically commented upon by Dallas and Baker; the former because Germany was now so much ahead of us in the air that the basis of an agreement seemed difficult; the latter because he did not trust Hitler or believe in an arms truce, as distinct from a general disarmament treaty, in any case.)

BUSET said nothing. He was sent to balance de Man and is against Belgian neutrality.

I doubt whether it was worth while for our visitors to come. To me, the only point of interest was de Man, whom none of my other colleagues much liked.

DIARY

23. 3. 39.

A deputation of six - Dallas, Hallsworth, Dukes, Grenfell, Shinwell and I - were appointed yesterday by a meeting of the Three Executives to see the P.M. this morning. We are with him at No.10 from 9.45 to 10.30 a.m. Also present Sir H. Wilson (the "Qu'est-ce que c'est que ça?" of Munich), Cadogan (looking more like a dead fish than ever) and a junior official taking notes. Wilson took no part in the proceedings except, near the end, to whisper to the P.M. "It's time you were going", and Cadogan also sat silent except when consulted by the P.M., just before we left, as to how much could be reported to our colleagues. The P.M. said it had been impossible to get Halifax there so early in the morning, and therefore "since I thought you might wish to say something to me about foreign affairs" he had asked Cadogan to attend. It had been arranged that I should open very briefly, leaving the maximum time for the P.M. to reply and to answer questions.

I only took four minutes. I said that the Three Executives were all deeply concerned at the growing risk of war and the rapid disintegration of Europe. We were also much disturbed by the appearance of delay, indecision and lack of definiteness in the negotiations now proceeding and in the attitude of H.M.G. I quoted the "Daily Telegraph" of this morning, which stated that the chief reason why other Powers were unwilling to associate themselves with our proposed declaration was because the latter was vague and indefinite. There appeared to be a lengthy discussion proceeding as to whether we should first have a conference and then a declaration, or first a declaration and then a conference. "Meanwhile", I said, "Hitler marches on."

The Labour Party, and the whole Labour Movement, I reminded the P.M., had stood consistently for a policy of collective security and strong, organised collective resistance to unprovoked aggression. We had not come here this morning merely to make debating points, but it was only right that we should remind him that we had urged this policy on the P.M. last September, but our advice had been disregarded. Now, we were glad to note, especially from the recent speech of Halifax in the Lords, H.M.G. had come round to the views which we had so long been pressing upon them. We were very glad to take note of this, even although this change of attitude had come so late.

He
Lambert
M.I. 6/19
L 342/6

after sweep on Prague
q
p
Dalton I 20 (14)
(Mance 145)

On previous occasions both the P.M. and our representatives had spoken with great frankness. I hoped the P.M. would do the same again to-day.

The P.M., who had showed signs of irritation at my references to last September, wriggling in his seat and assuming that obstinate and angry look we know so well in the House of Commons, said that, although he appreciated that we had not come this morning to make debating points, yet he could not let my remarks about last September pass without reply. He did not admit that the Government were wrong last September. He still considered that, in the circumstances then prevailing, they took the right course.

He then spoke in some detail about the difficulties of the present negotiations. Hitler had it in his power to strike in a large number of different directions. No-one knew - Hitler himself perhaps had not yet decided - where the next blow might fall. (The P.M. was evidently quite disillusioned about Hitler. He spoke of him more than once as a "mad dog".) The Government had been trying to get a joint declaration signed by Britain, France, Russia, Poland and Rumania, pledging each of these States to joint action in the event of further German aggression. It was their aim, he said, to show Germany in advance that, if she started a war, it would be for her a war on two fronts. The difficulty in getting agreement was, not with Britain, France or Russia, but with Poland and Rumania. Both of these, for obvious geographical reasons, were very apprehensive of a German attack and realised that neither we nor France could give them direct assistance. Both were apprehensive of signing a declaration jointly with Russia, and this for two separate reasons: first, because they fear that Hitler might make this an excuse for attacking them on the ground that they had allied themselves with Bolshevism, and, second, because both were reluctant to contemplate Russian armies entering their country, even in order to defend them against Germany, since they were doubtful whether, even if the Germans were repulsed, the Russians would go away. Both Poland and Rumania had said that they would prefer a Four-Power declaration with Britain, and France, Russia not signing, but there being some collateral arrangement whereby Russia would render them assistance in some form to be approved by them. He quoted Chatfield as having said of Rumania "It is not much consolation to say to a man 'You be brave and go into the lion's den and we give you an undertaking that, if the lion eats you, we will punish the lion.'"

The argument against a conference was that ministers attending such a conference would not be plenipotentiaries but

On previous occasions both the P.M. and our representatives had spoken with great frankness. I hoped the P.M. would do the same again to-day.

The P.M., who had showed signs of irritation at my references to last September, wriggling in his seat and assuming that obstinate and angry look we know so well in the House of Commons, said that, although he appreciated that we had not come this morning to make debating points, yet he could not let my remarks about last September pass without reply. He did not admit that the Government were wrong last September. He still considered that, in the circumstances then prevailing, they took the right course.

seemed He then spoke in some detail about the difficulties of the present negotiations. Hitler had it in his power to strike in a large number of different directions. No-one knew - Hitler himself perhaps had not yet decided - where the next blow might fall. (The P.M. was ~~evidently~~ quite disillusioned about Hitler. He spoke of him more than once as a "mad dog".) The Government had been trying to get a joint declaration signed by Britain, France, Russia, Poland and Rumania, pledging each of these States to joint action in the event of further German aggression. It was their aim, he said, to show Germany in advance that, if she started a war, it would be for her a war on two fronts. The difficulty in getting agreement was, not with Britain, France or Russia, but with Poland and Rumania. Both of these, for obvious geographical reasons, were very apprehensive of a German attack and realised that neither we nor France could give them direct assistance. Both were apprehensive of signing a declaration jointly with Russia, and this for two separate reasons: first, because they fear that Hitler might make this an excuse for attacking them on the ground that they had allied themselves with Bolshevism, and, second, because both were reluctant to contemplate Russian armies entering their country, even in order to defend them against Germany, since they were doubtful whether, even if the Germans were repulsed, the Russians would go away. Both Poland and Rumania had said that they would prefer a Four-Power declaration with Britain, and France, Russia not signing, but there being some collateral arrangement whereby Russia would render them assistance in some form to be approved by them. He quoted Chatfield as having said of Rumania "It is not much consolation to say to a man 'You be brave and go into the lion's den and we give you an undertaking that if the lion eats you we will punish the lion.'"

The argument against a conference was that ministers attending such a conference would not be plenipotentiaries but

would have to refer back to their Governments for instructions. This would mean delay and, if the conference failed to reach agreement, the position would be much worse, and much more encouraging to Germany, than if the conference had not been held. On the other hand, if a declaration could first be agreed upon, details could be worked out later and a conference might then usefully be held. He denied with some heat the truth of the statements of the "Daily Telegraph". They were neither true nor authoritative, he said. There was no vagueness in the British proposals. They were trying to get specific mutual commitments, in the first place from a small number of States most immediately concerned. They were in the midst of these negotiations now. If they succeeded, they would try later to extend the circle. Turkey was most friendly to us, and prepared, in association with us, to go to all lengths; but, and this was also true of Yugoslavia (as to which I asked him a question), they did not wish in the first instance to include in the declaration any Mediterranean Power. This was because they desired to weaken, rather than to strengthen, the Axis. Mussolini had not been consulted by Hitler before his swoop on Prague. There were grounds for hoping that Mussolini would make a comparatively reasonable speech next Sunday and that some settlement between Italy and France might be reached. "The French", he said, "have their own ways of dealing with the Italians".

Asked how Germany was reacting to the present negotiations, he said "Hitler, I understand, is in a black rage and has been threatening to denounce the Anglo-German Naval Treaty, but I think his advisers have told him that this would be a futile gesture at the present time, since German naval inferiority is a fact."

He dwelt on the economic importance of Rumania. If Germany got control of her wheat and still more of her oil, it would greatly reduce, or at least delay, the effectiveness of a British naval blockade.

Pressed about Russia, he said that no difficulty was now presented either by the Russian attitude to the British Government nor by the British attitude to the Russian Government. (It is also clear, though he did not admit it, that contacts both in London and Moscow are frequent now, in contrast to last September.) He told us that in the last invasion of Czechoslovakia German troops with their equipment had been landed in parachutes from aeroplanes and had been ready to go into action seven seconds after they had reached the ground. This, he said, though he himself thought that its importance could be exaggerated, since

-4-

the Czechs had no effective defence, had greatly impressed both the Poles and the Rumanians. The Polish frontier against Germany was very long and was not defended by any Maginot Line.

Asked about the possibilities of an economic boycott of Germany, he said that no doubt the U.S.A. could do this sort of thing and inconvenience Germany considerably and with impunity, but he had always taken the view that for European Powers economic sanctions against Germany, or Italy, would either be ineffective or, if effective, would lead to war.

We all got the impression that the P.M. now realised that his "appeasement" policy has been a failure, that he is completely disillusioned with Hitler, and very apprehensive about the future. The Government, or at least a majority in the Cabinet (Simon and others still dissenting), is now trying, though belatedly, to operate a collective security policy. Hitler has at least persuaded him that we were right.

DIARY24. 3. 39.

Saw Van at his house (we avoid F.O.) for 40 minutes this afternoon. This was my first talk with him since Munich. He is still trying to urge the Government to clear and definite commitments for mutual assistance. He says the Russians are now very willing to come in. Maisky used to tell him that he thought Hitler would go West rather than East. Van says that lately M. has not been so sure, particularly since the occupation of C.S. which, as Van said to him last week, instead of being, as the Germans used to allege, a pistol pointed westwards at their hearts, has now become a pistol pointed eastwards at the Ukraine. The Russians and French will now, Van thinks, sign anything with us, no matter how definite. But the Poles are still not quite sure whether we would go through with them to the end. It is most urgent that they should not continue to delay, as is Beck's nature. Let them raise objections or points of detail about the proposed declaration. Let them speak freely. But don't let the present mood in this country to be more firm evaporate through Polish indecision.

Rumania, greatly discouraged, has now not quite sold out but has gone a long way towards surrender to Hitler.

Someone should say now "Encirclement? Who is being encircled? France is encircled; Czechoslovakia was encircled; Poland is being encircled; even Russia is in danger of being encircled between Japan and the eastward-moving German Power. Germany is encircling everyone in turn. Therefore, let not Germans complain any more of encirclement. Such complaints would be greeted with a roar of ridicule in this country."

Mussolini will speak on Sunday. Probably he has not even yet made up his mind what to say. Van thinks it is about even chances whether he will pitch his claims so high as to indicate a willingness to face war now, or so moderately as to invite negotiations. But, if the former, a strange situation will arise, since Germany has now got all that she can comfortably digest for some time to come. No German, however enthusiastic a Nazi, would be disappointed if he had now to wait till 1940 for the next triumph. Therefore, it might well seem that, if Mussolini pitches his claims very high, the Germans were required to go to war in support of a purely Italian quarrel.

Van thinks our broadcasts in German are doing good, but we must not much strengthen the dose or it will all be stopped.

DIARY28. 3. 39.

Saw Maisky in the morning and Raczynski in the afternoon.

Maisky said that, though the Germans entered Prague on March 15th, it was not till the 16th that H.M.G. made the first approach to S.U. about the threat to Rumania. Tilea had an S.O.S. on the 17th. A painful impression had been created at Bucharest by the complete passivity of the Western Powers in face of German aggression. Therefore, Rumania must make up her own mind, but first asked London and Paris whether she could expect any help and, if so, what. Wohltat had made his demands, a week before the German occupation of Prague, for 100 % trade both ways and the liquidation of Rumanian industries. Bucharest rejected this, but W. had said "We will discuss it again later."

subsequent Halifax, on the night of the 16th (or 17th) had wired to Moscow, Warsaw and Angora asking what would be their attitude if Rumania was attacked. Seeds called on Saturday morning on Litvinov, and Maisky was invited to the Foreign Office. Litvinov said that he must consult his Government, but meanwhile asked what H.M.G. would do. On Saturday night Litvinov asked Seeds to come again and suggested an immediate conference at Bucharest.

On the 19th Maisky called on Halifax in the afternoon and asked "What about the Six Power Conference?" H. said he had had a word with the P.M. the previous evening. They did not reject the idea of a conference but thought it was premature. (M. explained that the S.U. had proposed a conference in order to test British and French intentions, of which they were suspicious.) H. suggested a declaration as a first step, to be made quickly.

The text of this was approved by the Cabinet on Monday, 20th, and sent to the various capitals. On the 21st it reached Moscow. On the 22nd Moscow said they would sign it and suggested that Prime Ministers as well as Foreign Secretaries should sign. The proposed declaration referred to the common interest of the signatories in peace and order in Europe. In the case of aggression, or threat of aggression, they would consult as to the best methods of dealing with the situation.

M. was very definite that the commitment in the declaration was only for consultation and not for mutual aid.

-2-

On the 23rd M. saw Cadogan, who said the French agreed but the Poles had not replied. G. understood, however, that the Poles had misgivings (1) because they were invited to join an anti-German front with nothing better than consultation in the event of trouble, and (2) because they were shy of signing with Russia.

On the 24th Raczynski told Halifax of these doubts. Beck was coming on April 3rd and could continue talks then. (I asked M. whether his relations with R. were at all intimate. He said no, but he gathered that R. himself had been in favour of Poland signing the declaration. This is borne out by my talk with R. recorded later.) M. said "Beck wants from you mutual aid and money." He understood that Beck would ask for a loan of £15 million. His attitude was "If Britain wants me she must pay." When the French had lent him money, said M., he had quickly turned away from France.

M. said that since Friday, 24th, nothing more has happened. He has had no more communication with the Foreign Office. The S.U. were only asked to agree to a Four-Power declaration - Britain, France, S.U. and Poland. They have not yet been asked to join in a Three-Power declaration with Britain and France.

I then told M. something of the story which the P.M. had told us. M. said that there were "two lies" in this: (1) Rumania was not to sign the suggested British declaration, and (2) this declaration contained nothing beyond consultation. M. said that he thought Chamberlain wanted (1) to frighten Germany by some evidence of a rapprochement with the S.U., though he did not seriously intend the latter, and (2) to meet the electoral argument that he was cold-shouldering Russia. It is now more than a week since M. has seen Halifax.

The Communique issued in Moscow last night, 27th, on the result of the talks between Hudson and Litvinov looks quite good on paper, though general. It covers politics as well as trade. It was issued, of course, in agreement with Hudson and Seeds, and M. had been told, before Hudson went, both by Hudson himself and by Van, that the political aspect of the visit was even more important than trade. Halifax had said the same to M., though more guardedly. None the less, last night the F.O. told the British Embassy in Moscow, though too late, to leave out all reference to international policy. This has irritated Moscow. The full communique had already been given to the Tass Agency before the F.O. message arrived.

