

Papers of Hugh Dalton:
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Met Masaryk at lunch at House of Commons. He related that he had recently been at a dinner party when Margot Asquith sat between Ribbentrop and himself. She turned to Ribbentrop and said "You are the very worst Ambassador that Germany has ever sent to this country". He was much taken aback, looked at her very solemnly, and *asked* said "Do you really think so?" She said "Yes. You have absolutely no sense of humour, or else you would not have given the Nazi salute when you were presented to the King." He replied "You are quite wrong. I have a great sense of humour. You should see me and the Fuhrer rolling on the floor together at Berchtesgaden and roaring with laughter after one of us has made a joke."

15.4.37

Dined with Attlee and Noel Baker to meet Captain P. Scott-Montagu (66, Cambridge Terrace, Hyde Park, W.2), Eton, Magdalen, Oxford; Coldstreams, Diplomatic Service (in F.O. and with Lord Lloyd in Cairo), Conservative Agent in Liverpool, and, in some interval, common seaman on Scottish oil tanker. Is now anxious to join and assist our Party, having become completely disgusted and disillusioned with the Tories, and learned on the oil tanker to enjoy the company of Glasgow seamen, whose habitations on shore shocked him out of all bourgeois social complacency.

He knew von Hoesch, the late German Ambassador, very well. Two nights before the latter's death, announced in the Press as a sudden heart attack when about to enter his bath, Scott-Montagu was alone with him at the German Embassy. Von Hoesch gave him a copy of the Memoirs of Paleologue (French Ambassador in St Petersburg in 1914), saying "This is a book which throws a wonderful light upon the events leading up to 1914. I would like you to keep it in memory of me." Von Hoesch then told Scott-Montagu that he had recently sent a despatch to Berlin stating that, if the present policy of the German Government was continued, there would be a major war in Europe within two years; that in such a war Germany would once more, as in 1914, find England against her; and that such a war could only end in the defeat and complete annihilation of Germany. He had also warned Berlin in this despatch not to pay attention to the Londonderrys and Lothians, who in no way represented any important section of British opinion. Von Hoesch continued that the reply to this despatch was an intimation that he would be recalled from London and dismissed from the Diplomatic Service. Scott-Montagu added that a private messenger ~~arr~~ had arrived from Berlin in these last days and had told von Hoesch that, if he returned to Germany, his life would not be safe, and that it would be better that he should commit suicide first.

A day or two after von Hoesch's death, Prince Bismark, the ~~Comill~~ ^{Comill} of the German Embassy, made a speech to the German colony in London in which he said "The late Ambassador died for his country as truly as if he had fallen on the battle field." Scott-Montagu said to Bismark after this speech, "How strange that von Hoesch should have died of heart attack. He always seemed so strong and healthy." Bismark replied with some confusion, "He did not die of heart attack," and then, after a brief pause, "It was a stroke". To which, Scott-Montagu replied, "He looked even less likely to have a stroke than a heart attack."...

^{↳ Bismark}
Von Hoesch's warning was given just one year ago.

15th June, 1937.

Dined with A.V. Alexander and Noel-Baker to meet Titulescu, who demanded to be fed on roast beef, cheese and claret, and to have all windows in the dining room closed. He thinks that the Yugo Slavs are practically out of the Little Entente but envisages the possibility of a defensive alliance between France, the S.U., Czechoslovakia, Rumania and Turkey. He says that in the event of war, Soviet troops could pass through Rumania, not into sub Carpathian Ruthenia (where, he agreed with me, the communications are hopeless), but through South Rumania to the oil fields. He thinks that the German interest in Rumania is chiefly lust for oil. He thinks there is no need to press the British Government to join in mutual security arrangements in East Europe. Such proposals, he thinks, antagonise large sections of British opinion which are quite prepared for a close Anglo-French understanding. If we really meant to support France, that was enough; France would be compelled to come to the help of Czechoslovakia if attacked.

It might be that after another six months at least he would come back to power in Rumania. He had no desire to be Premier, a Premier was blamed if the price of bread went up or the price of wheat fell. He would like Maniu to be Premier. He would then be Foreign Minister again. The present Foreign Minister, his successor, was gaga. He was 70 years old, and 70 in Rumania was as old as 140 would be in Western Europe. He had made a mess with Litvinov over Soviet recognition in Bessarabia. It was not necessary to raise this question again. He, Titulescu, had got the S.U. to agree that "Rumania" in all Rumanian-Soviet treaties meant Rumania within her present actual borders.

Tukachevski was very friendly with German Reichswehr leaders and not friendly to France. Titulescu had heard him speak very offensively of France. Many in authority in Moscow were angry with Blum because he had refused to sign a military convention with the S.U. (This same day reports of serious embarrassment of Blum Government by French communists, acting, of course, under Moscow instructions, bear this out.)

He told a story about Baldwin. On the occasion of George V's funeral, King Carol was in London and Titulescu persuaded Baldwin to meet him at lunch (generally Baldwin cannot be persuaded to lunch with foreigners). "My King behaved very badly. In the middle of lunch he turned to me and said, 'Titulescu, can't I do what I like in Rumania? Aren't I the King?', and I saw a frightened look come into Mr Baldwin's face. He had a sudden vision of what your Edward VIII might turn into when he was a few years older. Carol is rather like Edward. I think it was at my luncheon that Baldwin decided he must get

rid of Edward. He has a queer sort of insight into the future."

He also said "As soon as this country stands up to Hitler, then Neurath and Schacht and Blomberg will join in getting rid of him. They don't think he is safe, but at present his prestige is so high that they cannot do anything with him. If, on the other hand, you let him get stronger and stronger, one day he will speak to this country in a very unpleasant tone which will be quite new to you. At present he is still polite to you, but that is not because he is friendly to you. The Germans are a people elu and they will not tolerate any equal, much less any superior."

Titulescu wears pretty well, though I am not sure whether he can work his way back to effective control of Rumanian foreign policy. In the Byzantine political frame work of that country I fear the effects of Nazi propoganda by word and bribe. He is a wonderful wangler and has long been very sensible about the S.U. It would be good if he went back into power. I hear that Churchill, in a speech at a luncheon in his honour, said "In Rumania, as in England, many good men are at the present time outside their Governments. I understand that the head of the present Rumanian Government is a gentleman named Tatarescu. I hope that before long our guest of to-day will give his opponents Tit for Tat."

16th June, 1937.

Dined at the House of Commons with Bernstorff, Fletcher and H. Nicolson. The latter told us of a farewell dinner to Baldwin by Parliamentary Private Secretaries, etc, at which H.N. was present. Baldwin, asked to give the young men some good advice, said, "Never try to score off the Labour Party, or to be smart at their expense. Never do anything to increase the sense of bitterness between Parties in Parliament. Never go out of your way to irritate or anger the Labour Party. Remember that one day we may need them."

H.N. also said that at the final crisis of his talks with Edward VIII at Belvedere, they came in from the garden and B. asked whether he might have a whiskey and soda. Edward VIII poured this out for him with trembling hands and then burst into tears. Someone to whom Baldwin was telling this, asked "And what did you do then?" "I cried too."

Bernstorff, looking formidably fit but not less sly than of old, spoke as usual very freely against Hitler, who, he said, was getting madder, more cruel and less predictable every day. The recent execution of the young Jew who was technically an American citizen had been ordered by Hitler himself, although the German Foreign Office, to whom the American Ambassador had made fervent though rather confused representations, had strongly urged clemency. This victim was a little person of no importance, probably quite innocent of anything but a rather inefficient anti-Nazi idealism. It was very doubtful on the evidence whether he intended to throw bombs at anyone.