-3-

RACZYNSKI began by being slightly defensive. He said that of course I should realize that his lips would be to some extent sealed. I said Yes, of course, but at once went on to tell him that I had had a talk with the P.M. from whom and from other sources, I had gathered the grounds of the Polish objection to the proposed declaration. I told him that I understood that these were (1) No commitment for mutual aid, but only to consult, (2) Poland, being next in line of fire, was not keen to sign anything which might additionally excite Hitler, and (3) Poland did not want to sign the same bit of paper with S.U. I added that, having been in Poland's Eastern Borderlands, I quite understood point (3). This display of knowledge and pro-Polish sympathy unsealed his lips a good deal. He said the three objections were right. He himself, when the British declaration had first been proposed, had been in favour of signing. He had "felt as pleased as a child" because hitherto he had always felt that in London not much heed was taken of Poland. But Beck had been more cautious. (R. added that Beck had had many difficult positions to take lately and that he thought he had always been right. This was probably a diplomatic way of saying that he thought he had often been wrong.)

As to the form of the British declaration, "I don't know whether it is true that it was drafted by Simon, as some people say, but it was certainly very full of loopholes." To sign any joint declaration at all might be interpreted in Berlin as a sign of weakness and fear. The case against a joint declaration has become stronger owing to delays and arguments about its terms. Poland had made a very strong private statement to the Germans that they would fight if attacked, and even if the Germans attempted violently to disturb Polish rights in Danzig. R. thought that this would be more effective and appear more dignified than joining in a joint public declaration in present circumstances. (He said that the Czechs should have fought, even on the second occasion when Hacha was summoned to Berlin and threatened with the bombing of Prague if he did not accept a German protectorate. He should have dared Hitler to bomb Prague. If Hitler had done so, the whole of Europe and America would have been revolted. I felt it difficult to pursue this discussion with a Pole, though I am sure that in like conditions the Poles would fight.) I asked whether he thought his Government would support a bi-lateral pact of mutual guarantee with this country, each to come to the other's assistance if Germany attacked. He said most emphatically yes, but no such pact had yet been offered.

He said that Maisky, and he thought also Litvinov, were rather irritated with the British. (Madame Maisky, he said,

-4-

showed this very clearly to him at the Buckingham Palace Banquet to Lebrun, though Maisky himself showed more self-restraint.) On the other hand, the Russians felt themselves more secure now than they have done for some time past, since Japan is weaker than she was and increasingly in difficulties with the Far East. The Russians, therefore, can afford to sit back and do little in Europe at the moment. Raczynski's own guess was that Hitler would next try, in view of the firm Polish warning which he had received, to dominate Hungary and Rumania.

I can quite see that there are great difficulties in getting the Russians and Poles to pull together, even now.

DIARY30. 3. 39.

Saw ^{Jan} Stanczik the Polish Miners' leader over for the I.F.T.U. Executive. He says that they feel in Poland that the position is very critical. Three classes have been called up and half a million infantry mobilised. All technical services are fully mobilised. There is a mass of German troops on the Polish frontier.

The Polish workers are opposed to the present Polish Government. They want a Government of National Defence, including all Parties, in which they have offered themselves to participate. A joint conference of the Polish Trades Union and Socialist Movements has taken place and they are now holding meetings all over the country, making propaganda for such a National Government. The general spirit of the people is resolutely to resist Germany if war comes. They have always been opposed to Beck's policy. They want an agreement with England, France and Russia, though as to the form of Russian assistance there are some qualifications to be made. They were opposed to Beck's anti-Czech policy, wishing that C.S. should survive and give stability to Europe and be a barrier against German expansion eastwards. Since Munich, they have made some modification in their public declarations, as it would be rash and tactically unwise to offer too unqualified an opposition to Beck since this would suggest national disunity and might provoke Hitler. Poland can only effectively resist if she is promised help from France and Britain, and also material at least from S.U. He thinks that secret conversations have been taking place between Warsaw and Moscow to arrange for Moscow to give technical help, arms, etc., though not man power in the mass, in the event of war. The German pressure is now designed to get a pledge from Poland of neutrality, if Hitler attacks in the West. In the last few days German press campaigns have been designed to prevent Beck from going to London, or to make him go also to Berlin, either on the way to London or on his way back. Beck has refused, and will come here only. Even if Poland was left to fight alone she would resist, even although there would be great inequality of resources between her and Germany. The Peasants' Party are working in co-operation with the Socialists and Trade Unionists. A joint delegation of all three is to approach the President, Moscicki, asking for a Government of National Defence and also for a widening of the democratic basis of the next Parliament (secret ballot, etc.) when the situation permits the next elections to be held. Polish Socialists and Trade Unionists have always advocated cultural and political equality for the Polish minorities, especially for the

Ukrainians, who number five millions. Till now they have not succeeded, the Government having mistrusted the minorities. When Carpatho-Ukraine was formed, the Polish Ukrainians gave support to Hitler, believing that the Great Ukraine was near. But the Hungarian occupation of C. Ukraine has disappointed them. They have now swung round against Hitler, and the Polish Government has a great opportunity to bind them into the Polish State. The German minority is different. It has always been an enemy minority. In the mines and heavy industries there are no German workers, only Poles. The Germans are skilled workers and officials. But since Upper Silesia came under Poland, the majority even of Germans are in Polish Unions and have been assimilated, better than was expected, in the Polish Government. There is, however, a minority who are pro-Hitler. *State*

As to Russia, all Poles are opposed to the entry of Russian troops on Polish soil, even in the event of war, though they would welcome technical assistance and arms. They fear that the Russians, either during or after a war, would claim that there was strong Communist feeling in Poland and would try to set up a Communist Government. There is a strong sentiment in Poland against Communism, particularly in view of what they hear of conditions in Russia.

2 p.m.

Parliamentary Party Executive. Greenwood reports that he saw the P.M. for ten minutes before the special Cabinet this morning. The P.M. said that they had received reports from two sources, one an indirect German source, the other through the American Embassy in Warsaw, which had passed on the information to the American Embassy in Berlin, which had verified it, that Hitler was contemplating an immediate attack on Poland. Ribbentrop was pressing for this and was, for the moment, in high favour since the Memel coup was his idea and it had succeeded so perfectly. H.M.G., therefore, were considering whether they should not now issue a statement, in conjunction with France, that if Germany attacked Poland we ~~too~~ would regard this as a gross act of unprovoked aggression and would go to Poland's aid. It appears that Sinclair, who was also with Greenwood and the P.M., then asked "What about Russia?" The P.M. pointed to a document on his table which purported to be a statement on the visit of Maisky to the F.O. regarding some new formula of consultation (though apparently not involving a commitment of mutual aid). Greenwood gathered from the P.M. that Maisky had been satisfied with this statement.

-3-

The Executive was, as usual, voluble and ineffective, but it was decided to meet again at 9 p.m. to-night, Greenwood having arranged to see Maisky between 6 and 6.30.

In the corridor Baker, Alexander and I had a few words on the gravity of the situation and the indecision of the Government; also on the ineffectiveness of Greenwood. I said "I will tell Greenwood that I will go with him to see Maisky if you will agree". They both agreed. I met Greenwood in the corridor a few moments later and asked him whether he objected to my going with him to see Maisky. He said No, certainly not, though he was obviously somewhat taken aback and offended.

Grenfell had reported that Butler had told him that he had attended a Cabinet Meeting, waiting for a statement, but that no statement was to be issued. I don't know whether this means much or not.

DIARY

30. 3. 39

With Greenwood to Maiski. M. says he has not seen Halifax since the 19th, but is to see him to-morrow. He was irritated because out of touch. (I guess that at Moscow they may say "Why doesn't he get in more?" and this may be undermining his position here. Remember the case of Grandi at Geneva.)

Chamberlain had told the House that he was keeping those Governments with whom H.M.G. was in consultation informed on his proposals. M. Had seen Cadogan on another matter, and afterwards asked why, in view of P.M.'s statement, he was not being informed. Cadogan had seemed a little confused and said that he supposed the P.M. had meant the group of Powers in consultation over the Polish guarantee.

.....

Parliamentary Executive meets at 9 p.m. Great concern was expressed by several about the absence of the Russians from the circle of effective discussion. I proposed that two or three of us should see the P.M. to-night on the declaration to be made to-morrow. There might still be time, I said, to get something put in about Russia, and in any case it was our duty to emphasise our view. Greenwood, half unconscious in the Chair, was not keen, and did nothing to bring the discussion to a point. Finally I pressed it again and it was agreed that Greenwood, Alexander and I should go.

We saw the P.M. at 10.15 p.m. in the Cabinet Room at No.10 quite alone. We told him that he would never get away with it to-morrow unless he brought in the Russians. We dwelt not only on the state of opinion in our own Party and elsewhere, but on the crude importance of having the Russians on our side if trouble should come. I spoke of certain geographical details in Eastern Europe, and Alexander of the Pacific. The P.M. said the Government were anxious to consult the Russians and were keeping in touch with them, but he himself had been surprised at the strength of the objections taken by many States to having anything to do with Russia. There were not only difficulties with Poland, but he mentioned also Portugal, Spain and Canada (R.C.s in Quebec, I suppose.)

The P.M. said that Maiski was to see Halifax at 10.30 to-morrow morning after the Cabinet. I then suggested, and the others agreed, that he should postpone his statement from 11 p.m.

6

till later in the day, so that account could be taken of whatever passed between M. and H. He agreed that there was much to be said for this, but did not wish to delay his statement too long, or it would have leaked, as always, in Paris.

31.3.39. (Fri)

Unsubstantiated rumours about the H.C.

DIARYSunday, 2. 4. 39.

In London for a wonder! Ring up Raczynski and Maiski and arrange see them both in the afternoon.

Walking along Oxford Street, I meet Voigt wandering slowly and vacantly in the opposite direction. I invite him to turn round, walk a bit quicker, and give me his views. He thinks that Hitler for the moment is hesitating. He has been surprised by this new British firmness and does not know what to do next. V. has no doubt, in spite of Beaverbrook and the "Times", that the British undertaking covers both the "Corridor" and Danzig. V. distrusts Russia. She is not herself threatened in Europe. He does not want her brought into the present arrangement. "The fewer allies you have in a coalition the better". Poland, and not the S.U., has replaced Tzarist Russia in the Balance of Power. He thinks the Russians want a war in Europe, they themselves to keep out or to intervene only in a minor way. They still want a Communist revolution in Western Europe. The Czechs should have fought and not surrendered. Mastny has accepted a German ~~decla-~~^{ration} tion and Sirovy was photographed shaking hands with Hitler in Prague. The Czechs always deserted or ran away in the last war. Their trip across Siberia, though it has been much written up, was in fact a very squalid affair. It was Sirovy who betrayed Kolchak to the Bolshevics. In Eastern Europe a nation must either fight or go under. He cannot imagine the Czechs regaining their lost independence in our lifetime.

Having listened to all this, and said little, I am arrived on the doorstep of the Polish Embassy. I tell Voigt that he has put an interesting and rather unusual point of view. He will observe that I am now going in to see the Poles. He says "Raczynski is a very happy man. This is the greatest day of his life."

.....

Raczynski says that Beaverbrook and Reuters put over the limiting interpretation on the P.M.'s declaration on Friday night. Reuter corrected itself later in the evening. Then, on Saturday morning, came the leader in "The Times". Beck on Friday night was so upset that he sent for Kennard and said he would cancel his visit to London. K. said he was sure Reuter was wrong. On Saturday morning R. went to the Foreign Office and saw Sargent. He said "We want no Runcimanism in Poland". He was, however, quite

satisfied with the F.O. assurances. He thought that the terms of Chamberlain's declaration on Friday showed signs of too many cooks. It would be a great mistake to suggest to the public here that there are important negotiations pending between Poland and Germany. There is really nothing to negotiate. Poland rejects the German proposal for an autostrada across the "Corridor". It is quite unnecessary. There are good roads now and, if necessary, they could be improved. This would be a German brand across Poland's face and a symbol of German domination. Further, Poland rejects any change in the "Corridor". In Danzig some changes are possible, e.g., the substitution of a new bilateral Polish-German agreement for the League regime which has now become shadowy and nominal. But, says R., the Germans do much as they like in Danzig now. They persecute Jews and so forth. They cannot, therefore, claim that they are hindered in any way in their internal affairs. But, if Danzig became part of the Reich, they would fortify it and bring in guns which would threaten Gdynia. No well-informed person believed that any differences between Poland and Germany were now endangering the peace of Europe. This was endangered because unlimited German ambitions had now been unmasked and because Germany was showing such brutal impatience in seeking to achieve even the first stages of these.

I asked whether he would think it helpful if I asked Simon a straight question in to-morrow's debate on the Government's attitude to "The Times" interpretation. R. said "Yes, he cannot give the wrong answer now, particularly with Beck arriving the same day."

R. thought that the next ten days would still be seriously critical; we must seek peace; a preventive war was repulsive to all civilised people. After all, Hitler may die or some other change may come in Germany. Therefore, we should not provoke Hitler needlessly. Don't let him say "They are all gathering round; they are after my skin; I must fight now."

I said that I hoped the Anglo-Polish guarantee would be mutual. He said Beck would discuss it. R. himself would, of course, welcome it. From now on he thinks that our two countries are closely bound together. He could not have hoped for this a little while ago. The German-Polish Pact of 1934 runs for ten years and they had hoped that it would be renewed. "We must not do anything now which might even seem to be breaking this."

As to Russia, he asks what is our view. I tell him that the Labour Party is Russophil but not Communist. Further, we want the maximum of co-operation against aggression. Some of us appreciate the Polish objection to Russian troops on Polish soil, but what about aircraft, supplies, etc? Should there not be technical discussions

with the Russians on these questions? R. asks "What do the Russians really want? What is Maiski's attitude?" I say that I think that they feel they have been left out of consultations and that Maiski himself is rather irritated, feeling perhaps that his position with his own people is being undermined. R. says that the Stalinistic dictatorship is rather mysterious, and Maiski may not really know what they want. He may think it is the safest line just to grumble and scold. R. adds that if we can get in Rumania, Poland and Rumania between them, with sixty million people, would be a great safeguard for Russia against German attack.

.....

Went on to see Maiski, this time alone. He says he saw Halifax on Friday at 1 o'clock - he grumbled a little that he was put off at 10 a.m. from his engagement for 10.30. Halifax showed him the declaration which the P.M. was to make in the House at 3 p.m.; he said that it had taken a lot of drafting and that if he had many more such drafting jobs he would be inclined to commit suicide. (This, said M., although intended to be a joke, showed that there had been differences between Ministers.) M. asked what was meant by supporting Poland with "all our power". Did this mean military power or only economic and financial. Halifax said it included military power. M. said he did not think it was quite clear. H. then asked, could the P.M. say to-day that the Soviet Government approved of this declaration. M. said that clearly he could not say this, since his Government had not seen it. H. said that they wanted to avoid trouble and differences of opinion in the House this afternoon (this was clearly an effect of our visit the night before.) M. said that his Government had always been in favour of Collective Security and concerted action against an aggressor, and would approve this principle. (Something of this effect was inserted in the P.M.'s answer on Monday afternoon.) I asked M. whether H. asked him to consult Moscow regarding the P.M.'s declaration, or to transmit any proposals. He said no. Van saw him in the afternoon and was very cordial. He said there were now no differences in the Government and all were anxious to keep in close touch and co-operation with Moscow.

M. then spoke to me of the Reuter-"Times" incident. He said that on Friday at midnight Beck had summoned Kennard, who was then in bed. K. was dumbfounded. He said that the Reuter-"Times" interpretation was quite contrary to his own instructions from the F.O. He got on to Halifax by telephone and got him out of bed at 2 a.m. on Saturday morning. Halifax gave satisfactory assurances, which he carried to Beck. But, in view of C.S. and Munich and the fact that the same personnel are still in charge here, this incident, says M., gives additional grounds for suspicion. Who gave out the

Reuter-"Times" interpretation? Hoare, who is near to Beaverbrook?
No.10? Wilson?

some [?]

X

M. says that Beck will now ask for £20 million and 500
aéroplanes - to test H.M.G.'s sincerity. Russia will wait till
she is asked to do, or to discuss, anything. The Russian war
plans have been drawn up on the basis that Poland and Germany will
be in alliance against her. He believes that, sometime ago,
Berlin and Warsaw were discussing the cession of the "Corridor" to
Germany in exchange for German aid in a Polish attack on Russia
which should give Poland a further slice of the Ukraine, including
Odessa. (I said I thought all this was some years out of date
and I did not believe that the Poles would ever have been willing,
even at such a price, to give up the "Corridor".)

M., just as I was going, said that L.G. saw the P.M.
two days ago and asked "What about the Soviet Union"? The P.M.
said the Poles weren't willing, but spoke of need to confront
Germany with prospect of "war on two fronts". L.G. asked "What
is your other front?" The P.M. replied "Poland". L.G. laughed
at this idea. He spoke of the lack of equipment of the Polish
Army. He added "Without the S.U. your policy is a reckless
gamble!" I said "I suppose the P.M. told you of this conversation."

.....

3. 4. 39.

Debate in the House. See Hansard. On the whole,
satisfactory. Simon deplored Reuter-"Times" affair, repudiated
interpretation and alleged that it had come from no Government
source.

(X Talks in [?] & [?].)

DIARY3. 4. 39.

Simon said to me behind the Speaker's Chair, when I warned him that I should ask who inspired the Reuter message and "The Times" leader, and added that the P.M.'s entourage was among those suspected, "Between you and me, the trouble now is that the P.M. is coming out at the other end of the pipe."

11. 4. 39.

Bechler at W.L. He says things are not quite so bad in Danzig as in the Reich. The Gestapo has spies everywhere, but they have not the same powers as in the Reich. e.g. He went the other day to the funeral of an old colleague, a Socialist and an athlete. This was reported to his boss, who sent for him and demanded an explanation. But nothing more happened. In the Reich he would have been sent to a concentration camp for this. Being still in the Polish customs area, butter and eggs are more plentiful and cheaper than in the Reich. Conscription is not legally in force, though many leave, often under pressure, for the Reich for this purpose. Small parties of Czechs have arrived for work in the Danzig area. They are herded about like prisoners of war. Danzig is still demilitarised. If it became part of the Reich and was occupied by troops and heavy guns installed, Gdynia would become untenable.

If, he says, later on a free election could take place in Danzig, there might well be a most dramatic anti-Hitler vote.

DIARY4. 4. 39.

Tell Szapiro to use bits of my speech from Hansard in Polish press. I tell him that Polish propaganda has always been utterly futile. Ninety per cent of people here know nothing about Poland. Of the remaining ten per cent, five know only that in Poland there are minorities with grievances. To win Left sympathies here it is most important that P. should return to more democratic forms. S. says that in the Municipal Councils the Socialists are now the principal Party, that the President would like to move to the Left, but that Emigly is stupid about it, having the soldier's mind, and having originated the Ozon, the "Camp of National Unity". I say to Szapiro that just as rich Poles buy their clothes and tobacco in London, so Poland had better take our electoral system. Don't have any more P.R. but single-member constituencies with either the relative majority, as with us, or the alternative vote in the single ballot. This will have the good effect of blotting out small Parties. I also criticised the failure of Polish publicity for tourist traffic. Now that so many parts of Europe are objectionable, Poland might well step into the gap. She should boost particularly her Carpathians, and, to avoid crossing Germany, increase shipping facilities between London and Gdynia and develop air lines not coming down in Germany. He says one can now fly London-Copenhagen-Gdynia.

.....

F.O. official dinner in honour of Beck. Attlee and I were asked, but he is still ill. There was some muddle about Greenwood taking his place, so I am only representative of H.M. Opposition. Sat between Van and Rumbold, who claims that he always foresaw all this and used to send quotations from unexpurgated edition of "Mein Kampf" to F.O. in 1929, but they paid no heed. Clearly he thinks Hitler's paranoia rapidly getting worse. No-one knows what he may do next. If the Czechs had fought in September, the Russians would certainly have done something to assist them from the start and, Rumbold thinks, it would have been impossible for us and the French to have stood aside and watched them being destroyed. The Germans thought that the Czechs, unaided, could hold out for some weeks; the Czechs themselves said for six months. How stupid of Poles, Czechs, and Slovaks not to have come together years ago in a strong federation or alliance. I said that this was an old idea of mine, but I was always told that it showed complete ignorance to suggest it.

Van says that he was not too sure how Honest John would do last night in the House, but now is fairly reassured. Crookshank, sitting beyond Van, asks whether I have noticed, of view of Hoare's

-2-

and P.M.'s denials yesterday, who is sitting between them to-night? It is Lord Kemsley. I tell Van and C. that I hear from Emrys Evans that Dawson was seen outside P.M.'s room at the House on Friday night. Of course, he may not have seen him!

Exchange a few anodyne and aimiable words with Beck after dinner. He gives the impression of a man exceedingly pleased with himself and his work. Very different from the rather stiff style of his visit in 1936.

Late in evening
he was drunk
Swain's about but
St. M. very pleased
with himself.

DIARY12. 4. 39.

I see a lot of people to-day.

First, Tilea. Rather agitated; spends more than half the time I am with him, in a large room at No.1, Belgrave Square (apparently a huge house but no staff!), at the telephone. Mistrusts Beck. Before B. came to London, H.M.G., he says, had decided to give a guarantee to Rumania on the same lines as Poland. B. persuaded them not to do this pending discussions which he would conduct between P. and R. in view of the old alliance between them which was directed against the S.U. and would need to be rearranged before it could be turned round and made to point westwards. But, though Beck got back to Warsaw on Saturday, the 8th, nothing has yet been said by the Poles to the Rumanians, either at W. or B. Tilea verified this statement from the latest telegrams which he received at 1 p.m. while I was still with him. If, he says, to-morrow the P.M. guarantees Greece and Turkey but not R., it will have the most disintegrating effect in R. They will feel that they must make terms with Berlin at all costs, and the will to resist may disappear. R. is encircled by Hungary and Bulgaria, but the Turks will attack Bulgaria if she moves. The Turkish Ambassador has urged at the F.O. that R. should be guaranteed, and so has Corbin, who has been twice to the F.O. in the last few days on urgent instructions. Gafencu's visit to the Turks seeking a Turkish, or Balkan, guarantee was a failure. The Turks will not guarantee R. directly unless Britain and France will do the same. Yugoslavia is now more and more in the German orbit. "At best she would be neutral", he said, "in a general war." But for this very reason Bulgaria is inclined to be less pro-German than before.

As to the S.U., "If war came", he said, "of course we should accept her help", though he thought that the Red Army and the Red Air Force were not worth much except as a defensive force. But to announce in advance that they would take Russian help might (1) precipitate an attack by Hitler, and (2) upset feeling within Rumania and strengthen the pro-German element, which still has one or two mild adherents in the Cabinet. Pressed by him, however, he said that R. would have no objection to an Anglo-Soviet or an Anglo-French-Soviet pact. As to the guarantee, he pressed most urgently for speed.

I was aware, of course, though I did not mention this to Tilea, that Gafencu was going to Berlin next week. Evidently if he goes without a British guarantee, Hitler will swallow him.

.....

-2-

Lunch with Gillies, who thinks (as others do) that Mikoyan is very important in Moscow now. Maiski and even Litvinov are mere office boys. This explains their evasions of straight questions and their repetition of mere generalities about being in favour of a general pact, etc. The French say that our F.O. handles them clumsily and does not seem to be telling them enough. In Paris, Bonnet sees Suritz quite often, though it is not clear how much he says to him.

.....

In the afternoon see Maillot of the Habas Agency who is in very close touch with the French Ambassador. He is very urgent on the Rumanian guarantee. He says we can't go on waiting for Beck. Gafencu is now due to spend three days in Berlin. There is great danger of an economic arrangement with Germany. Rumania is swarming with German experts. The French General Staff is much disturbed about our defensive arrangements in Egypt. The Italians have troops everywhere, in the Dodecanese, Albania, both ends of Libya, Abyssinia, Spain, and Spanish Morocco. It may be Mussolini's plan to use these dispositions to raise his price and intensify his blackmail if Hitler goes to war and Italy at the start stays neutral.

Maillot thinks that both the British and the Russian Governments are exploiting each other's unwillingness to be definite. There is great suspicion on both sides. The French, at any rate, see the Russians more often and tell them more. Daladier wants to give Rumania a guarantee to-morrow, even if the British Government does not do so. Bonnet is against this, but may be overborne.

.....

Visit Maisky in the evening. He has seen Halifax twice since our last debate. "So our debating point has gone", I say. "Yes", he replies, "but you have another one." His conversations had only been for information and general discussion. (I hear it is the same in Paris with Bonnet sees Suritz.) But, M. says, Halifax did ask "Would you supply Rumania with arms and material in the event of war?" M. said that on this point he had no instructions, but he repeated Stalin's statement about aid to victims of aggression.

I asked whether this point was not pursued, either by

M. saying that he would seek instructions or H. asking him to do so. He said no. I said, rather hotly, that this was pretty bloody and that they were both to blame. I and some of my friends were coming to believe that Moscow was nearly as much to blame as London for the failure to make effective contacts and get on with the job. I said that this opinion was growing, even in Labour Party circles, and if it was untrue it was up to him to help to prove it so.

He took this very well, but repeated the old story about how they had proposed a conference which H.M.G. thought premature, and how they had expressed willingness to sign the Four-Power declaration which Poland had refused. I said that all this was getting stale now and in these fast moving days one could not live on a diet of history. He said that Moscow was becoming more and more suspicious of the intentions of H.M.G. They think they "don't mean business". After a month since the fall of Prague what have they done? Only made the pact with Poland, and will to-morrow guarantee Greece. He said that the question of the Rumanian guarantee was now in a frightful muddle, and he did not see how they could possibly straighten it out. Beck, because he is a friend of Hungary, is holding up all guarantees to Rumania, and the British Government played into his hands when he was here by postponing the guarantee till he had arranged things with Rumania. Gafencu is going to Berlin next week and may then hand Rumania over to Germany. Chamberlain, he thinks, is going to try to do another flirtation with Musso.

I said that these suspicions, which no doubt he was passing back to Moscow, might or might not be well grounded, but Moscow at least should be like Caesar's wife.

X concerns about this, we should point Hitler to what the
for what? here, - with 30 minutes of 1939

After these conversations I rang up C.R.A. and told him that I was very much concerned about the Rumanian guarantee. I arranged to see him next morning at 10.a.m.

13. 4. 39.

At 10 a.m. I urge that we should try to see the P.M. before the Cabinet at 11. We went round at 10.30 and saw the P.M. alone for about a quarter of an hour. We pressed very strongly the need to give the Rumanian guarantee to-day. Otherwise, if

Greece and Poland are guaranteed and Rumania not, the latter will be exposed not only to selective attack but also to moral disintegration, and Gafencu will go to Berlin next week in very poor shape. I say that I understand the French are pressing very hard for the guarantee and that it is possible that if we don't give it, Daladier will, and that this will look most unsatisfactory. The P.M. says the Cabinet have not yet decided. He admits the strength of our arguments but puts the case on the other side: (1) Beck has not yet completed his discussions, (2) R. will be less inclined to cede part of the Dobrudja to Bulgaria if she gets the guarantee now. I ask whether he realises that both the military and popular forces in Poland are much ahead of Beck and that he could afford to brusquer the latter, particularly if he lets other Poles know. He says "I don't know much about conditions in Poland". (I am quite sure this is true. It is a variant on his famous remark about C.S.) Anyhow, we have done our best, and we should not have done our duty if we had not tried.

I tell the P.M. that I have it on good authority that the French General Staff is much disturbed about our inadequate defences on the Egypt-Libya frontier. The P.M. says, rather irritably, "They are always riposting at us because we are always telling them how weak their Air Force is."

.....

That afternoon he announces the guarantee to R. Tilea, whom I see afterwards, is on top of the world. I tell him of our visit this morning. He says Corbin came again at 10.50 to the F.O. and two Conservative ex-Ministers had also pressed for the guarantee. His press attache sat by the window in the gallery in the House of Commons and, by arrangement, waved a white handkerchief out of the window when the guarantee was announced. This sign was taken by a Rumanian waiting below back to the Legation and a telegram sent off at once.

.....

In the debate the P.M. was going to make no reference to Russia until barracked from our Benches. He then emits a few improvised platitudes of good will. Winding up the debate, I advocate an A.-F.-S. military alliance against any aggression in Europe, Asia or N.Africa, and ask whether H.M.G. have proposed this to Moscow and, if so, whether it has been turned down. Simon, replying, tries to evade this question, but I put it again, and he says "H.M.G. have no objection in principle to such an alliance." Many people find this astonishing.

-5-

After the debate Burgin speaks to me in the corridor and says that it is all very difficult and that my statement that Poland and Rumania, though unwilling to have a direct pact with the S.U., would both welcome an Anglo-Soviet Pact is not true. I say that my information, from good sources, is otherwise. He again mentions the difficulty about Canada. I say that it is about time the Canadians were told to go to Hell, and that they did not understand either the politics or the military strategy of Eastern Europe. He suggests that if Russia were neutral in a war she could still supply great quantities of material to P. and R. I say that this would be a most miserable second-best and that, though I attach less importance to the use of Red ground troops, I want the Red Air Force to be in action from the start. This man is a Simonite of the worst type and his remarks probably reflect the talk of a minority in the Cabinet.

DIARY OF ANGLO-SOVIET NEGOTIATIONS15. 4. 39.

British proposal made in Moscow requesting the Soviet Government to make a unilateral declaration guaranteeing the three States guaranteed by France and Britain in Eastern Europe, viz., Poland, Rumania and Greece.

17. 4. 39.