The present degree of employment and very qualified prosperity in Germany might go on, he thought, for quite a long while. The great danger was some sudden hysterical act by Hitler. Bernstorff thought, and kept repeating this throughout the evening, that the substitution of Hitler by Goering would be a very great improvement. Goering, he said, was a barbarian and a swashbuckler, but at bottom he was a normal man with whom one could do serious business and have practical discussions. He was immensely vain and would be most susceptible to flattery. It might be a good move to invite him to London. (I said that there would be ugly noises outside the Embassy when Neurath is here next week. If Goering came, the hostile demonstrations might become really impressive.) I asked on what basis could one make a settlement with Goering. Bernstorff was not very clear cut on this. He did not think Goering had much interest in Colonies, nor even in territorial changes in Europe. He

thought that if he were "told that he could keep his Air Force and his Army" and if he were flattered and reassured against any possibility of an armed attack on Germany, he might quieten down and be content with more pomp, titles, uniforms, and hunting expeditions. He would be much more subject to technical advice from the Reichswehr leaders than Hitler was. He was not really anti-Jew. With Hitler this was a mental disease. If Hitler went, Goebbles would go. Ribbentrop might go soon in any case. It had been reported by Blomberg, over here for the Coronation, that Ribbentrop was a complete failure; also that the British Air Force was very good. Blomberg was a yes man to Hitler, but if a change became possible, would really prefer Goering. Other Reichswehr leaders were better and more independent than Blomberg, notably Beck. Neurath was very weak. He wanted above all to remain Foreign Minister. He would put up with any humiliations from "Party men". They were filling the junior ranks of the Diplomatic Service with quite impossible toughs nominated by the Gaureiter. These men were really the most serious obstacle to Germany becoming civilised again.

His uncle's book of Diplomatic Memoirs had been seriously criticised by the Party leaders, but one of them had said, "We do not approve of it, but we shall not suppress it because it costs 5 Marks. Therefore it will only be read by the bourgeoisie, and it is a matter of complete unimportance what the bourgeoisie reads. We are only concerned with the political education of the masses." Bernstorff, who is now in a Bank (Wassermann, Jewish), said that he had increasing difficulty in getting leave for coming to England. One had to fill up longer and longer questionnaires, giving full particulars of all the people whom one expected to meet. Perhaps soon they would forbid him to come abroad at all.

When he left London immediately before a judicious retirement from the Diplomatic Service in 1933, he said to me, "I am taking with me, as a protection, a signed photograph of Sir John Simon."

18th June, 1937.

Lunched with ^WNemier. I thought he was still a don at Balliol but it seems that he has been for a number of years now the Professor of History at Manchester. He is also very close to Weizman. He showed me, in great confidence, a letter from the latter to Ormsby Gore, in which W. is prepared to accept partition provided certain conditions are satisfied, notable, a sufficient area for the new Jewish State, complete sovereignty of the Jews therein after a brief transitional period, acceptance of a special regime in Old Jerusalem and Haifa, the suburbs of New Jerusalem to be included in the Jewish State, and the reservation of the Negeb under British control to be made available later on for Jewish settlement and then to be incorporated in the Jewish State. During the transition period there should be a great increase in Jewish immigration, and the frontiers should be so drawn as to contain, not a Jewish majority now but a Jewish majority at the end of the period, say three to five years hence. The chemical works on the Dead Sea should also be included in the Jewish State, and Akaba should be developed as a Jewish port, (a) for export of chemical products from the Dead Sea and (b) for imports from India, Australia, etc., thus furnishing, with overland communication to Tel-a-viv or Haifa, an alternative trade route to the Suez Canal.

N. claimed that he had drafted this letter. W. was running a great risk in accepting, even thus conditionally, the idea of partition, which would be violently opposed by many Jews. It would be an essential condition that the Jewish State should become a British Dominion and that immigration should from henceforth rise sharply and continue at a new high level for many years. N. thought that relations with the new and enlarged Trans-Jordan could be quite friendly, provided British officials did not create difficulties, e.g., as regards proposals for resettling any Trans-Jordan Arabs from within the borders of the Jewish State. He blamed very bitterly for past mishandling, Passfield, the C.O. officials, and the British administrators in Palestine. The latter always favoured the Arabs at the expense of the Jews, whom they did not understand and found antipathetic. He quoted two sayings illustrative of this. A British official has said to him "When I give an order in a Jewish village, they argue; when I give an order in an Arab village, it is obeyed." The wife of a British official had also said to him, "When an Arab is dirty he is picturesque; when a Jew is dirty he is filthy." He thought Wauchope was completely discredited. He had been very weak and had failed

to maintain order. He hoped that he would not be continued during the Transition Period. It would be a bold step, but much the best solution, to appoint a Jewish Governor straight away and to make a number of Jewish appointments in the higher ranks of the Administration. He had heard that W. had been at a dinner given by Sir A. Sinclair some ten days ago, at which Sinclair, Churchill and Attlee had been present and had all argued against the acceptance of partition. In spite of this, W. was prepared to negotiate with Ormsby Gore on the basis of partition. But the conditions put forward in the letter he had shown me were an absolute minimum. I said that many of my colleagues who were very friendly to the Jews would be inclined to oppose partition in the interests of the Jews themselves. He said that this would do no harm. He thought that Snell was the best informed man in our Party on this subject, but Passfield had always refused to listen to him. Mussolini had been making W. most wonderful offers, including the setting up of an independent Jewish State, on condition that he broke all British connections. But W. had not been attracted by the idea of Italian protection. N. said, "After all, the Italians would not be content unless their Black Shirts had a ceremonial march under the Arch of Titus, and you know that no good Jew ever walks under that Arch, through which the Roman conquerors dragged our priests as captives. They will only walk under it again when a free Jewish State has been re-born." I told him that I was meeting W. to-night at the Mendelsohns.

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That evening Ruth and I met two Weizmans at dinner. We did not like her - hard, rich, no taste - but were greatly impressed by him. He is a born leader, a natural statesman, as well as a great scientist. We talked at great length on Partition. He is clearly for it, thinking that he has a good prospect of getting from H.M.G. conditions which would make it workable. In particular, he thinks he has now got all Gallilee intact. There was danger that the northern tip would not be included in the Jewish State. He is prepared for an international regime in Jerusalem, but hopes that some political arrangement might be made whereby the Jewish population, which predominates in the new suburbs, might be "associated" with the new Jewish State. If this were done and if, conversely, the Arab population of Haifa were similarly associated with the enlarged Trans-Jordan, a Jewish majority would be secured at once within the limits of the proposed Jewish State. Failing this, there would be a very even balance of Arabs and Jews, which could only be offset by a large Jewish immigration during the Transition Period. This he

insists upon in any case, and attaches importance to the replacement, during this period, of a number of the present very unsatisfactory British officials by Jews. Quite definitely, the new Jewish State must be a British Dominion and British control should be retained over the Negeb. He believes there are great possibilities of future settlement there, particularly along the coastal strip, which is potentially very fertile right up to the Suez Canal. He thinks that the Jewish State, once established, and the Mandate liquidated both there and in Transjordan, they could bargain with the Arabs and give financial inducements for Arabs within the Jewish State to sell out and settle in Transjordan. This would be agreeable to both Governments. He says that the author of the Partition scheme is Coupland, who sought him out for a long private talk just before he left Palestine. He will have difficulty in persuading some of the Jews to accept Partition in any case, but he will clearly try his best if he can get the conditions he hopes for.

22nd June, 1937.

The Three Bodies entertained Savage, Jordan and other New Zealanders at dinner at St Ermine's Hotel. I sat between Jordan and Mrs Nash. Nash was dining elsewhere. Jordan said, "Why do they print the menu in French? Why can't you say 'roast mutton'." When I asked them this in a West End restaurant a few weeks ago, they said, 'The chef's a Frenchman.' I said, 'It would be a cow, wouldn't it, if he was a Maori'. Jordan was very angry at the report in the New Statesman that Eden, at the Council meeting at Geneva, had come over to him and blue-pencilled and corrected the speech he intended to make. He said that this story was an insult to NZ and an insult to him. He always spoke from notes and not from manuscript. What had actually happened was that Eden came across and showed him the manuscript speech which Eden himself intended to deliver. He made some comments on certain passages and Eden then marked these with a blue pencil, and, when he spoke, modified. Jordan was furiously angry with the New Statesman, but said that he thought it below the dignity of the High Commissioner for New Zealand to write to the Press and contradict such stories.

Savage made a most admirable speech. He spoke in clear, simple, forcible English. Some passages might have been by Abraham Lincoln. He read extracts from their election pamphlets. These were written, I think, by Nash, who also has this same gift of language. He was clearly most impatient at the attitude of British, and some other Dominion, Ministers at the Imperial Conference. He thinks the Conference has achieved nothing. He spoke of the very slow advance of the New Zealand Labour Party; how they had been "going very slowly up the hill"; how many of their supporters had been "losing themselves in blind alleyways"; how many had become disheartened; and then, how "it all came with a rush" and they found themselves with a large clear majority over the Opposition. Since then, they had been doing what they promised. To-day he was sure that if there was a general election in New Zealand, they would come back with an even greater majority. Of political opponents, he said "the closer you get to him, the smaller he appears." He showed great self-confidence. He thought that the broadcasting of the principal speeches in Parliament had been a great success. It had roused and held public interest in Parliamentary proceedings. He had told "people in high places", in reply to the question whether he thought New Zealand could defend itself, that of course they could not (he used a picturesque phrase, which I cannot recapture, about a herring on a grill) and that the British Commonwealth must stand together and they must all be loyal to Collective Security through the League. He was now threatened with "quotas and levies" on New Zealand exports to this country. And yet millions of people here did not

get enough to eat. He had tried to make "people in high places" understand that you could not have one-way trade, but that if New Zealand sent more food to Britain she would buy more British manufactures and so create wages for British workmen to enable them to buy more food. If the British population was to be properly fed, that would mean much greater prosperity both for the British farmer and for the farmer in New Zealand.

24th June, 1937.

Saw Vansittart in his room at the F.O. at 5 p.m., and Maisky in his room at his Embassy at 7. Curious how these two very dissimilar witnesses corroborate each others evidence on many points.

I had asked to see Van. to do my duty to Sheila Grant Duff and the Czechs. Van. denied, as I expected, any pressure by the F.O. on the Czechs to take Henlein into the Czech Coalition Government. What we had done, he said, (and this, of course, I knew already) was to take every opportunity of urging the Czechs to do everything possible to remove reasonable grievances entertained by the German Minority, in particular as regards schools, contracts, and jobs, whether for officials or manual workers. There was no doubt that the German Minority in C.S. was even now much better treated than any other Minority in Central Europe, e.g., than Germans in Poland or Poles in Germany. He thought Hodza was a wise man and doing his best, but the agreement lately reached between the Czech Government and the German Activists, though good on paper, was very slow to come into operation and was, no doubt, sabotaged by any local Czech officials. As to Henlein, Van. had had him to lunch some years ago and formed the view that he was a small man, but might be dangerous in certain conditions. He had then denied any dependence on German Nazis, or any desire either for revision of frontiers of C.S. or domination of C.S. by Germany. Of course, one should not believe too readily such protestations, and, even if true then, in the meantime, through the growth of Nazi power, Henlein's mind might have changed. Van's view was that Czech ministers and politicians should cease to treat Henlein as a social and political outcast. To take him into the Government would, no doubt, be going much too far, but to establish friendly personal relations, to listen patiently to his grievances, and to try to remove as many as possible, would be sensible and prudent. Van feared that there might be some element of truth in Germany's allegations of maltreatment of Weigl and Staubner in Czech prisons. Gross exaggeration, no doubt, in Nazi Press, but Czech police methods were not very civilised, though much less barbaric than those of most of their neighbours, especially

Germany. The danger was that the Germans had some colourable grievances connected with C.S. and, given the personalities and moods now prevailing in Germany, there was a constant danger of violent explosions in this direction. He suggested that in to-morrow's debate in the House, whoever spoke for the Opposition should refer to present conditions in Central Europe and emphasise our concern. This would enable Eden to say something, when replying, which might have a reassuring effect, not only in C.S. but in Austria and elsewhere. The Government had already declared that they could not undertake any more specific military commitments in Central Europe, but that did not mean that we were disinterested in events there.

He said that Hitler had never been so "hot under the collar", so hysterical and dangerous to the peace of Europe as during the past week. He had been keeping vigil alone with the dead from the Deutschland (31 corpses of German sailors). Left unrestrained, he might have ordered wholesale onslaughts by sea and air on "Red" Spain. Some of his advisers had succeeded in controlling him. Goebbels was always his evil genius, urging him towards violence in word and deed, but it was believed that Goering and the professional heads of the Fighting Services were at present, at any rate, for moderation. Van himself was extremely doubtful whether any torpedo had been fired at the Leipzig. So was our own Admiralty. But the personal factor of Hitler was incalculable.

Corbin had called this morning and was extremely jumpy, especially at the prospect of the debate in the House to-morrow. He feared that words might be used which would set Hitler off again. And indeed, Van added, the German Press Campaign, directed, of course, by Goebbels, had been turned furiously against the British during the past few days. He begged me, and several times repeated this, to use my influence to moderate the language of any who might be speaking in the debate. I said that this was very difficult, if not impossible, particularly as regards speeches from the Back Benches. I also thought that ambassadors and Foreign Office officials were inclined to be unduly nervous about Parliamentary debates. After all, much had been said, both in recent debates and in daily questions on foreign affairs, which would give Hitler any excuse which he wanted. None the less, I promised to repeat what Van had said to Attlee.

As to Spain. Van said that he was satisfied that arms had been going in in great quantities in recent months to both sides. He believed that our intelligence reports on this subject were very good. Large consignments had been reaching Valencia and Barcelona, principally from Black Sea ports, but also by round-about routes from some of the smaller European countries and also from across

the Atlantic. A good deal had also been going in over the French frontier. I said that Bevin and Citrine, at a private meeting held at the House of Commons last night, had reported that Mounsey had made this same assertion. I added that most of those present had not believed this. Why, one asked, if this were true, had the War in the Basque country been so one-sided, and why had there been no military movements by Government forces on any of the other fronts? Van said that the Spanish Government had, in fact, sent a number of aeroplanes to help the Basques, but that these had been destroyed on the ground in their aerodromes by German and Italian bombs. This fact had not been published by either side. Each thought they had an interest to conceal it. On the Madrid and Aragon fronts, offensives had been delayed because (a) of internal trouble in Catalonia, and (b) the slow progress made in training both ground troops and air personnel. He said that the Spanish Government were finding very great difficulty in persuading the Catalans to get into military uniform. They had great disinclination to become soldiers. They preferred either politics or work in the factories.