In reply the Soviet Government presented an 8-point programme including, among other things, a Triple Defensive Alliance of France, Britain and the U.S.S.R. and the guaranteeing of all States situated between the BALTIC and Black Seas.

9. 5. 39.

Britain replied to the Soviet proposals by reiterating their request of April 15th, with only slight modifications.

14. 5. 39.

Soviet Government replied reiterating their proposals of April 17, but in a more simplified form. They proposed:
(a) A Triple Pact of Mutual Assistance; (b) A Military Convention;
(c) A Guarantee to all States in Central and Eastern Europe, including the Baltic States.

27. 5. 39.

British Government replied accepting the Triple Pact of Mutual Assistance and the Military Convention, but leaving the guarantees relative to the Baltic States very vague.

2. 6. 39.

Soviet Government replied reiterating their demand for full reciprocity respecting the Baltic States. The reply named 8 States which should have full equality in the provisions of the Pact, viz., Latvia, Estonia, Finland, Rumania, Poland, Greece, Turkey, Belgium. The Soviet reply also proposed the simultaneous coming into force of the Pact and the Military Convention. This proposal raised some doubts in the minds of the British Government.

12. 6. 39.

Soviet Ambassador in London told Lord Halifax and Mr Strang (who was leaving the same day for Moscow) on behalf of his Government, that the Soviets were interested in the substance

and not merely in formulas and that if agreement was reached on the substance it would be easy to find words guaranteeing the States on the north-west frontier of the U.S.S.R. giving these States the same protection as the other 5 States, namely, Belgium, Turkey, Greece, Poland, Rumania. As regards the simultaneous coming into force of the Pact and the Military Convention, His Excellency said that this could be settled in the course of the negotiations.

15. 6. 39.

First meeting took place in Moscow, between, on the one hand, Sir Williams-Seeds, Mr Strang, and the French Ambassador, and, on the other, the Commissar for Foreign Affairs, M. Molotov. The British-French side put forward various suggestions, but these were not regarded as satisfactory by the Soviet representatives.

16. 6. 39.

The Soviet representatives proposed that, as the British-French side were not yet prepared to put forward satisfactory guarantees regarding the Border States, that the three Governments should conclude a Triple Defensive Alliance to come to one another's assistance in the case of direct aggression.

21. 6. 39.

British-French representatives submitted another formula which was still unsatisfactory as regards guaranteeing the Baltic States. Under this proposal the Soviets would have had to pledge themselves to give automatic assistance in the case of an attack on the 5 States guaranteed by Britain and France, but British-French assistance would not be automatic in the event of interference with the Baltic States.

22. 6. 39.

Soviet representatives replied that the British-French proposal was not satisfactory because it was not based upon full reciprocity.

It is now June 28th. No meeting between the two sides has taken place since June 22nd. Throughout the whole of these negotiations the Soviets have replied with promptness, but the British-French side have been very desultory in preparing their replies.

Points for possible supplementaries to P.M.

*Dipl
in before
y. 1939*

Ten weeks since negotiations began; more than 10 days since Strang went to Moscow; this delay giving great satisfaction in Berlin and increasing the risk of new German aggression leading to general war in Europe.

What is outstanding difficulty? Won't recognise Russian interest in Baltics as legitimate as ours in Low Countries? Will only agree to consult, not to act, in event of aggression?

Has proposal been made from either side, at any stage of these negotiations, for straightforward triple pact of mutual aid against aggression?

Will P.M. consider turning Simon off Foreign Affairs Sub-Committee? And keep ~~him~~ off himself?

Does he recall that, before Whitsun, I suggested that Halifax should fly to Moscow? Why not now, and do his work without interference by Simon?

DIARY17. 4. 39.

Saw Maiski, who is leaving to-morrow for Moscow for consultation. He expects to be away about ten days, perhaps more if, he says, he can arrange to stay for the great May Day Parade in Moscow. It is quite a different Maiski to-day, much more cheerful and less carping. He thinks that last Thursday's (the 13th) debate was very useful. He was particularly delighted at Simon's reply to my question - that H.M.G. had no objection in principle to an Anglo-French-Russian military alliance. He wonders, could this reply have been unpremeditated? Is Simon that sort of man? (Rothstein, the press attache, whom I saw in the hall, was also full of glee and said that on Friday all Fleet Street was saying that Simon and I had concerted this question and answer beforehand. I tell him that Fleet Street is quite wrong.)

I said that, in the light of his attitude at our last meeting, when he feared that there would be no British guarantee to Rumania and that this was to be interpreted as an invitation to Hitler to go East along a selected route, I supposed that the Rumanian guarantee had made a lot of difference. He replied very warmly that this was so and that it had removed much, though not yet all, of the distrust in Moscow and the doubt whether, even now, H.M.G. "really means business." Until he heard the P.M.'s speech last Thursday, he was inclined to bet that there would be no Rumanian guarantee. He spoke, as he came into the Diplomatic Gallery, to Tilea who likewise did not know the guarantee was coming.

He agrees that British opinion on Anglo-Soviet relations has moved with a rush. He lunched to-day in the City with a number of bankers and financiers who were all very angry with Germany and declared their desire for close collaboration with the S.U. I said "What a tribute all this is to your skilful propaganda. You will be able to boast, when you get to Moscow, of the resounding success of your diplomatic mission in London." He was rather pleased, I think, at this very obvious flattery, and no doubt intends to speak somewhat on these lines. To me, however, he said that he thought perhaps Hitler too had helped.

On the Friday morning (14th) he had called at the F.O. on his own initiative in order to deliver a message from Moscow, on instructions just received, noting and welcoming the British guarantee to Rumania, and adding that Moscow was disposed actively to assist in the defence of Rumania and asking how H.M.G. proposed that such defence should be organised. (I said that these

instructions must have come pretty quick. since our guarantee could not have been known in Moscow before 4 p.m. ~~yesterday~~ ^{on the 13th} afternoon. Halifax had been pleased at this approach and had shown M. a telegram to Seeds which he had just drafted, instructing the latter to see Litvinov and ask whether, in view of the British guarantees to P. and R. and our hope to extend this system further, Moscow would now be disposed to make a unilateral declaration to the effect that she would join in the defence of any States on her borders if attacked, and, if she was disposed to make such a declaration, whether she would also be prepared now to concert with us suitable means for doing this. H. told M. that in view of M's communication he would send this telegram as drafted but would add a final paragraph welcoming Litvinov's message.

L. told Seeds, after a day's reflection, what before answering he would like H.M.G.'s reply to his question on Rumania. (There is still a residue of mistrust on both sides.)

The French had proposed to Moscow in the last few days that the Franco-Soviet Pact should be extended so as to cover the case of either party being at war by reason of an attack on Poland or Rumania. This proposal was narrower than the British and does not touch, as the British does, the Baltic States.

Maisky says that Rumania is thought in Moscow to be more crucial than Poland, (1) because she is militarily weaker, (2) because she is internally more divided, containing some pro-German elements, (3) because Hitler on the Black Sea would be only 30 miles from Odessa, and (4) because Germany would then have her oil. Also R. is more willing than P. to accept Soviet aid, especially aeroplanes and fighting material. He says that Soviet relations with Turkey are now once more very friendly, after a period of coolness during the last two years of Kemal's life. The Turks want a wide agreement with the S.U. in Poland, and especially Beck, is less willing than Rumania to agree in advance to accept all forms of Soviet assistance, but they recognise, of course, that the S.U. could aid P. enormously in time of war by supplying her with munitions, iron, oil, etc. In 1914/19 Russia had to import munitions. Now she can export them.

Turning to Spain, he says "How the British Government have been deceived over Franco!" I say that I, at least, long before Eden resigned, told him in the House of Commons that "it is contrary to British interests that Franco should win this war." This was received from the Government side with cries of "You want war." And Scrutator in the "Sunday Times" had said that my speeches on Spain were "becoming more and more tangential."

DIARY23. 4. 39.

Dine at Rumanian Legation to meet Gafencu who has just arrived from Berlin and Brussels.

Before dinner, talk to Rumanian Air Attache, who combines London, Paris and Madrid. He has heard that our aircraft production is now almost as great as the German, and that the French, though still much behind ours, has considerably improved. From Spain it is reported that many German bombers are arriving via Italy. What for?

Tilea tells me that all our (more or less) private talk at the House the other day came out in the American papers, via the U.S. journalist who was with H. Nicolson. T. says that Beck is playing a German game and is not to be trusted, but he thinks that Gafencu made some progress with him when they met last week.

G. is very friendly to me; he expresses much gratitude at my part in obtaining the guarantee, as to which I think that Tilea has told him a great deal. Arthur Henderson, Jr., who is one of the guests, met him in Bucharest a few months ago and is on good personal terms with him. (A hard-working and creditable, if not very clever, little man this.) Gafencu has been an airman, economist, journalist, newspaper proprietor, Parliamentarian - member of the Peasants' Party - and Under-Secretary before being made Foreign Minister. He is good looking, especially in profile, and, as Raczynski says to me to-night, "It is so seldom that a man is both good looking and a good worker."

G. says that he was received with respect in Berlin and that they did not try to bully him, "thanks to your guarantee". He saw Hitler, Ribbentrop twice, and Goering. King Carol has replied to the German enquiry, whether Rumania fears German aggression, that such a question is a quite new diplomatic procedure and that he does not understand its significance; that he has no fear of attack by any of his neighbours, but that Germany is not a neighbour.

All the high Germans said to G. in Berlin "So you have got the English and the French to fight for you? But they cannot help you." But they added that they had no objection to British and French guarantees, but, ~~they~~ they would interpret a Russian guarantee very differently. Hitler, he says, gave him an indication of the speech he will make on Friday, 28th. He

-2-

will declare that he never had any intention of attacking Holland, Belgium or Switzerland, nor of attacking the colonies of Holland, Belgium or Portugal. He will hint that France and England have suggested this. He will say that he wants his own colonies back, and base this claim on the grounds of justice and right. G. hopes that our reply will be strong. If changes are to be based on justice and right, then, we might reply, let Hitler first leave Prague and then we could talk of other changes.

He says that Hitler worked himself up into great excitement about war, declaring that he himself desired only peace. He said "If the British want war, they may have it, but it will be a far more terrible thing for them than they imagine."

He then went on to speak of the immense power of the German Air Force and of all the new and terrible inventions of their chemists and scientists. He said that very soon many great cities of England ~~would~~ be completely destroyed. But then he added "So, I know, would many cities in Germany and other countries which were at war. And what would be the good of this?" G. said that Hitler worked himself up into a great passion and "cried" at this point. Then he suddenly quietened down again and went on to speak of economic questions and the German "Living Space".

I am sorry to find that G. is still very shy about Russia, even of an Anglo-French-Russian agreement formally detached from guarantees. If war came, he says, of course Rumania would accept any help, but he does not wish to say so beforehand. Russian troops in Rumania would certainly do Communist propaganda. Russia, he thinks, has not the will to peace as Britain and France have. He suggests that we might also lose American support if we come too close to Russia. I say that I think this is no longer true. I ask "Have you any objection to a triple alliance, or at any rate a triple declaration against aggression, by London, Paris and Moscow?" "If your country chooses to make it, I have no right to object. Your guarantee to my country is unilateral, and I am very grateful for this, but I would prefer that you and the French made a military arrangement, which would not be published, with the Russians, rather than a political arrangement, which would be published." He thinks that in any case Russia would not do very much to help if war broke out. She would prefer war to peace in Europe.

Raczynski, to whom I speak afterwards, takes much the same line. He thinks that such a triple alliance would give Hitler

-3-

a further pretext of encirclement and might precipitate a war. R. says that he has for some time been pessimistic. He thinks the odds are perhaps 3 to 2 in favour of war. A triple declaration, he thinks, would increase the risk of war still further. I say that he will have seen that the desire for a triple pact has now spread far beyond the Labour Party. He agrees with this is so. Poland, he says, was opposed to the original proposal which was made by H.M.G. to have simultaneous and reciprocal pacts with Poland and Rumania. This would have looked too much like encirclement. I reply both to R. and to G. that there is another possibility, namely, that if we are able to display to the Germans an overwhelming potential force arrayed against them in the event of aggression, it will make such aggression less likely. Both take the line, in reply, that Germany knows that Russia would do something against her if war came, and that nothing is gained, and much might be lost, by aiding Hitler's propaganda inside Germany, by such a declaration.

R. says that in Danzig things have now quietened down again. A few weeks ago they were very tense, but since the Germans now realise that the Poles will fight for the maintenance of their rights in D., they are holding off.

Ashton Watkin tells me that the Treasury are gibbing at providing any more than £10 million for political economic policies in Europe. They say that our balance of payments ~~has~~ is already very unfavourable and that we cannot afford to do more. I say that since we have guaranteed Rumania it is ridiculous not to go ahead and give her something really worth having. He says that the Rumanians want from us £10 million worth of armaments, whereas we cannot let them have more than £100,000 worth. I ask whether it has been considered that we should lend ~~the~~ the Rumanians money with which to buy arms from Russia. This would be a much better type of transaction. He says that a request by Lithuania for economic assistance has been turned down flat.

On parting, he asks me about conscription. He has just come back from Paris and all the French, he says, are demanding it. I say that all the technical arguments here are against it - we need equipment rather than more men; - a large body of domestic opinion is firmly against it; on the other hand, it is argued, and this is the only argument worth listening to, that foreigners both friendly and unfriendly would be impressed. I wonder how small a departure from our present arrangements would impress them. He thinks a compulsory register.

M. said that the only State which risked or did anything to defend British and French interests in the Spanish Peninsula during the Civil War was the Soviet Union.

DIARY3. 5. 39.

Saw Van at his house at his suggestion. Before he came in, I had five minutes with her. She is full of indignation against Wilson who, she says, still has as much power as ever at No.10. Years ago he used to come quite often to see Van but now has not seen him for a year. She says that Cadogan is also jealous of Van and never initiates any discussion with him or suggests that he should be called in to conferences. Van himself has always to "muscle in", as he puts it, on his own. Halifax, she thinks, is friendly to him and can be influenced a good deal, but he is subject to the Inner Cabinet, which contains some bad men. All very womanly! She says that Cadogan, and also some Cabinet Ministers, have never forgiven him for not being willing to take the Paris Embassy, when it was urged upon him.

Van says that, as far as he knows, Horace Wilson and Neville Henderson are still where they were, incredible as this may seem in the light of Munich. "The Times" and the rest of Hitler's Fifth Column in London - I tell him that I called them that in the House of Commons the other day - are still active and ready at any time to start up appeasement again and to sell the Poles as they sold the Czechs. Wilson now is always present at Cabinet meetings, which is an innovation. Van has never had a private conversation with the P.M. on foreign affairs, nor, for a long while, has he spoken to Simon, who never liked him. On the other hand, Hoare is, and has been for a long time, very sound on Russia. It is a mistake to put him in the same group with P.M. and Simon. Halifax, likewise, understands the position well. (According to all this, two out of four of the Inner Cabinet are not too bad, but of the other two one is P.M. and the other the snakiest of them all.) Van shares my great impatience over the slowness of the Russian negotiations. He says - and this is a new way of putting it - that he finally lost his reputation as a trustworthy expert on September 18th when the French ran out and sacrificed the Czechs. He had always been labelled as pro-French and had been telling everybody that the French would stand firm over C.S. if only we did. Then the French, not much encouraged by us to stand, ran away. He has every personal reason not to be pro-French now!