There was still danger that Germany and Italy would declare a Blockade of the Spanish Government coast. This might produce very grave incidents immediately, e.g., they might begin to stop, or even sink, British or French ships. Meanwhile, rumours that the German fleet was concentrated in the Mediterranean were not true. On the contrary, their ships were going west through the Straits of Gibraltar. But they might, of course, suddenly return.

We spoke of the export of arms from this country. I said that we had been surprised by answers given in Parliament showing the magnitude of such exports recently. He said that he, personally, wished we had been able to export more to those countries which were our regular clients for arms. We had to supply Iraq and Egypt, with whom we had special treaty arrangements. We were also supplying certain quantities to Scandinavian and Baltic States. We were also still supplying something, though much less than some years ago, to Portugal. Germany and Italy were trying to take our place in Portugal. The supply of arms generally carried with it a supply of trained instructors and political influence. If we ceased to supply Portugal, our political influence, already much diminished, would vanish altogether. At this moment it was generally believed that our new types of aircraft were the best in the world and this view was widely held abroad. Although our exports of arms had, to some extent, been maintained, the requirements of our own arms programme had obviously operated to diminish them.

As to Russia. He had been very sceptical about the earlier blood baths, but he was satisfied that the Generals were guilty; that they had been in close relations with Germany and were planning a military dictatorship and the elimination of Stalin and Voroshilov. For the moment, no doubt, the Red Army had been weak and this was very dangerous both for the obvious reason that it might encourage the Germans to take risks, and for the more subtle reason, not generally appreciated, that personal links between the German and Russian High Command having been broken, the German soldiers would no longer be restrained through this channel from contemplating an attack on C.S. (I did not pursue this point, but I infer that the basis of the German-Russian military friendship was, not so much Russian indifference to a German attack on C.S., as Russian indifference to a German attack on France and Britain.)

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I saw Maisky alone, as I generally do, but I daresay there was an unseen listener to our conversation. I began by saying, "It is some time since we met and a lot of things have been happening in your country which have disturbed us a good deal. I should like you to give me some information about them. I hope that they have not seriously weakened the Red Army." He replied, "Let us put that down as No.2 on our agenda. I should like first to speak about Spain." He urged that in to-morrow's debate there should be what he called "an outcry in advance" against further German and Italian action against the Spanish Government. For the moment there was a lull, but he was sure that they were preparing something, probably a blockade of the Spanish Government coast, and perhaps even more violent action, e.g., bombardment of Valencia and Barcelona. They were determined to secure a victory for France within the next few months. Otherwise the superiority of forces at the disposal of the Spanish Government would lead to Franco's defeat, not, indeed, immediately, but within measurable time. It would also be a serious consequence of a German-Italian blockade that the supplies of arms which were now reaching the Spanish Government would be seriously interfered with. I asked whether, in fact, the Government had been getting large supplies. He said, "Yes, certainly. From many quarters." I asked whether he thought they had been getting as much as Franco. He replied, "Probably yes." I asked how this was done in spite of the "control". He smiled and said, "It is very easy. When the Italians send men and arms to Franco in Italian ships they fly the Italian flag until they come to Spanish territorial waters and then they hoist the Spanish flag. There is no control over Spanish

ships. It is just the same on the other side." He added that the production of arms in Catalonia is now proceeding on a large scale. A few months ago this production was utterly disorganised. "The Anarchists", he said, "are the criminals." They had insisted on a 40-hour week in the arms factories and this had completely disorganised production. But now things had changed. I made the same point as to Van. If the Spanish Government have all these arms, why have they not been using them lately to relieve pressure on the Basques? He said that there had been great difficulties in the organisation of the Government armies, lack of unified control, lack of competent commanders, the need to train large masses of civilians. But in the next few months there would be a great change. He used, as in previous conversations with me on this subject, the analogy of the Russian Civil War in which, for the first year, the Red Army hardly existed as a military force, "and then", he said, "we gradually gained the upper hand over the Whites and were able to bring our reserves of man power into action." I said that conditions in Russia, both geographical and as regards material and human resources, had been much more favourable to the Red Army than were conditions in Spain to-day to the Republican Forces. He admitted this, but still pressed the analogy. He urged that, in to-morrow's debate, we should declare that any further German and Italian action, by way of blockade or bombardment, against the Spanish Government would not be tolerated by this country. A clear and emphatic warning would have its effect. Nothing else would. We should also declare that, unless the "volunteers" on both sides were all speedily withdrawn, the non-intervention agreement should be denounced. I said that the attitude of our Party now was that, in view of Plymouth's admission that the non-intervention agreement had completely broken down and become a farce, it should be ended forthwith, independently of action for the withdrawal of volunteers. He said that he did not quarrel with this. He added that Plymouth, at the meeting of the Non-intervention Chairman's sub-Committee, after making the statement which I had just quoted and which had been published in the Press, had gone on to suggest a "symbolic" withdrawal of an equal number of volunteers from both sides. This had not been published. It was a preposterous suggestion which showed the state of mind of the British Government. Franco had at least 150,000 Germans and Italians on his side. The Spanish Government had, at the outside, 20,000 non-Spaniards helping them. To withdraw equal numbers would therefore operate entirely to Franco's advantage. He asked whether I thought that the stiffer attitude apparently adopted yesterday by the British and French Governments was due to the replacement of Baldwin by Chamberlain. I said that on this particular point I did not know, but that I thought, in general, that Chamberlain would be in favour of a firmer policy than Baldwin when he thought British interests were directly threatened.

Whether he would take a wider view of British interests, e.g., that these would be threatened very seriously, even indirectly, by a victory of Franco in Spain, I was not so sure. M. said that it was very unfortunate that Delbos was going on as Foreign Minister in France. He was a very weak man. Before taking any decision he always asked, "What does Mr Eden think?"

We then passed to Item No.2 on the agenda. He gave a long explanation, largely on familiar lines, of the recent trials and executions. He said that the Generals, particularly Tukachevsky and Putna, who had been Military Attache here for some time, were definitely pro-German, anti-French and anti-British. When T. had been over here for the funeral of King George V he had spoken openly and contemptuously of Britain and France, both as regards their Parliamentary institutions and their armed forces. He was a great admirer of the efficiency of Germany. Putna was the same. There was no doubt that they were plotting a military dictatorship in Russia, close friendship with Germany, the re-establishment in some measure of Capitalism in Russia, and the cession to Germany of part of the Ukraine, including Odessa, in return for the re-absorption of the Baltic States into the Soviet Union. They were willing, on these terms, to let Germany have a free hand in the West. I said that I found the story about ceding even part of the Ukraine almost incredible in view of (a) the importance of this area to the Soviet economy, and (b) the obvious fact that the Germans, if they got part of it, would soon want the whole and much more besides. He said that I must remember the immense area of the S.U. I might think that the analogy was for this country to cede Scotland to Germany. In fact, the analogy was rather to cede Trinidad. I told him that I still did not find this part of the story convincing.

As I was going away, he said that he hoped I did not resent his making suggestions to me about the line we should take in Parliament. I said, "Certainly not. I have been very interested to hear your suggestions. Many of these are not new and we already have been thinking on the same lines; and I have made suggestions to you before on other questions, for instance, that you should convey to Mr Dimitrov that he should take steps to liquidate the Communist Party in this country and let its members join the Labour Party as individuals. This would get rid of many difficulties and would improve relations between your country and the Labour Movement. I am sure that you have already passed on that suggestion of mine." He laughed a little uncomfortably; perhaps at this point he was more acutely conscious of the unseen listener, and he said "I cannot interfere in such matters. I have no authority to do so."

.....

P.S.

It is, I think, conclusive that V. and M., relying on on their different sources of information, corroborate each other, (1) on the supply of arms to the Government of Spain, (2) on the guilt of the Red Generals. As to (2), Titulescu also said the same thing about Tukachevsky. As to (1), there is further corroboration in the statement, reported by Gillies, that del Vayo had told Schevenels about a month ago that "the Spanish Government are getting all the arms they need."

.....

I spoke later in the evening both to Attlee and Sinclair, who is opening to-morrow's debate for the Liberals, and gave each of them Van's message: (1) that a reference to Central Europe would give Eden an opening, and (2) that it was strongly felt that care should be taken in choice of words regarding Germany.

10/9/37.

Comment. He is pleased with our Declaration on "International Policy & Defence". He thinks the symbolic vote against Defence Estimates were becoming more & more indefensible & unintelligible.

He asks what he has to say to accusation that French Govt is dominated in Foreign Policy by the British. He says I had better ask Blum & Chamberlain. But certainly there is a feeling that France must not go ahead of England, & that she has herself visibly isolated. He fears that the conciliatory policy which seemed toward Germany & Italy will only encourage these two to think that we will draw the line nowhere. Then suddenly there will come some incident, worse than any that went before, and the Democracies will catch fire & demand strong action. I say that it is a measure of the

Degeneration of the situation in the last few years that now the incident is become the Dictatorship Policy. Before we were building up, with general acceptance, the technique of predetermined peaceful procedures for dealing,

Check.

not only in incidents (P.C.I.J., League Council etc) but with major nations. Now all that is gone or abroad in the rising storm.

He is sure that the ^{private} submarine in the Mediterranean are Italian, either after Italian Navy, or lent by Italy to France. Almost certainly Italian ones,

- "Vauban". He has seen Boutlett but Mussolini says "I don't want war, but why should I stop helping France, by any means I can, until France & Britain stop me. I shall go on for as long as I can, & go on as long as I can, - short of provoking war. One German are doing nothing in the Mediterranean.

C says that, during the past months, the balance of imported supplies has shifted heavily to France's side. There is a danger that the Spanish port will be very seriously short, of munition & oil, before long. I said that in the middle of July I heard, not from our side and from the Soviet Embassy, that supplies were short again. He says that the submarine campaign, & feared it, has since altered ^{now}.

Comment.

Hence the French Govt's ~~not~~ intention to open the land front in the Pyrenees, & let R.S. Russian supply some to Marseilles. The Spanish Govt want no more men. Only supplies. ~~Other~~ members of the new Republican Army are already said to be large, & the discipline at least as good as Franco's.

Mr. Lemay, even conciliatory gesture is misinterpreted. Pongrat has sent to Wembley, & now Joebels makes a public speech then saying that France has sent large quantities of munitions to Spain.

Mr. Russia, C says they are very difficult in spite of the F-S Pact. France is out of touch with their intention & is not regularly consulted. The French Ambassador in Moscow does his best, but is shut in just as much as their diplomats. Their latest notes to Italy were sent without any warning to, or consultation with, France. They have pleased left opinion in France, however. People say "We are glad someone has had the courage to tell Mussolini the face that he is a liar." C thinks that, if

Lesnick:

I speak to Helen about the Russians, I shall find her rather bitter about them. The Russians are supplying large quantities of men to the Union. I say that I think her is wise. I only doubt whether the Union are capable of making proper use of them. He thinks they will do all right, so long as they remain in the defensive. (Ryminian again!) If they attack they will be beaten. He thinks the danger of ^{the Union} is greater now than a year ago!

Coming away I have a suggestion of Zilly's, I modify it a bit in my own mind. And her answer.

"The British port should remain the initiative. Hitachi the Kasubs have monopolized it."

Let a Lib port, immediately on coming into Office, communicate with France, Germany, Italy,

Russia, Poland and U.S.A. To France renew made of mutual assistance, to G, I, R & P of the similar made, - to run for a fixed period, say 2 years - & then be subject to renewal. In his period negotiation to D. Bant & for removal of economic & other provisions

to be actively pursued. In U.S.A. no suggestion of peace, but
 cannot report to Conference in ref. statistics. ? suggest
 how long to handle these things be held in Washington.
 (One is to say about to the League.) There are many
 of course. Decision etc. But there are also great
 possibilities. Work out more fully.

Paris 13/9/37.

Darhou I 18 (24)

Hostive meeting of L.S. & I.F.T.U. in the morning at 213 Rue Lafayette.
I joined swing to smoke attendance till Wednesday. Size Spanish present,
glaring at each other. A Spanish bull fight is anticipated where
they get going! Dr. Brackere, just back from Spain, tells me
that internal spatters are terrible, the best arm & food are very
short, and few Catalans are fighting. Catalan arm production
is decreasing. During the past months in submarine blockade has
been most effective. - - -

Saxe, of Brunet, with woman & Gillis I lunch, reminds us
that in 1914-15 Marcel Sembat, Socialist & French Minister, &
Joseph Blum was private secretary, sent Calhoun, the Socialist
now Communist, to Italy to find recruits for intervention
campaign. Calhoun came back & said "I have found a
splendid man, a certain Benito Mussolini." So Sembat
supplied him with funds - French Govt funds - to start on
with available ^{com. if in need.} newspaper - Il Popolo d'Italia. Joseph Blum
had a part in setting up Mussolini in business.

Pap. 9.
14/9/37.

Blum with R & Gillies by car to his Mesnats. Blum this wife, as last year, in this remote little house in a small village, but few telephones in the living room. He is very charming, and looking surprisingly well. He gets on very well with R who, he says, speaks French quite without accent.

But our political talk leaves me, - partly too as a result of Gillies! - quite tired & very miserable.

It is hard to see how things can get better, very easy to see how they can get catastrophically worse.

We spoke in turn of
the Spanish situation
the Myon Agreement
the Far East, the attitude of U.S.

its repercussions in Europe, & Tukhachevsky, & Hitler's cooperation with the Russians, & expectations.

the domestic position in France,

Britain's position in Europe,

Blum's own personal position,

& the British Ambassador in Paris.

Blum #14/9/37.

Dalton I 18 (26)

12

Spain. He had had accounts of internal divisions - a bitter hatred - on the Gortside. The hatred between Prieto & Caballero was in some way long standing. Caballero was not resigned to loss of power. The Communists were aiming at getting on top, & were already suppressing some opposing elements - not only in P.O.U.M. - with great cruelty. The Republican Army was now capable of small but not of great offensives. Nevin & others claimed that next year they would be able to produce all their own arms - even aircraft - with the exception of heavy guns. But the danger that the Republic would be destroyed by internal strife was real.

In reply to a question by me, he said that we should not have a year ago, embassies in London by denouncing the non-intervention agreement. There was a great movement of opinion in France on this subject. A year ago they had been paralysed by Radical opposition. Now Daladier in particular, & others, had changed their attitude. I said that the Labour Party had now, as he knew, declared against non-intervention, but he should not move the Govt. He was not sure. He thought he had noticed, a few days ago, a distinct change in the attitude of Chamberlain & Churchill. They were much stronger against Italy. Sir Arnold Chatfield was very determined.