As to conscription, I tell him that a message was brought to our Parliamentary Executive via an un-named intermediary and Ed Attlee and Greenwood that, in his view, if there was too vehement opposition to conscription, the chance of Hitler pulling the trigger would be increased by 25%. He says that he does not know how this

-2-

can have come. He did not send any emissary, nor does the statement truly represent his views. He thinks, rather, that if conscription goes through soon and without too much opposition, the effect in France will be very great. It will be pretty good anyhow and will do much to defeat the Flandins, who have been most active in anti-British propoganda. The Germans and Italians have also been spending large sums on French press and politicians.

The French have a dreadful responsibility for what has happened in Spain. He does not think the Republicans could ever have won, but it might have been a draw if the French had not closed the land frontier. There was never, in his view, any danger of a General European War arising from Spain. Central Europe was always the danger point. Even if German and Italian soldiers leave Spain - as very likely they may in the next few weeks - Spanish air and submarine bases will still remain available for Franco's helpers in case of war.

Hitler may understand a show of biceps; he will certainly understand nothing else. This is why a firm stand by the Poles has such importance, and why an arrangement with Russia should both be made and proclaimed. It is time now to tell the Germans that, having got 100% of their demands in Austria, C.S., etc., they must not in future expect to get more than 30% at the outside, and that only if they will negotiate, behave decently, and give evidence by way of deeds, not merely promises. He agrees with me that the Poles are thundering bad propogandists for themselves. They should long ago have made a full and reasoned statement of their position as regards Danzig and the "Corridor".

He has been having a lot of trouble with his teeth and is physically a little low.

.....
4. 5. 39.

First day's debate on Second Reading of Conscription Bill. P.M. incredibly inept and said to have upset even his own Yesmen. Two major blunders are (1) a shilling a day for conscripts - he should have said that they would get so many pounds a week of which, however, so much would be for splendid food, so much for first-class accommodation, so much for well fitting uniforms, and on top of this something more for luxuries and fun - and (2) reference to N.Ireland, which is so "loyal" that he trusts it to furnish, without conscription, its quota of volunteers. This makes, very naturally, great uproar on our Benches.

Eden very excited about Fifth Column leader in "The Times" to-day: "Danzig is not worth a war". He asks question on this and on Soviet negotiations, to which Ernest Brown, of all people, is to reply at end of debate.

In corridor find Eden, Winston and J.P.L. Thomas very excited against Government. Winston says "Fancy having thrown away the Czechs, a gallant and democratic people, and now we have to do the best we can with the Poles. I cannot defend many things the Poles have done, but we must make the best of it now. If the Cabinet had a plan and weren't simply humping about in a panic, they would have a perfectly clear, though unpublished, understanding with the Poles about the point at which the Poles would fight." Talk is going round again to-night that the P.M. cannot last much longer and that Winston will soon be in the Cabinet again, and may soon after be the P.M. I have heard all this so often before that I am disinclined to believe it.

Some farmers say "Mr. C. S. Clifton" (53)
 then, surely, "We want an
 Alliance with Russia."

DIARY7. ~~2~~⁵ 39.

From Hyde Park Demonstration to Soviet Embassy.

Have not seen Maisky since the eve of his departure for Moscow. I am careful not to mention Litvinov nor to ask whether it is true, as widely stated, that M. has for some while been undermining him at the Kremlin and that his last visit to Moscow was the final blow.

The present phase in the negotiations is pretty clear, and our talk added little to what I knew already. Before M. left for Moscow, Halifax, as M. had told me at our last talk, had told him that he was proposing, through Seeds, that Moscow should give a unilateral declaration of intention to support all Western limotrophe states, i.e., from Finland down to Rumania. It appears, however, that Halifax's draft was tampered with by colleagues and that in the end all he proposed was that Moscow should give such a guarantee to Poland and Rumania. The Soviet reply, which reached here on April 15th or 16th, was a straightforward counter-proposal for a triple alliance of Britain, France and Russia. This would apply to any attack in Europe on any of the three allies. Its conclusion would immediately be followed by military talks and a detailed military convention. There would further be a joint guarantee by the three allies of all states bordering on Russia. The Far East would be left out, and so, apparently, would any direct reference to the small states in Western Europe.

It has taken nearly three weeks for the British Government to compose a reply to this, but this reply either has gone yesterday or will go to-day or to-morrow and is a mere re-affirmation of the previous British proposal, namely, a Soviet guarantee of Poland and Rumania. To meet Russian suspicions that there might be a plot in London or Paris to involve Moscow in a war and then leave her in the lurch, it is further provided in the British proposal that the Russian guarantee to P. and R. should not operate unless Britain and France had already taken military action under their own guarantees to these two countries. There is, however, no suggestion in the British proposals of Staff talks, though Bonnet has suggested to Suritz that such talks might follow later if the British proposal, apparently also approved in Paris, is accepted.

I say that from the point of view of a Pole or a Rumanian there seems practically no difference between these two proposals, assuming good faith in the West. Difficulties with P. and R., therefore, cannot, it seems to me, be an important reason

-2-

for British refusal of the Russian proposal. In practical terms there seems to me to be not a great deal to choose between ^{men} except - and this might indeed be important - that under the British proposal, if Hitler attacks us or the French, the Russians are not required to do anything except, perhaps - and only perhaps - if Poland then comes in and is attacked by Hitler in her turn.

M. thinks that Moscow will say No to the British proposal. So far, he says (though here both he and I have to talk delicately), there is no change in Soviet foreign policy in spite of change of persons. He hints, however, that if we still refuse their terms and the negotiations break down, a change may come. I look up at Molotov's photograph - which has hung in his study for a long time, together with a painting of Stalin and a bust of Lenin, but never any picture of Litvinov - and ask whether Molotov has not hitherto principally interested himself in internal affairs. I recall his saying, which pleased me, that under capitalism, for each factory there is a plan, but outside there is anarchy; whereas in the Soviet Union there is a general plan, but inside each factory there is anarchy. Maisky said that Molotov had always kept in touch with the international situation and had a shrewd practical view of foreign policy. Always when Soviet Ambassadors abroad went back to Moscow they went to see him and had long talks with him. (I thought "Yes, you little monkey, and you went and told him that Litvinov was no use.")

I say that I have a feeling that for the moment war is at least postponed. M. says that Hitler thinks that he will die within two years and therefore he must do big things quick. For the moment the Axis has a military superiority, but this may not last and would be quite removed by the triple alliance.

I ask him his view about our conscription. He says that in Russia they have no objection to conscription and that they are surprised that we have managed to get along without it for so long. He wonders whether the Labour Party could not sell conscription for the triple alliance. I say that this idea is, of course, so obvious that it has been much discussed, but that the Labour Party, as he will have learned, is most conservative and that great indignation is expressed by some of my colleagues that there is even a hint of trading anything, however keenly desired, against conscription.

He says he thinks the real obstacle here to acceptance of the Russian proposal is the Umbrella Man (Maisky and I always refer to him thus). Also Simon. I tell him I ~~observe~~ ^{hear} that Hoare is, and has for some time been, in favour of a Russian

hear

-3-

alliance or something very near it. He says that this is so, and that Halifax, he thinks, would also like to go much further than the P.M. and Simon.

Sir H. Wilson is as well entrenched as ever, he thinks, at No. 10. He suspects that it was he who instigated Rushcliffe to write an appeasement letter to "The Times". Chamberlain, like Beck and Bonnet, is personally quite unreliable and always looking for a hole in the hedge. This snag can only be removed when we get a new P.M.

As I am going away, he asks how many members there are in the Parliamentary Executive. Is it about 24? I say the full membership is 15 plus one or two Lords. An average attendance is about a dozen. He says that some of my colleagues have been indiscreet and have been talking outside, and even writing in letters, about what he has told to Attlee, Greenwood and myself. He hints that we should say less, particularly where he is involved, in the Executive. I try to get names out of him without success, but he assures me that he knows I am always most discreet. I say that Coates is also a good deal about the House of Commons and mixes with some loquacious people outside our Executive. He says that he has given Coates a warning to be careful what he says to Labour M.Ps. Maisky adds that "at No. 10 Downing Street they think that I am an arch plotter. I do not mind that, but I hope you will ask your friends to be careful." I say that I thought Phil Baker was a little indiscreet in Parliament on Friday in mentioning April 15th as the date of the arrival of the last Soviet Note. Clearly he could only have got this either from Maisky or the F.O.

DIARY10. 5. 39.

Blum dines, as Attlee's guest, at H. of C. Also present: Greenwood, Morrison, Alexander, Clynes, Hicks, Dallas, Baker, Middleton, Grenfell and myself. The conversation is frank though slow, since Phil, Grenfell and I are the only persons capable of interpreting. Besides us, only Attlee seems to have any French, and that very lame and atrocious. Blum has no English.

Blum thinks that the great danger is that war shall come through a misunderstanding, Hitler and Ribbentrop still believing that Britain and France are not serious in their intentions to resist further aggression. It is for this reason that he has desired to see conscription introduced here. He well understands the technical arguments against it and is willing to believe that it will make no important early addition to our military strength. But he is sure that already it has had a very great effect both in France and in Germany. He quotes someone as having said "Ribbentrop will only understand that Britain and France mean business when the British working class accept conscription and the French middle class consent to pay their taxes". He says that he was urged to write his article and do what he could to influence British Labour opinion by President Roosevelt, who sent a message to him through the American Ambassador in Paris. Roosevelt had been urging Chamberlain to introduce conscription in order to impress the Germans, and Chamberlain had replied that he could not do so owing to the opposition of the Labour Party, on whom he placed all the blame. (I could see that one or two of the Party, including A.V.A., raised their brows at this.) Blum says that in Paris two or three papers, including "Le Journal" and "Le Jour" have certainly been bought by the Axis. Laval keeps in constant touch with Mussolini, and Flandin, of whom we know only too much, is always active on behalf of Hitler. Posters had been put up in Paris and other parts of France telling people that the British were deceiving them, that they neither would nor could give any military help in war and that France would be left alone to face Germany. Pressed by some of us, on the obvious military unimportance of the Conscription Bill, Blum maintains that its mere introduction has had an immense effect. Hicks tells him that the Trade Union leaders were much upset and irritated by his article, and asks him whether he recalls the visit paid by Hicks, myself and Gillies to him in September 1936 when he was Prime Minister to seek his views on the Spanish Civil War, then only just beginning. Hicks says that Blum will recall that we then were very careful to make no public declaration without first consulting Blum, and, having consulted him and heard his case for non-intervention, ourselves, in order not to embarrass him, supported non-intervention both at the T.U.C. at Plymouth and at the Labour

-2-

Party Conference at Edinburgh, in face of much criticism from a section of our own people, on the assumption that Blum was right in supposing that this was the best means both of aiding our Spanish comrades and preventing the outbreak of a general war in Europe. Hicks suggests that in this case Blum would have done better first to consult us and take our view on a matter of British policy before writing an article which has undoubtedly embarrassed us and pleased our opponents. (Hicks tells me afterwards that he puts all this thus bluntly in order to be able to report to his colleagues of the General Council that he put these questions and Blum's answers to them. Hicks himself is friendly to Blum and not disposed to be too critical.) I translate all this not unfaithfully, but with a few additional friendly flourishes. Blum, with his charming manner, says that he remembers with great gratitude our visit, our willingness to accept his view, and our subsequent loyalty. He fully realises how embarrassing it was for us to have thrown across the floor of the House of Commons the taunt "But it was your friend Blum who first proposed non-intervention". He still thought he was right to have made this proposal, though very soon, when German and Italian intentions became clear, non-intervention should have been abandoned. In the present case he wishes to emphasise that the French Socialist Party has made no declaration on conscription here. His article was the expression of a personal view and he endeavoured so to phrase it as to give all the arguments on both sides and to embarrass us as little as possible.

Dallas then counter-attacks him on the weakness of the French Air Force and asks whether any improvement has been made in the rate of production of aeroplanes and munitions generally. He asks whether it is realised in France that, owing to the weakness of French aviation, it would be necessary for us not only to do most of the work at sea in the event of war but also to bear the brunt of air fighting in the West. He says that he understands that part of the British Air Force is already in France. On this last point Blum denies knowledge, but he says that there has been a great reorganisation of aircraft production since last September. Mass production is now taking place and the French output has now risen to between 150 and 200 planes a month. He hears that our production has now reached 800 a month and is equal to the German. He hopes that the French output will rise further. In addition, they are procuring many good machines from the U.S.A.

Several ask him about Bonnet. Why does he remain at the Quai? Blum replies that Daladier does not wish to sack Bonnet since this would endanger his majority in the Chamber. On the other hand, D. has taken over from B. practically the whole conduct of French foreign policy. B. has been placed in a most humiliating

LDF
Wm
2/10/36

-3-

and undignified position which would have caused most other men to resign. D. deals direct with Foreign Office officials over B.'s head and is quite determined on a firm policy. It is also Blum's view that Chamberlain, although he realises that we mistrust him as much as good Frenchmen mistrust Bonnet, has really changed his attitude and is prepared to be firm. On the Russian negotiations the French are anxious to get our Government to go further to meet the Russians. The official communique from Moscow was no doubt designed to push Chamberlain in the desired direction and to help his critics here. Blum thinks that the Poles will now stand firm, being confident that they will be supported both by Britain and France and also, though they do not say this openly, by Russia, if they were attacked. He tells a story about the Dobrudja to the effect that King Carol had his mother, whom he hated, buried there in order to render its cession to Bulgaria impossible. As to the Bulgarian claim for access to the Aegean, the Greeks might be willing to agree to this, but not the Turks, who are in favour of taking a strong line with the Bulgars and who are saying everywhere "Leave them to us. If they move, we will deal with them."

Asked whether he knows anything of eight German Divisions concentrated on the Italian frontier, he says No, but there is much evidence of continued infiltration of Germans, including specialists in aviation and artillery, into Italy, and he has been told that the French Ambassador in Rome, when visiting Ciano, saw an agent of the Gestapo outside Ciano's door wearing a swastika armband. He thinks that Mussolini is more and more a prisoner of Hitler and that, although he is increasingly angry and envious, he finds it very difficult to escape from the German embrace. There are also many Germans and much material of war in Spanish Morocco facing Gibraltar.