The Nevin Agreement he thought was excellent. The Germans & Italians had been guilty of a less stupidity in not accepting the invitation to this conference. Now Italy has been offered no more than a Balkan state, rights of ^{control} in Spain & her own transitional waters & the main Mediterranean route did not run through these. Nevin had been afraid that German & Italian, in his presence, would have spiced for Franco & let him have what Russian

Blum

Dalton I 18 (27) 13

ships & others were entering Spanish territorial waters. Now this danger did not exist. He hoped that supplies from Russia would now reach Spain as before the submarine blockade. Gillin said "Britain & France will guarantee the right of Russia to send arms to Spain."

Blum said that he thought the most serious situation of all was today in the Far East. He thought that Japan intended, in the very near future to attack Russia as well as China. It was a serious fact because they were calling up against China the most modern resources. She was keeping the younger classes in reserve against ~~China~~ Russia. She maintained however Russia was indefensible. If Russia became involved in war in the Far East very grave things might happen in Europe. (I think he meant not only that Germany might attack Russia, but alternatively that Germany might feel free, with Italian help, to strike westward.) Events were repeating themselves, as before 1914. Attempts had been made to get common action in the Far East between Britain, France & U.S. One U.S. was very suspicious, particularly of Britain, remembering how Simon had let them down in 1932.

He had no doubt that Tukhachevsky was in very close touch with Germany. He was for in Russia having no westward commitments, he was planning a military coup d'état to get rid of Stalin.

I asked, following Comant's cue, whether he found ~~it~~ cooperation with the Russian Govt becoming easier or more difficult. He replied, rather unexpectedly, that the most essential thing in Europe was to improve British-Soviet relations. With Britain, France and of course as a nucleus, the smaller powers, more so frightened & discouraged, would rally round us. I asked whether it was not true that the Russians set their sights to that without consultation with

France

He said yes, but we must remember how suspicious the Russians were. & we did many things without consulting them.

Hitler's aggressive speeches last year, following Sverdrup's speech, were based on the expectation (1) of a resolution in France & (2) of a conf. by Tikhonchovskiy in Moscow.

They had been able to improve Polish-Czech relations a little, & had persuaded the Poles to agree to Russian aircraft crossing Polish territory, but not to the Red Army passing through Poland. They resumed about 1920.

In France the Communists, like Communists everywhere, were a mystery. The relations of Socialists & Radical Parties were not easy. In the Cantonal elections the Communists would gain heavily - they were starting from zero - and the Radicals would lose heavily. The Socialists might gain slightly. In the Socialist Party there was a strong feeling against continuing in the Chautemps Govt. If at the Radical Congress at Lille, immediately after the Cantonal elections, there was any resolution passed, reflecting even so slightly on the Socialists, this feeling might become uncontainable. It was for going on in the Chautemps Govt. There was no alternative majority in the Chamber for any Govt except Front Populaire, & an early dissolution required the consent of the Senate. But many Radicals were only held to the Front Populaire like a dog on a lead. He himself had had

BLUM.

Struggle very hard, at the National Council, at the Marseilles Conference
 with the Parliamentary group, for a majority for going on in the
 Front Populaire. He was like a man who, during the past 20
 years, had built up a big balance at the bank of confidence in
 himself by the Party. And now he was having to draw checks upon
 the ~~bank~~ against his balance, so that it was dwindling. He
 did not wish to be P.M. again unless he could bring in another
 League & rapid series of reforms. And this was not possible
 in present conditions.

As we were going, he said that Francois-Poncet complained that he
 could not get the same intimate relationship with Neville Henderson
 which he had had with Phipps. He thought N.H. seemed too
 much toward the Nazis. F. Poncet was not a month left, but he
 was one of their best of Ambassadors & knew Germany very well.

DIARY

21/10/37.

Saw Peter Howard in the smoking room at the H. of C. Congratulated him on last week's Sunday Express, comparing the Bournemouth and Scarborough Conferences. He told me that he had asked Cripps for an interview, to get a line but not for straight publication. He had, he said, been most graciously received by the great man in his chambers in the Temple. Cripps had told him that he had no desire to be the leader of the Labour Party; he did not think that Attlee would "put difficulties in my way"; he thought that Herbert Morrison will "come our way before very long". This was all Peter would tell me at that moment, as others joined us.

.....

George Lathan tells me that Cripps has now sent £250 to the Campaign Fund with promises of three further sums of like amount to follow at due intervals. He is curiously rash and ill-judged in many of his political contributions. I recall that he blurted out to me, immediately before the final row over the Socialist League, when I had him alone in my flat, that in the last Parliament, when Lansbury was out of action, he had subsidised Attlee, it "having been decided" (? by whom) that it was better that he himself should not lead the Parliamentary Party. This revelation somewhat embarrassed me at the time, as Cripps and I were then supposed to be fighting each other on the United Front and other issues.

[Xerox copy
Original letter with
correspondence.

Dalton I R (3014) See. 5/2. For original

Dear ~~Mr~~⁵⁺ ~~Mr~~



Monday, Oct. 25 [1937]

BROWN'S HOTEL,

LONDON, W. I.

Pin to diary (ROBERTS & ALBEMARLE ST)

TELEGRAMS BROWNHOTEL, LONDON.
TELEPHONE NO REGENT 6020.

Dear Dalton

Though it is some 7 years
since we last met & you
have probably forgotten me,
I shall, if it interests you,
very much like to have a talk
with you about Germany. I
shall be in London at this address
till I start back next Saturday
so that if you give me a
ring or left a message I'd
arrange to meet you where &
when you suggest

Yrs sincerely
Neville Henderson

DIARY23/10/37.

Sir Neville Henderson, British Ambassador in Berlin, came to see me in my flat, at his own request, and stayed for a little over an hour. He did not make a very good impression on me, either in respect of political intelligence or character. I had only once seen him before, seven years ago when he was Minister at Belgrade, and it was not really either very gentlemanly or very clever to jeer at his predecessor in Berlin to a complete stranger. This arose when I said that, being in France last month, I had heard that Francois Poncet felt very much frozen out since Phipps had left. On this Henderson said, "I found an impossible state of things when I got to Berlin. It was common talk that there was no British Embassy there at all. It was only a branch of the Quai d'Orsay. I was compelled to make a change ... Phipps was a most unsuitable appointment. When he got Berlin I wrote to him 'Dear Eric, I shan't congratulate you because I think you are going to the wrong capital. You should be going to Brussels, where you would be much closer to your spiritual home'".

Henderson began his conversation by asking me whether I remembered that when we had met before I had said to him, "Here is the famous pro-Yugoslav." (In fact I am sure that I said nothing of the kind, but this was an opening to lead on to his supposed pro-Germanism to-day.) He thought that it was very useful for him to be able to meet "people like yourself" in addition to seeing members of the Government. He had met Citrine at lunch. (When I told Ruth this, she said "He must feel he has been getting among the Reds".) He was speaking, he explained, entirely for himself. I could find out the view of H.M.G. or of the Foreign Office from other people, but he would give me, quite frankly, his own views of a possible Anglo-German settlement. "And that", he said, "would be the greatest guarantee for the peace of the world, when you think of the enormous strength in men and armaments and wealth which we and Germany combined could dispose of." (He mentioned to me that he had just come from seeing the Prime Minister. I wondered whether he spoke to him on these lines. If so, it would be old Joseph's dream come back again.) I asked him on what basis he thought an Anglo-German agreement could be reached. He began by some rather elementary reflections on the Treaty of Versailles and a long quotation by heart from a letter of Wellington after Waterloo. He added that we were all the time on a rising market with the Germans. What they would have agreed to a year or two ago was not enough for them now. If we did not agree to what they wanted now, they would want much more a few years hence. He thought that we should make it clear that we had no objection to German

populations contiguous to the Reich entering it, and should seek to make such entry peaceful. Austria, he thought, was an obvious case. It was a great mistake that we had ever opposed the Anschluss. The Sudeten Germans should immediately have autonomy within Czechoslovakia. Benes "should be made to agree to this." It might well be that such autonomy would lead, after a certain interval, to the German districts, which were very clearly defined, joining the Reich. We ought to raise no objection to this. We should let Danzig go without any more fuss and should encourage the Poles to make some concessions in the Corridor. He had been at Marienwerder lately, staying in a wonderful old castle looking down upon the Vistula, and had been shown how there was a strip of Polish territory along the river bank which prevented the Germans from any access. (They have been taking him round all the obvious places.) He had also lately been to the Lithuanian border and thought that some adjustments might be made there. I asked if he would encourage German Switzerland to go into the Reich. He seemed rather surprised at this question and said No. Then he came to colonies. He appreciated that the South Africans would not give back "South West". As for Tanganyika, there were not many Germans there in any case. But he thought the right thing would be for us, the French, Portuguese and the Belgians to carve out from our own colonies two substantial tracts for Germany on either side of the Congo. We ourselves should have to be generous and put a good deal into the pot, but opposition in this country would be much diminished if France and Belgium were also contributing. I asked whether he thought that these areas should be given to Germany in full sovereignty. He said that he would much prefer that they should be under mandate, and he believed that the Germans would agree to this. He thought that the effect of such a colonial offer in Germany would be tremendous. He was sure that they were really anxious to be friends with us. Hitler in particular. Nor was Goering, nor Blomberg, nor Schacht, anti-British, and old Neurath did his best to prevent follies and excesses and to curb those Nazi Party members who "did not know how to behave". But the real scoundrels were Gobbels and one or two early members on the old Nazi Party list, to whom Hitler was still very loyal. I asked what he thought we could get from the Germans if we made the concessions which he had been suggesting. He said "A check to their rearmament programme - that would have to be a condition." And he thought that they would be prepared to rejoin the League of Nations. He added "I am a great believer in the League and in general security but I think there will have to be some changes. It is no good trying to put the roof on before you have got solid foundations, but I think that Hitler would be willing, as part of an agreement, to go back even to the League as it is now." We should remember, he added, that the National Socialist Revolution was less than five years old and they were all most anxious to build up their new political and social order. He was sure that they did

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 subject
 1/27

not want war. In any case, he did not think that there was any fear of this until 1939. I said that this fatal year seemed always to be receding. A year or two ago people talked of 1936 and 37 as the dangerous years. He said, "I do not think there need be a fatal year if we are willing to meet them half way."

I said that some people took the view that it was contrary to British interests for Germany to be strengthened in any direction and that this was the reason why some felt that it was necessary to organise collective security against any possible aggressor, and that those who held this view had Germany particularly in mind. "Oh, that is the old French system, which has completely broken down. You see how, now that Germany is rearming, all Central Europe is breaking away from that old conception." He added, "Of course, we cannot give up the French, any more than we can expect the Germans to give up Italy. France is often a very mauvais coucheur, but we have to stick to her just as we have to stick to Holland and Belgium. But she is not a dynamic country as the Germans are."

I said that there were some who thought that if Germany went to war with Russia, we should keep out of it and bring pressure to bear to keep France out of it too. He said, "That would certainly be my view." I asked whether he did not fear the effect on Western Europe of a Germany, victorious in an East European war and enormously strengthened by the conquest of large territories and rich natural resources. Would not such a Germany soon be dictating to this country who should be allowed to be Prime Minister and what newspapers might or might not be published? He did not seem to think much of such dangers, and added that he did not believe the Germans really wanted war in the East. They would not wish to have to assimilate large Slav populations. He then added some rather unfavourable comments on Slavs in general. "Slavs", he said, "are incurably corrupt. This was King Alexander's great trouble in Belgrade. Mackenzie King told me that Germans made much better settlers than Slavs in Canada and were easily assimilated." I said that, when we had met before, he had highly praised the qualities of Serbian and Slovenian peasants. This disconcerted him and he said, "Oh well, of course they are much the best. But I don't think much of the Russians or the Poles, and I hear that the Czechs are pretty corrupt too." When I pressed him further as to whether he would trust the Germans, particularly if they were strengthened in the process, to carry out the terms of any Anglo-German agreement, he said "Well, of course, in the last resort you cannot trust any foreigners who carry out agreements with you, if they feel it is against their interests. Apart from that, I would not trust the French. Perhaps one could trust the Americans more than anyone in Europe."

I said that I had heard it suggested that Goering might visit London and that a little flattery, a new Order, another uniform, and a little country-house life, might work wonders with him. Henderson said that Eden had suggested that it should be Goering rather than Neurath who should come over here and talk to us, but when he had suggested it to Goering in Berlin, Goering had laughed and said "If I came to London all your Ellen Wilkinsons would throw carrots at me." I said even if Neurath came, and certainly if Goering came, there would be loud and ugly noises outside the German Embassy. I would suggest that, as a preliminary to any such visit, he should use his influence with Goering to get the concentration camps in Germany visibly and audibly emptied. If this were done, the noises would be less loud and less ugly. He said "That is a most useful suggestion. This shows the value of my coming to see people like you. Do you really think that if I could arrange this you could guarantee that Goering's visit would go smoothly, and would some of your people be willing to meet him?" I said that in this untotalitarian country one can never guarantee a complete non-expression of public opinion. No doubt Communists would demonstrate in any case, and I thought there would be great disinclination on the part of members of H.M. Opposition to meet Goering anyhow. But I had no doubt that, if the concentration camps were liquidated, that would produce a great impression on Left opinion in this country. I hoped he would try to get it done. He said "Oh yes, and I should like to do something about the Jews and the churches as well." I said that this would help still further. He finished with a warm invitation to me or any of my political friends to come and stay with him at the Embassy in Berlin "and meet all these people." I said that I was afraid that this would not be practical politics at present.

.....

I was not much pleased by this man, and later, running into Eden at the House, I said that Henderson had been to see me and had been explaining in detail all the concessions which he thought we should offer to Germany. Eden said, a little vexed I thought, "I wish he would not go on like this to everybody he meets."

DIARY4/11/37

Had a letter from Van suggesting that we might have a short talk. (I had told him, through Clifford Norton who was at the House last week, of Henderson's onslaught on my political innocence.)

I went round to the F.O. about 12. Nothing very new or topical from Van's side. He said that the drive against him was going as strongly as ever. Londonderry, Lothian, The Times it was worse now because lots of people were frightened and thought that by giving things away right and left to Germany they could buy our own peace and security. I said I was frightened too, but I did not say so in public, nor did my fear make me act like that. He said, "So am I, but it is one thing to have fear in one's heart and quite another to show funk and run away from these people. That won't help at all." The dictators were now getting more and more openly abusive, not merely, as a little while ago, to Red Russia, but now to all the "reactionary democracies". The barrage against this country, both in the German and Italian press, was mounting. The Germans might change their list of priorities. They might alter the order of their dishes, but the menu remained the same. To-day, probably, it was, No.1 Austria, No.2 colonies, No.3 Czechoslovakia, but it might be changed tomorrow. He agreed with me that it would be almost impossible to stop the Nazification of Austria if the change came through an engineered internal explosion.