As to Spain, the French Government have made mistake after mistake. Even now reports from Spain are believed to the effect that Franco is anxious to be friendly with France and Britain and to get rid of the Germans and the Italians. Blum thinks this is very doubtful. Another story is that Franco's personal position is very insecure and that he may be overturned any day and replaced by some other Spanish General whose policy would be equally ambiguous. Naturally, last September Franco said he would be neutral, because then the Republican Army was still in being and the entry of three or four French Divisions into Catalonia would immediately have transformed the whole military situation. In any case, Blum thinks, we must count, in the event of war, upon full use by Germany and Italy of Spanish bases both for aircraft and submarines.

I took him home after this talk to his hotel. He said he felt very tired. I said it was a pity we saw him so seldom in

London and that on this occasion, in view of the article, etc., his visit had received perhaps an uncomfortable publicity. If he could come more often the press would take less notice and we could keep better contacts. He said that after the fall of his Government and the death of his wife he had been a very sick man, but he was now recovered and he had the firm intention to "circuler" more. We should see him, he hoped, much more often in London in future. I said that he would appreciate that the British Labour Party was really very conservative and was a little heavy on its feet and slow to confront new situations. I did not believe that, except among our simpler militants, there was much opposition in principle to conscription, and, when the Bill was law, I thought it would be accepted, although there would be many personal grievances which would be exploited by us in the ordinary way of politics. On the other hand, I myself recognised the importance of the international argument which he had put, and there was a minority of our members in Parliament who were abstaining from most of the votes on the Conscription Bill because they did not wish to do anything which might even seem to be opposing national defence.

DIARY26th May to 2nd June, 1939.

Southport Conference. Hard work but quite a success. As usual, the first day of the Conference is the most difficult. Owing to coyness of many colleagues, I was given the job of dealing with Cripps. Wisely, though after many hesitations and discussions on procedure, precedence, etc., it was decided that he should be allowed to address the Conference "on behalf of himself and other expelled members". He did very badly. He said nothing on behalf of his colleagues, except to dismiss them in a sentence as "the others", whose case, he said, was different from his own and therefore he could not deal with it. For the rest, he put up a legalistic argument, reading his whole discourse from typescript and upsetting many delegates by a tactless reference to his private wealth and the attempt to "create class prejudices" by reference to it.

I astonished myself by my power of self-restraint in reply and by the sense of regret at having had to get rid of him which I think I managed to convey. He gave me an opening to let out the three questions I had put to him at his last E.C. These, and his answers, impressed the Conference. It was an easy victory on the vote, more than 5 to 1 in favour of the expulsion, and among the Constituency Parties alone, more than 3 to 2. His minority of 400,000 included 150,000 N.U.D.A.W. and about 50,000 other T.U. votes, thus leaving him only 200,000 D.L.P. votes out of a total strength in the Conference of 554,000.

This high number of D.L.P. votes was a record. 403 D.L.P.s and 9 County Federations were represented. The previous high record had been 323 at Bournemouth in 1937. There was evidence of a pro-Cripps block vote among the D.L.P.s, 100 of whom, practically all represented at Southport, had sent us resolutions protesting against his expulsion. The voting strength of this bunch was very nearly the vote recorded for Mrs Strauss for the Executive: 142,000. She had never been at a Conference before and is completely unknown outside Crippsite and "Tribune" circles. It is clear that some sort of string was run by Crippsites for the Executive. They tried to turn votes away from Morrison, Dallas, Wilmot and myself. Wilmot unfortunately missed re-election by one vote (200,000 as against 201,000 for Griffiths who, I think, though not a member of the string nationally, got some of its support regionally). Special steps were taken to see that George Dallas was saved, particularly through the Agents. H.M. and I were safe in any case, having a wide, diffused support which the

Crippsites could not hope to undermine. Clearly, however, the Crippsites, having a grudge against the four above-named members of the E.C., gave their votes to the other three - Laski, Baker and Pritt - and thereby a little disturbed what would have been a natural order.

When we came to the Popular Front on Thursday, their opposition had crumbled, and only 70,000 D.L.P. votes were in the minority. The D.L.P.s, therefore, voted against the P.F. by more than 6 to 1. H.M. spoke very well on this.

In private session, things were said both by Bevin and Francis Williams concerning the weakness of C.R.A.'s leadership. He, poor little man, has been ill and is going into a Nursing Home for an operation (prostate gland). I hear that the view is now taken both by Citrine and Bevin that a change in the leadership must be made. Also that they have no confidence in Greenwood either.

Ellen Wilkinson has an indiscreet article, not under her signature, in "Time and Tide", and another, signed, in the "Sunday Referee". To shift anybody from anywhere in this sheepishly loyal Movement of ours is a Herculean task. The fact remains that at Annual Conferences, when H.M. and I are the principal performers, we can build up the self-confidence, unity and moral of the Party in a most surprising wayand then, a few weeks later, others having resumed their feeble sway, down it all sags again!

I tell Francis Williams a few things, e.g., about the Masons, which he did not know, on the last morning of the Conference. I say that I am prepared to go to all lengths to get the right sort of change, provided there is reasonable chance of pulling it off. Otherwise, what is the good?

There were some humorous little incidents, e.g. when the Crippsites cheering their hero when he came to the rostrum in the Conference Hall, others started to boo. Little Mrs Lathan said to me afterwards "I was sitting in the gallery and the people round me began to clap when he came in, so I booed like anything." Mrs Walker, Jim's wife, also booed from behind the platform and seemed quite proud of it. I think that, as Crossman says in an article in the "Statesman" in which I recognise signs of my own inspiration, Cripps has now bored and irritated most of our Party to sheer distraction. One of the most effective speeches in the

Conference was by Brown, a young delegate from St Albans, who went for Cripps immediately before the vote on Expulsion and complained that "We have wasted nine blasted months arguing the toss about Cripps and this Popular Front".

Mason.

Dalton I 20 (63)

DIARY

24. 5. 39.

Bellenger engages me in conversation on the Terrace and asks whether I have ever considered becoming a Mason. I say no. He then explains how useful this association is and tells me that there is a Lodge at the House of Commons, called the New Welcome Lodge, to which a number of Labour M.P.s belong. "Greenwood" he said "is a member". He assured me that there was no politics in Free Masonry, but that there was a wonderful sense of fellowship, etc. I thanked him for his suggestion but said that I did not feel that I would care to join. I added "There is a good deal of talk going round about this Lodge". "There ought not to be", said he, slightly embarrassed I thought.

I don't know whether he just blurted this invitation out without consideration, or whether he had been deliberately sent to try to buy me off. Anyhow, I now have part of the story direct from another source.

Party L. & O.
Dalton J 20 (64)

DIARY

14. 6. 39. (Wed)

Party Meeting, at which a vote of sympathy with Attlee in his illness, and of personal confidence in him, is passed nem.con. This is the climax of some well-meant but maladroit and most ill-timed publicity. The peg on which a rather disagreeable discussion at the Party meeting was hung was an article by Ellen in the "Sunday Referee" of June 4th (this was the last issue of this paper, which died before any indignant person could answer Ellen the following week!) This article began by mourning a bit over Cripps. It then stated that when Lansbury broke his thigh, Cripps had been offered the Leadership and had refused it. Then, after some mild criticisms, the hope was expressed that Cripps would see sense and come back, and finally, after some platitudes on the need for decisive, courageous and inspiring leadership of the Labour Party, she asked - I paraphrase - "What would Chamberlain feel like if he knew that from now on he was to be confronted in the House of Commons by Herbert Morrison, that superb organiser and first class politician, aided by able-bodied lieutenants Dalton, Greenwood and Cripps? Surely the political situation would immediately be transformed, and a Labour victory would come soon." No mention of poor little C.R.A. at all!

There had also appeared in "Time and Tide" from her pen, though not bearing her signature, an article even more outspoken, in which she stated that at Southport the news of Attlee's illness had been received "with due sympathy. But his absence from the Conference made not the slightest difference to anyone. Now this is very serious." She then went on to boost H.M., and said that the impression made by Southport was that he was the dominating figure, with me as "his able lieutenant". No other mention of C.R.A. and no mention at all of Greenwood.

A third stone thrown among the geese on the pond was an article by Francis Williams, "Foundations of Victory" (attached) in the Daily Herald, to the first part of which no objection of principle could be taken, though the only three names chosen for praise are H.M., myself and Bevin. But at the end of the article, having declared that "the nation must be convinced of the Labour Movement's capacity for leadership", after citing various ~~evidence~~ anonymous evidence, e.g., "the administrative achievements of the great trade union leaders, the successes of Labour Ministers in the past", he finished, "It is at this moment shown pre-eminently in the commanding position in public respect which has been achieved by Herbert Morrison, through the great qualities of

courageous and imaginative leadership he has brought to the control of London." Again, no mention of C.R.A. nor of A.G.

As to this third article, I hear from Maurice Webb that A.G. reacted violently. Rang up F.W., demanded an explanation, and even demanded that F.W. should come round to the House to give this. F.W. refused and told A.G. that if he wanted to talk he could come to the D.H. Office. This was on Friday of last week, since when M.W. had heard no more.

For several days before the Party meeting there had been rumblings of a row coming. The Masons had been actively going about, swearing that they would have Ellen's head on a charger and alleging an immense and far-tentacled intrigue to impose H.M. upon a reluctant and indignant Parliamentary Party. It is possible that I also have been made the object of some organised suspicion and antagonism, but to a much less degree than H.M., first because my name, though honourably mentioned both by F.W. and Ellen, is only secondary, and second because on many issues, e.g., strong line with Cripps and strong arms for Britain, I have been much more persona grata with the Masons than H.M., who has been thought wobbly on both. The Masons, though no doubt hoping that C.R.A. will come through his operation all right, would like him to retire on grounds of health in a month or two and A.G. to get the Leadership, but for the moment they concentrate on indignation at this attempt to stab a sick man in the back. (And, indeed, these articles are most untimely. C.R.A. is due to have his second operation for prostate within ten days of the first, i.e., round about this next weekend, June 10/12. It is by no means sure that he will come through. M.W., indeed, told me some days ago that he had heard he had not better than a 2 to 1 chance. From what I hear elsewhere, I think his chance is much better than that, but he may well be out of action for some months afterwards.)

Having heard the Masonic rumblings, I have some words on Monday, June 12th, with Ellen and H.M. I think we are not observed together, meeting, after the House has adjourned, in the little room behind the Speaker's Chair. I urge her, if attacked, to counter by spilling some Masonic beans. She says that Scott-Lindsay, with A.G. - the latter not wholly sober - have been threatening her to-night with votes of censure at the Party meeting. I say that whereas C.R.A. is quite virtuous, in spite of all his inadequacies, A.G. and the Masons are a scandal, and this is a chance to expose them. She agrees to this idea and says that Jagger, generally very cautious, is now encouraging her to fight, particularly because he is infuriated at the activities of Robinson, who is the Masons' drummer in chief. H.M. thinks that it is very unfortunate that all this has been raised when C.R.A. is sick, but

thinks that there should be some day an open discussion on the Leadership in the Party meeting. In 1935 we took a silent vote after, as he says "two smart questions put to me".

M.W. tells me on the same evening that Shinwell has been raging to him against H.M. who, he says, was a MacDonalдите in 1931 and whose capacities have been enormously exaggerated by well organised propaganda. Shinwell thinks that on the whole C.R.A. is the best available Leader. If he should fall out, Shinwell says that either Greenwood or I would be better than any other alternatives. This is interesting, because I was not sure where Shinwell stood, and suspected that he might be in favour of Alexander as Leader. There are faint rumours, which I cannot verify, that there is a minor campaign in favour of Alexander running at this moment.

On Tuesday night I walk home down Victoria Street, with Alexander and ask him whether he is coming to the Party meeting to-morrow. He thinks not, as he is very busy. He regrets the press reflections on C.R.A., though, as I know, he has little use for him as Leader. I mention to him the Masonic matter, of which he seems ignorant - I suppose he is not a Mason himself in some other Lodge? - but he agrees with me that it would be a scandal and an impossibility for A.G. to lead the Party. He says "Has not A.G. got the T.U. vote?" This is an astonishingly ignorant question. I say "Of course, there is no T.U. vote on this issue. They are all split up." We both cautiously avoid making suggestions to each other, though, checking up our memory of the events of 1935, I recall to him, casually and in passing, that on that occasion we both supported H.M.

M.W. also told me this evening that A.G.'s state of mind was (a) that he was terrified of the Leadership, particularly if the international situation got bad, but that (b) he could not bear to serve under anyone else, except to continue under C.R.A.

On Wednesday morning, 14th, on the way to the House, I meet Fletcher, to whom I have long spoken frankly, and give him the tip that if the Masonic issue is raised, he should be blandly curious and ask for much more information on this affair.

At the Party meeting, after some non-contentious business, A.G. raises from the Chair, "with regret", the question of Ellen's article, but does not give detailed information about it, saying only that the E.C. thought it very wrong that at such a moment such an article should appear in effect expressing lack of confidence in our sick Leader. The discussion that followed was angry and confused. Ellen is not popular with most of the men

at the best of times, and on this occasion she had infuriated (a) the Masons, (b) all the loyal little Attleean, and (c) a number of members who rallied to the side of a sick man. She did not make a very good defence and she did not counter-attack the Masons. Perhaps it was best that she did not, for this might have been resented by some non-Masons as a red herring, and she is so unpopular at the moment that she would not have been a good person to spill these beans to-day. Shinwell moved a resolution of confidence in Attlee's leadership which, as already noted, was carried nem.con. Ellen did not vote. All the rest voted for it. Francis Williams, challenged, though not very aggressively, by Shinwell, made a short statement on his article, saying that he had no such intention as his critics alleged. Although he had not mentioned C.R.A., he had been discreet enough to use wide, anonymous phrases. No more was said on his part, fury being concentrated upon Ellen. Walker proposed a vote of severe condemnation on her for her article, and this had some support from the Masons, but it soon became clear that opinion was divided, and finally this proposal was withdrawn. Jagger, who watches the wind as skilfully as most men, and is a great friend of Ellen's, made no attempt to defend her *article* but did, in a semi-humorous speech, argue against a vote of censure on her. H.M. made a short speech at an early stage of the discussion. He said that, since his name had been mentioned in Ellen's article, he thought they would expect him to say something. He had had nothing to do with inspiring the article. He had not seen it beforehand. If he had seen it, he would have advised that it should not be published. He had been, as they knew, a candidate for the Leadership in 1935, but, after the Party had taken its decision, he had loyally co-operated with C.R.A. It was unwise to talk too much of "cliques", for there had been some cliques in the 1935 leadership election. (This was his only counter-offensive hint, and it was not sharply barbed.) If the vote of confidence in C.R.A. which had already been moved was put to the vote, he would vote for it. If the vote of censure on Ellen was pressed to a division, he would abstain from voting.

I was conscious of a certain hostility in the atmosphere while he was speaking, though he was heard quite silently.

This has all been an unfortunate and miscalculated affair. There is nothing more to do at present except to wait and see the result of poor little C.R.A.'s major operation. H.M. whispered to me later in the day on the Bench, "That was a queer double-meaning debate we had this morning."

DIARY14. 6. 39.

Stokes has a party to meet Nash at the Savoy. I sit between Nash and Holland Martin of the Bank of England, spoken of as a possible successor to Norman. I did not like the man. He is a thin-lipped, monocled, money lender. I start by rallying him half jovially about the Czech gold. He says "All the difficulty has arisen because we are not politicians." He went on to defend the B.I.S. as a place where bankers who were not politicians could meet without publicity and discuss the good of the world. I said that many of us politicians thought that it was high time the B.I.S. was wound up. I then devoted myself to Nash and did not speak to H.M. again until we were nearly through the meal. I then talked to him about America and then slid him on to Old Etonian shop. In the discussion which followed the meal, in which Nash was very clear and effective, H.M. took no part, and I very little; but at one stage I said to Nash, "I think your mistake has been not to restrict imports enough, so that you have lowered your sterling balance and enabled people like this" - and here I indicated Holland Martin - "to push you about". Even then H.M. did not react, except by some faint murmur of denial.

Among those present was Kirkpatrick, whom I had known at the F.O. and who came back from Berlin at the end of last year, after a period first with Phipps and then with N.Henderson. He thinks that Hitler is the most wicked, treacherous, false and evilly ambitious man alive. Last December he was seriously contemplating an air attack on us just out of the blue, not necessarily immediately, but as his next big move. After Munich, in spite of all his gains, he had been gnashing his teeth, disappointed then of his easy little war and his armed occupation of Prague. He had said to Goering after Munich "Next time I shall move so quick that old women like you won't be able to intervene to stop me." I asked K. whether he thought that speedy agreement on the Anglo-Soviet Pact would halt Hitler or hasten his next offensive. K. thought it would probably halt him, though it was impossible to be sure. On the Anglo-Russian negotiations, he said, evidently critical of the way in which they had been conducted from this end, "At the beginning our Government thought they were inviting the Russians to join the Turf Club and that they would fall over themselves with delight. The Russians, on the other hand, felt that they had a valuable oriental carpet to sell and were dissatisfied with the price offered." He was hopeful that agreement would soon be reached. Molotov was something of a suspicious peasant and was finding new and unintended meanings in some of the British formulae. It was a serious difficulty whether we should

-2-

involve ourselves in automatic action in support of a Russian decision that one of the Baltic states was being tampered with from within by Hitler. As to staff talks, K. thought that our people would now like them. A little while ago, owing to the nakedness of the land, they were unwilling to have them with anyone, but now, since we have many more arms, they would like to know what the Russians had and what they were prepared to do. There was a slight illogical snag in the present negotiations, since we had proposed that there should be staff talks as soon as the agreement had been signed, and Molotov had said that he would not sign anything until the staff talks had taken place. Probably, however, this can be got over. There is another possibility, namely, that Molotov may suddenly introduce the Far East, saying that he has been thinking things over and has decided that the Pact should extend also to the Pacific. I said to K. "Don't you think this might be a very good thing from our point of view?" He was not sure. He says that Gladwyn Jebb has just come back from Poland saying that they are all very determined and almost exalted. The Rumanians, on the other hand, are wobbling about a bit.

DIARY

Dalton I 20

70

21. 6. 39.

Lunch at F.O. to meet Polish Trade Delegation headed by Colonel Koc, who speaks very bad French, one of Pilsudski's colonels, looks like a weasel. At lunch sit next to Polish naval officer who says they have "five beautiful submarines". He would like the British fleet stationed in the Baltic to impress the Germans, "and then we would blow up the Kiel Canal", he says. I say it would make a bit of difference which side of the Canal the German's fleet was when we blew it up. More practical is the suggestion made to me by another Pole that we should station a strong British air force at Western Polish bases, from which, as he points out, it would be much easier to attack East German targets than starting from British or French bases. The Poles want a large loan, many credits, and lots of aeroplanes. I hear from Nixon, Export Credits Department, that they are to have 150 "Battles".

After lunch, talk with Van in his room, Kirkpatrick on the stairs, and Gladwyn in ~~his~~ annexe to poor fish Cadogan.

Gladwyn, recently returned from Poland, says the Poles will certainly fight. Their calculation is that they will have to retreat on their western frontier, but will hold up the Germans for two months and perhaps overrun East Prussia as well. At the end of two months they think the German regime will collapse from within. They are prepared for a rough federation, including Lithuania, Rumania and the Czech and Slovak lands, with friendly relations with Hungary. They are very romantic, but also very determined. He does not think there are any severe internal strains. The Nortons, he says, are being a great success in Warsaw, and so is the Ambassador, Kennard, so long as his wife is away. But when she is there, she nags at him and he is less good.

In Spain there is a tug of war going on between generals. Suner, Franco's Foreign Minister, is in the pocket of the Axis, but a lot of the others don't like this and would like to be really neutral and Spanish. Meanwhile, the Spanish rolling stock is in a shocking mess and they could not do much in a war.

The Italians, he thinks, are more and more in a blue funk, and don't quite know where Hitler is taking them to. A general war would certainly mean the early collapse of the regime in Italy. Musso, he says, "sees fewer papers" than he used to do. He has now been furnished with a phlegmatic German blonde, partly to symbolise the Axis and partly because the very exciting dark Italian lady whose place she has taken was thought to be exciting him too much.

-2-

Abyssinia is a mess. Ciano is stupid, conceited, corrupt and pro-German. Starace, who has never been out of Italy, was, during the war, the officer commanding the brothels of Brindisi. (This is very Italian! Ricordi di vent'anni fa.)

Van will try to stimulate Perth, who, he agrees with me, is rather old for his new job. Lord Lloyd, Van thinks, would have been better on grounds of energy, but no doubt would have been unpopular in many circles. He himself had decided to refuse the job if offered, for had he accepted, it would have been said that he had no time for anything else and could no longer butt in, as he does still, in spite of discouragement from No.10, on foreign policy from day to day.

Van, Gladwyn and Kirkpatrick all take an optimistic view of the Russian negotiations, though they say that Russian rigidity is a bit bothering.

DIARY25. 6. 39.

It is all very well that optimistic rumours should flow week after week both from the Soviet Embassy and the F.O. about the Anglo-Soviet pact negotiations. I am less and less inclined to believe them and, therefore, arrange to see Maisky at noon to-day. (I have not seen him for some weeks, partly because things were said to be going well, partly because I thought I had been seeing him too often for my own dignity, partly because I was conscious of jealousy of some colleagues at my frequently reported visits to him and did not wish to stir this needlessly.)

I began by telling him that all this optimism, partly radiated through Coates, has kept me away from him, but that a fortnight ago I was "very offensive" to the P.M. in the House and got a large mail, chiefly favourable, in consequence, and thought that perhaps the time had come to do it again, though these things could not be done too often or they lost emphasis. I asked what was really the trouble. Was it (1) a question of naming the Baltic States, or (2) the fact that H.M.G. would only undertake to consult in certain cases, or (3) difficulty about getting Staff talks started. He said that on (3) he thought there would be no difficulty. Moscow would probably want dates fixed for these to begin and finish, but he thought this would be conceded. The difficulty was a combination of (1) and (2): The S.U. wanted the three Baltic States to be guaranteed and eight guaranteed states to be named - Belgium, Poland, Rumania, Turkey, Greece, Finland, Esthonia, and Latvia. The British and French did not wish to guarantee the three Baltic States. He had suggested to Halifax two days ago the precedent of the Munroe Doctrine declaration, in which the U.S.A. had declared, without consulting the South American States, that any interference with their independence by an outside state would be a cause of war with the U.S.A. H. had complained to M. about the slowness of the negotiations, and M. had replied "with a few figures". He had pointed out that the negotiations had now lasted for 67 days, of which 17 had been occupied by the S.U. considering their replies to British proposals, and 50 by the British considering their replies to Soviet proposals (by Monday, 26th, when I put my next question in the House, it will be 70 days, i.e., 10 weeks, of which the British will have occupied 53; by Monday, too, Strang will have been in Moscow for 11 days.)

M. said that in the British draft there were three cases.

In the first case, it was clear that the pact would be automatic if any of the three great Powers were directly attacked; also, in the second case, if any of the states guaranteed up to date were directly attacked and a guaranteeing great Power was drawn in; but, in the third case, e.g. when a third Power not guaranteed, e.g. a Baltic state, was attacked, the intentions of the British draft were not clear. The pact was not automatic and there would have to be some sort of "consultation". Things might develop, said M., so that Hitler attacked Latvia. The Russians felt themselves threatened and demanded consultation. The British and French would say that of course Hitler's action was very deplorable and could not be justified, but that it was not sufficient to justify a general war, and therefore the Russians should not move. The Russians, in such a consultation, would be out-numbered by 2 to 1. The Russian interest, he said, in the Baltic States was similar to, and much stronger than, the British interest in the Low Countries. He then made the important statement, which I asked him to repeat, that last week Molotov, finding the negotiations sticking, said that perhaps the best plan would be to revert to a simple triple pact of mutual aid in the event of direct attack, leaving out all reference either to states already guaranteed by Britain and France, or to the Baltic States. I asked whether this suggestion had been taken up at this end. M. said no. I pressed him as to whether he was sure that it had been understood by our negotiators in Moscow and passed back to London. He said he was sure. I asked whether it would embarrass him if I asked a question on this in the House. He said no, if it was carefully framed.

I thought the little man seemed rather dispirited. He asked what I thought could be done about Tientsin. I said Nothing. The place could not be defended against a Japanese attack, nor could we divert great quantities of ships and other arms from Europe to the Pacific. This was a consequence of Simon's and others' foreign policy over eight years. Also of the failure to make the triple pact in Moscow. M. said "Why not evacuate Tientsin but tell the Japs that you are now going to lend £25 million to the Chinese as a punishment for Jap misconduct?" I said I thought this was ingenious.

DIARY28. 6. 39.

Citrine, Morrison and I, appointed by the N.C.L. to seek an interview with the P.M. on the international situation, with special reference to the Anglo-Soviet Pact, the Danzig danger and the Far East, spent two hours in P.M.'s room at H. of C. this evening - 6.15 to 8.15 p.m. We had a preliminary talk of just over half an hour in Attlee's room, and it was agreed that Citrine should open, taking in turn (1) Anglo-Soviet Pact, (2) Danzig, (3) Propaganda, and (4) the Far East. Citrine, though very reasonable and an excellent team man, is still inclined to be sufficiently anti-Russian to see, perhaps a little more clearly than is necessary now, the difficulties of H.M.G. over the Pact. But he never lets colleagues down publicly when facing the other side.

P.M. has with him Halifax, and Rucker, his new principal private secretary from the Ministry of Health. The latter only takes a note of the talk and says nothing. Not like H. Wilson on a previous occasion. I don't think he tries to intermeddle in foreign affairs.

Citrine says we are much disturbed at long delay in getting Pact and urges its immediate conclusion; expressed fears as to possibility of early German aggression over Danzig, and suggests that H.M.G. should consider a rather clearer and more definite public warning to Hitler; on propaganda, he says that Perth's appointment "commands no support at all" in the Labour Movement and urges that there should be more drive and definiteness in our propaganda, though B.B.C. broadcasts, apart from a few technical defects, are good; finally, he asks for information as to the Far East, and especially what is being done to bring U.S.A. and S.U. into effective co-operation against latest Jap activities.

I speak briefly, limiting myself to the first two points. The delay in getting the Pact with Moscow is rapidly robbing it of much of its value. We should understand, and be prepared to make large concessions to, the Soviet point of view as regards the Baltic States. These are not less a vital interest to Moscow than the Low Countries are to us. If Hitler is to be effectively warned - and the air is full of talk about another German aggression within a few weeks - the conclusion of this Pact must be an essential part of the warning. As to Danzig, I support the view that we and the French, together with the Poles and, if possible, the Russians, should jointly and definitely warn Hitler against any further aggression at this danger point.

But you
know
I think
it
is
a
good
idea

Morrison then gives him quite a good lecture on how to conduct propaganda. They should not, he says, deny that we are encircling Germany. The Germans know more about European geography than we do, and a denial is simply regarded as typical British hypocrisy. We should rather say "Of course we are encircling you, and we are going to go on doing it, as a precaution against the aggressive tendencies of your present Government. We are going to encircle you so completely that you cannot possibly hope to win a war if you start one, but we don't want to continue this policy one moment longer than your Government makes it necessary. If, therefore, you will cease threatening your neighbours and join in friendly and reasonable discussions with the rest of us, we shall be most happy to meet you, and most willing that you should have your fair share of all the good things in the world." There should be more firmness and definiteness in our public statements.

H.M. tells Halifax that he ought to be more cocky in his speeches. Sometimes to make a few jokes about the Germans, and to boost our success as regards social services, Laval Government, etc. As to the Far East, M.M. says that we could, no doubt, have quite a long debate about the events of the past eight years which have led to our being where we are, but for the moment the question is What are we going to do. It looks as though our Concessions are now completely untenable from a military point of view.

P.M. - after the usual understanding that we shall all speak freely and discuss at the end how much can be passed on - leaves propaganda to Halifax and speaks at some length on the other three matters. In the Far East our position is very difficult. We cannot send a large enough fleet to the Pacific to have any influence on the Japs - much less a fleet large enough to win a major fleet action - without evacuating the Eastern Mediterranean, which the French would not be able to take over. This would create a situation in which Hitler would say to Mussolini, "Come on now and drop all these hesitations" (I infer from this that there is good evidence that Hitler has been pushing Mussolini towards a joint aggression, but that the latter has been hanging back. This accords with other evidence.) In the Far East the attitude of the U.S.A. is decisive. If they were prepared to threaten to use their fleet or to take joint action with us for economic or financial boycotts, that would certainly stop the Japs, but the Americans are not at any such point yet. They are friendly to us and encourage us to take a firm line, promising that, if we do, they will consider what they should do next, and they are speaking behind the scenes to the Japs, warning them not to risk American displeasure. But this is all, and damage has been done by the speech of Bonnet, in which he said that if America would make it clear that she would be in the war from the first day, the war would not happen. The sure way, said

the P.M., to lose the Americans is to run after them too hard. Moreover, just at this moment, with the Neutrality legislation going through Congress, it is most important to do nothing to strengthen the isolationist and anti-Roosevelt elements in the Senate.

It is true that our Concessions cannot be defended against real Jap attack, and even Hongkong "could not hold out for very long". It would be necessary, if things got really bad, to withdraw all our ships from the North China waters to the shelter of Singapore. (I gather that the Japs have ten capital ships in the Pacific, and we nothing stronger than cruisers.)

The P.M. praises Craigie for his skill and persistence, which have resulted in getting the Japs to agree to talks in Tokyo and the cessation of strippings, etc., at Tientsin. The P.M.'s own view, though he adds that this is not yet a Government decision, is that the only effective thing we can do against the Japs is to lend more money to the Chinese, and that we should do this, even though "Of course, we shall lose our money", but it will keep Chiang-Kai-Shek in the war. Our last loan to maintain Chinese currency had done this and had greatly annoyed the Japs.

Asked by me about possible financial operations against the yen (which is already quoted at 9d. on the black exchange, as against 1/2d, and might easily fall much lower), he said, rather vaguely, that all these economic and financial possibilities had been examined by the Board of Trade, but "the results were not very hopeful".

Pressed about Soviet help in the Far East, he said they did very little trade with the Japs and had very few ships, "and it is ships we want out there". I said that I understood the Japs were apprehensive about the possibilities of the Red Air Force at Vladivostok, which could bomb Tokyo or the Jap naval bases. He tried to belittle this, saying that such air raids "might be very disagreeable but could not be decisive". (This, no doubt, links up with what he said later about the inability of the Russians to make good the wastage of aircraft in the early stages of a war.)

As to Danzig, I did not think him very satisfactory. He repeated our undertaking to the Poles to come to their help "if there is any threat to Poland's independence and if Poland decides to resist." "And so", he said, "if Germany commits an act of aggression in Danzig and the Poles resist, we shall be in it." I took him up at once on this, and said that I was glad to hear him so definite, in view of stuff put out by "The Times" etc. some months ago, even though this had been repudiated by Simon in reply to me in Parliament. He then began to hedge. There were many different

possibilities. The Danzig Senate might merely proclaim that Danzig was now part of the Reich. Nothing more might happen. If then the Poles occupied Danzig, the Germans might describe this as aggression. If we only had to deal with a reasonable Germany, it would be very natural and open to no real objection that Danzig should form part of the Reich. Some people, he said, were always warning him about the Poles, as being romantic and excitable people. Hence the difficulty of making a very precise declaration of warning to Hitler. It would be dangerous to say either too much or too little; too much, so that Hitler should feel he had no alternative but war, and the Poles be unreasonably encouraged; too little, lest Hitler should think there were some steps which he could take with impunity and then find out that he had been wrong. He praised Burckhardt, the Swiss League Commissioner, who has apparently been flitting about between Ribbentrop and Beck, suggesting a possible solution whereby Danzig might be a Free City within the Reich, with a German-Polish guarantee of its new status, to remain unfortified, and Polish economic and financial rights to be maintained. It was possible, the P.M. thought, that some such arrangement as this might be acceptable. I said that I thought such a declaration as I had suggested might, none the less, be framed so as to have a restraining influence on Hitler and to reassure the Poles that we were not going to leave them in the lurch. (I did not say "As you did the Czechs", since I desired to get as much information as we could out of him.)

As to the Soviet Pact, I gathered two impressions, first that the P.M. makes more of the difficulties than Halifax, who once intervened to correct him regarding the attitude of the Baltic States, but, second, that, none the less, the P.M. realises that now a failure of the negotiations would be very damaging to him and to the Government and would be a great encouragement to Hitler. He told us a long story about how difficult it was to deal with the Russians, how full of suspicion they were, how they studied all our phrases under a microscope and read into them all sorts of sinister meanings which we had never intended. This was particularly so with Molotov, and the P.M. said that one of their difficulties had been that "the Russians changed their Foreign Secretary just at a critical time. They got rid of Litvinov who, after all, was a man of the world. Negotiations with Molotov are not at all easy. He has never been out of Russia in his life. He sits up on a higher chair than the rest when negotiations take place, and this does not create a very friendly atmosphere. He only makes curt statements, rejecting or objecting to this or that proposal of ours. There is no real discussion." The P.M. also brought out the grievance that Potemkin failed to turn up at Geneva to meet Halifax.

- P.M. says that the latest instructions to Seeds, which have been co-ordinated with the French instructions to Naggiar,

should give full satisfaction to Molotov, if he really desires to be satisfied. We have re-stated our objection to naming and guaranteeing the three Baltic States - namely that they are most unwilling to be named and guaranteed (the P.M. makes a slip here, saying "Finland and Estonia have even told us that they would regard such a guarantee as an act of aggression", whereupon Halifax intervenes to correct him, saying "I don't think they went quite as far as that; what they said was that the entry of Russian troops under a claim to guarantee their independence would be regarded as an act of aggression") - but are telling Molotov that, if he still insists, we agree, provided that we also name Holland, Belgium and Switzerland, and the Soviet likewise guarantees them. Hitherto, H.M.G. has not guaranteed Holland and Switzerland, though we have privately informed the French that a German aggression against either would be regarded by us as an act of war. Further, it is understood that just as we and the French would be the judges of whether Holland, Belgium and Switzerland were victims of Nazi aggression, direct or indirect, so the S.U. would be judges of whether or not aggression had been committed against any of the Baltic States. (If this is really in the instructions, it should remove yet another snag, mentioned to me by Maisky, namely that we were insisting on "consultation" in respect of the three Baltic States. although claiming "automatism" in other cases.) Further, said the P.M., we had agreed, although he greatly disliked it, to the insertion of a clause demanded by Molotov that if we were engaged in war, none of the three of us would conclude a separate peace. The objection to this was that circumstances might be such that the Russians would desire a war to continue whereas we and the French might believe that it should be concluded, and the Russians might be doing relatively little fighting. Further, although H.M.G. had originally proposed that there should be a reference to Article 16 of the Covenant of the League, we had now consented, in view of Russian objections, to ~~eliminating~~ eliminating any such reference. As to staff talks, - we had asked whether any difficulty had arisen on this head and whether there was any unwillingness on our side to enter into such talks - the P.M. said that H.M.G. were perfectly willing to enter into staff talks as soon as the agreement was signed, and had so informed the Russians. At an earlier stage the latter had demanded that the agreement should not come into force until the staff talks had been held and completed, but we had pointed out that this was quite illogical and was contrary to what we had already done with the French, the Poles and the Turks, with all three of whom there had been staff talks following the signing of an agreement. The P.M. also told us - and this squares with information from Maisky - that Molotov had proposed, as an alternative to a more elaborate agreement, the conclusion of a simple Triple Pact of mutual assistance against direct aggression. I asked "Would not this be excellent, and a good beginning?" The P.M. said no, because it was so drafted by the

new
part.)

Soviets as to exclude Soviet assistance to us if we became involved in war with Germany by reason of a German aggression against Poland, Rumania or any other guaranteed State. (I am not sure either that this interpretation of the Soviet offer is correct, or that, assuming it to be correct, it could not have been modified and the obligations extended so as to cover any case in which any of the three Powers found themselves at war in Europe.)

We discussed the practical value of Russian assistance, and on this the P.M. was sceptical. He said they had from many quarters poor accounts of the efficiency of the Russian Army. Pressed by me as to the Russian Air Force, he admitted that many of the machines were very good, and likewise the pilots, but expressed doubt as to whether, given the enormous initial wastage which everyone expected would take place in the early stages of a war, the Russian power of production of aircraft and of organisation generally could long be maintained. In other words, Russian aid would not only be doubtful at the outset, but difficult to maintain even at its initial level. (I am very sceptical of all estimates on such matters. The hope is that all, including the Germans, will realise that there is a large element of doubt about the whole business, and that it may turn out worse for them than they think.)

I think, as stated above, that the P.M. realises the danger and damage of letting the negotiations now break down. None the less, when pressed by us as to his view of the consequences of such a breakdown, he said, in his flat, obstinate way, "Well, I don't think that would be the end of the world."

There is not a great deal in this talk to report to colleagues, nor has it the same degree of dramatic intimacy as some previous interviews. It is not till next morning that my doubts about the Government's attitude on Danzig take firm shape, as to which, see later Diary notes.

DIARY29. 6. 39.

Alexander tells me that he has had a telephone message from Chatham House regarding to-night's Annual Dinner at which Halifax is to speak. The message is that Halifax has been "much concerned" at some of the things that were said by the N.C.L. deputation yesterday and that, in consequence, he has revised his speech considerably. A revise is being sent to Alexander, who later tells me that all the stiffest passages, which evoke much comment and general praise in our press next day, were new insertions in the second draft. I suspect that others, in addition to us three, had been at work on him, and that the message to us was partly soft soap. None the less, I think we had at least a little to do with it.

cf
Yam i
One Week
July 5th
See later.

30. 6. 39.

Lord Astor had approached A.G. and Lord Trenchard had approached H.M., asking them to sign a public letter with Churchill, Sinclair, etc., in support of Halifax's speech and the Government's policy. Our Parliamentary E.C. - including myself, vehemently, - were against this procedure. This crowd must not try to line us up behind them. Let us say what we have to say in our own way, as in our Manifesto to the German people. This view carried.

29. 6. 39.

Call on Raczyński. I say "I have come to give you a piece of information and to ask you a question." I then told him of our pressure yesterday, through N.C.L. deputation, on P.M. and Halifax regarding Danzig, and that we had urged that a definite declaration should be made jointly with the French, mentioning Danzig. He thanked me and asked how this had been received. I said that we had not been wholly satisfied with the Government's attitude on this point (I told him this because I hoped that he and his Government would then press our crowd for something more definite, and stimulate the French to do the same.) The P.M. had seemed averse from such a declaration, saying that it was difficult to avoid saying either too much or too little. I also mentioned P.M.'s story that Burckhardt was running about with a compromise plan.

I then asked R. what his latest information was about the situation in Danzig, and whether the attitude of his Government in this matter had changed at all since we had last spoken. He replied that he did not himself think that there was an immediate danger of war, i.e., not within the next few weeks. Beyond that

it was hard to see. The German press had exaggerated the numbers of "tourists" and other Germans who had come into Danzig from outside. The tactics of Hitler were the familiar "psychological massage" which he applied to those who stood in his way. The Polish spirit at the present time was very firm and confident. If their nerve was broken, the consequences would be very serious, but he did not think that this would happen. Nothing had been heard officially at Warsaw of Burckhardt's plan. R. understood that he had been to Berlin and made some suggestions, but had been rebuffed. R. did not think that B. had seen Ribbentrop; only some subordinate. R. also denied, reading to me relevant parts of telegrams which he had received, the story that the Vatican was intervening at Warsaw. The Papal Nuncio, he said, had had a long conversation with Beck, but only on the subject of new sees. I asked him what he thought his Government would do if the Danzig Senate merely proclaimed the annexation of D. to the Reich, and if no further overt acts followed this proclamation. He replied that this would indeed place the Polish Government in a difficult situation and that he thought it would be necessary for them to perform "some symbolic act" to indicate their refusal to recognise such a declaration.

I told him that we were still pressing our Government strongly to conclude the Soviet Pact, and asked him how this was now viewed in Warsaw. He replied that, when Beck was in London, he was averse from any direct arrangement between Warsaw and Moscow and also somewhat discouraging to H.M.G. when they proposed negotiations between themselves and the Russians. But this, said R., was because Beck still wished to give Hitler the benefit of every possible doubt and still hoped that, if Hitler saw that Britain and Poland intended to stand together, this would have a moderating effect upon him. Beck, therefore, was unwilling at this time to see the Russians brought into the picture at all. Since then, however, "things have gone from bad to worse", Hitler having denounced both the Anglo-German Naval Agreement and the German-Polish Peace Pact merely on the ground of the Anglo-Polish arrangement, and having now intensified his agitation in Danzig. Beck, therefore, to-day feels no objection to an Anglo-Soviet Pact, though - and here R. again quoted from a telegram - he has warned the British not to expect too much, by way of material aid, from the Russians even if the Pact is signed. There still exists grave doubts in Poland as to Russian capacity, as distinct from will, to bring help on a large scale. R. also read a telegram from Warsaw stating that the Lithuanians had been asked by the Germans to undertake to join in against Poland on the German side, a promise having been made to them that they should be "compensated", presumably by Vilna, etc. The Liths, however, had declined, saying that they would remain neutral in the event of war.

30. 6. 39.

D'Egville tells me of a talk he had with Maisky, who complained on now familiar lines about the slowness of the British to conclude the Pact and used the Munro Doctrine argument about the Baltic States. D'Egville purported to be sympathetic to the Soviet view on all this. He says that he and Maisky are old friends. So far so good, but on Danzig and the Poles D'Egville is very unsatisfactory. Danzig is a German city; the arrangement in the Peace Treaties was most unjust; the Poles are a very poor sort of people; and how could we help them if they were attacked? I have noticed before that he is sympathetic to the German free-run-in-the-East school of thought, having been also anti-Czech last year. He had with him, during this part of the conversation, "The Times" correspondent lately in Berlin, who is now going to Moscow. I did not catch his name, but he speaks with a strong Scotch accent and is also slightly anti-Polish, saying that "the Germans don't think much of the Polish Air Force, anyhow." I asked these two "Which do you regard as the more civilised and friendly to this country: Raczynski or Ribbentrop?" Of course, they said, this was not a fair question!

Decided at a meeting of the N.C.L. this afternoon, to which we three reported, that a Manifesto to the German people should be issued and put over the air from all possible directions, and also circulated in Germany through underground channels. At H.M.'s suggestion, the drafting was left to the three of us. At one moment there was a danger that Middleton would be added, but this was dodged! H.M. had the first draft and Tewson - Citrine being on the point of departure for Zurich - and I went through it. We are to have a look at a clean copy co-morrow morning.

1. 7. 39.

Francis Williams rang me up to say that yesterday "The Times", "Daily Telegraph", "Daily Herald" and "Daily Mail" had been invited to receive "guidance" from a Government spokesman who had told them that the French had rumours of a coming coup in Danzig this weekend and wished our two Governments to issue a very clear warning, referring specifically to Danzig. H.M.G., however, were disinclined either to believe these rumours or to act as suggested. As an alternative, they wished the press to carry a strong story of British intention to be firm. F.W. thought this unsatisfactory - and so did I.

Went on to Tewson's room, where he, H.M. and I put finishing touches to the draft manifesto. We cut it down to 1,300 words, still

a little on the long side, but the essential things, I think, are said, as well as some less essential. I have a copy sent to the Polish Embassy with a suggestion that they should put it across from Polish stations.

Going down by car to R.A.C.S. Demonstration at Abbey Wood, the "Star" was carrying posters "Labour Peace Call to Germans"; "British Labour's dramatic Call to Germans", etc. The other evening papers were not featuring it. I unloaded much of this to the R.A.C.S. audience, who took it very well, but how little, I thought, do all these excellent and friendly-disposed people realise how close we are to war!

This evening I heard the Manifesto going over from the B.B.C. in French, German and Italian, fullest of all in German. Later, we had a pretty good press for it, both in the Sunday and in the Monday morning papers. Clearly you get maximum press results for matter issued about noon on a Saturday.

Dalton I 20 (84)

-3-

K. would like to become "Daily Herald" correspondent in Prague. I write to Williams urging his appointment. A typical decent, plucky, restrained, democratic Czech. The Slavs through history have had to wait their chance. Some day they will swamp the Teuton, but not yet.

ADDRESS:

J.K.Kosina,

Na Perstýně 11,

PRAHA I.