As to Czechoslovakia, he saw Henleinⁿ for the second time a little while ago and thought that he was losing his head. He was putting his demands higher and higher. Van had said to him that he really should show more moderation, since if war came in Central Europe all the areas in which the Sudeten Germans lived would be smashed to pieces first and worst of all. On the other hand, Van thought that Benes had been very stupid not to see Henlein. Hodza was more reasonable, but Van thought that Benes had got some kind of strangle-hold on Hodza. Possibly he knew too much of his private affairs. I said that I had heard from a Czech journalist (Winter) that obstruction of Hodza's agreement with the German activists was coming, not only from small Czech officials on the spot, but from Cerny, the Czech agrarian Minister of the Interior. Van said this was news to him and he would enquire. If it was true, it would be at once both more serious and perhaps more remediable by words spoken in Prague. Russia, he thought, was in a terrible state of dis-organisation after all these purges and shootings, but he repeated that he was satisfied that some of the Red generals had deserved all they got. He was not too sure about Tukhachevsky or Putna, but he was quite sure about Jaffi and Kork. In the Far East they were thoroughly frightened and had not even said 'peep-peep' to the Japs.

Meanwhile, Isvestia and Pravda were daily full of leading articles attacking the "supine British" for doing nothing to stop Japan. This weakness of Russia was most unfortunate, encouraging Hitler and Mussolini. The latter seems to have lost all powers of cool calculation such as a few years ago he undoubtedly had. He was very much the junior partner on the Berlin-Rome Axis. He had plunged in 100% into the German embrace. If he had only gone in 40% he would have retained valuable power of manoeuvre. He had apparently been persuaded, quite literally, to sell Austria to Hitler. Van reminded me that some time ago he had said that neither he nor anybody else could guarantee what would happen in Europe after the end of 1937.

I mentioned the possibility that I might be going to Australia in December. He said he was sorry. He would have preferred that I should be in this country. The biggest fools of all were those who thought that the "British Empire" was a source of strength to this country, that we could rest securely upon it and within it, and that the Germans might be persuaded to "guarantee" it for us if we would let them do what they liked everywhere else meantime. He thought that the Empire was largely an incubus, both from the economic and military point of view. The Australians, at any rate, were realists and might be prepared to give some help in time of trouble. Many of the others would not.

I am sure that he is determined to stick like a limpet where he is, until pushed out. He believes that he sees the danger to peace and can, at least, prevent major errors. I am sure that he is right on negative propositions. Whether he has a good positive policy, or, indeed, whether any good positive policy can be made just at this moment, is another question.

DIARY30.11.37

Jacques Kayser who is very close to Chautemps came to see me this morning. I always find him very clear-headed and sensible on international questions. He said that Chautemps and Delbos were well satisfied with their visit. It was the first time that Chautemps had met Chamberlain. They had made a tour of the world with British Ministers and it was true to say that "complete agreement had been reached", but rather on the problems to be studied than on the solutions to be proposed. He was assured, however, that The Times and its adherents had been defeated. Their propaganda had been too strong. I told him of the activities in this country of Sir Nevile Henderson and of the Cliveden gang. He said that Francois-Poncet had told him that every day in Berlin he was conscious of the great difference between N.H. and his predecessor. I then asked Kayser's opinion on the situation in a number of European countries. The Soviet Union, he said, was at present a land full of question marks. There was reason to fear that the Red Army was less strong from a military point of view than before the Purge. The process of mobilisation, he feared, would be a long one. Great claims were made for the Red Air Force, but these were perhaps exaggerated. The decline of the personal prestige of Litvinov at Geneva during the past 12 months was very noticeable. This reflected not any personal set-back for Litvinov but a general consciousness that Soviet Russia counted for less and was a more speculative element than they had supposed a year ago, when Litvinov had occupied an almost dominating position in the Council and Assembly of the League. Of the Franco-Soviet Pact it could at least be said that it had negative value. It prevented the formation of a German-Soviet Pact, which could not be excluded from the possibilities of the near future and which would be catastrophic for Europe.

In Poland the international political position was bad. The reactionary and anti-Semitic forces had grown stronger. The recent Democratic Movement seemed likely to come to nothing. The Peasants Party, and Witos, were unlikely, he thought, to come to power. He agreed with me that it had been an act of most mistaken politeness not to demand of Smigly-Rydz the removal of Beck before additional French loans were granted to Poland.

He was also gloomy about Yugo-Slavia. He had recently met in Paris some members of the Opposition and gathered that they also had gone backward during the past six months. He did not trust Stoyadinovitch or Prince Paul. Yet Yugo-Slavia was one of the most important countries in Europe. They had splendid material in their Army and a deep hatred of Italy. He believed that, if a

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crisis came, both Poland and Wugo-Slavia would still be on the side of France, but what was very dangerous was that this might not be known for certain until the eleventh hour, when war had already become inevitable. It was indispensable to create in advance a knowledge in German minds that England and France would have strong and active Slav allies on the continent. This might prevent the outbreak of war.

Rumania, he thought, had been much undermined by German propaganda and the politicians now in office were not reliable.

We spoke of Czechoslovakia and agreed that publicly we could advocate no concessions to Germany, although the Czech Government should be urged to remove all reasonable grievances of the German minority. I said that, although I would not say so publicly, I was inclined to think that a moderate degree of frontier revision would be preferable to the so-called "Federalisation" of C.S. He thought that both would be equally bad. There was now a natural frontier, fairly easily defensible, between C.S. and the Reich. Once the German frontier was moved across the mountains on to the Bohemian Plain it became almost impossible for the Czechs to defend.

As to colonies, British and French Ministers had agreed that the German claims should be "studied". He thought, however, that we should insist on any concessions here being made part of a "general settlement". I asked exactly what he meant by "general settlement". He said Germany should return to the League and give new guarantees of peaceful intentions and willingness to submit all disputes to arbitration, etc. I asked "What about any change in the Covenant?" He said that Article 10 must remain intact but that, as regards Article 16, if it were a choice between (1) keeping Article 16 in the Covenant but with no real agreement or intention to apply it, and not getting Germany back into the League, and (2) removing Article 16 from the Covenant and getting Germany back into the League, he was inclined to prefer (2). Better than either, of course, would be an assurance that Article 16 would be effectively and loyally observed by all States which mattered. (I thought this was rather defeatist.) I then said "What about a check to the arms race as a necessary condition of a general settlement?" He said that this would be very difficult, for Germany would say "I cannot limit my arms unless Russia limits hers", and this point of view was, one must admit, not unreasonable. And Russia would say, even more reasonably, "I cannot limit my arms unless Japan limits hers". And perhaps Japan would say, though less reasonably, "I cannot limit my arms unless the United States limits hers". And therefore one was

driven back to another international conference on disarmament since it was clear that this matter could not be decided by a few States alone. And the preparation for such a conference would take time. And therefore it was difficult to include a provision for arms limitation in an early German settlement. (I thought this, also, was defeatist and was a little shocked.) I drew his attention to an excellent Leader in this morning's Daily Herald which proposed that we should start from the fact of the Anglo-French mutual assistance agreement and propose to Germany and others that they should enter it on the same terms. This, I suggested, might be a ground for persuading the Germans to accept some arms limitation in advance of a full-sized international conference. He was not very warm about this suggestion.

As to colonies, he thought that whatever the Germans might be given, they should not regain the Cameroons, for with Italy, as a result of Laval's concessions, stretching down towards Lake Tchad from the north, we should run the risk of the Rome-Berlin Axis stretching right across Africa and cutting the French African Empire in two. He would prefer that the Germans should be given something south of the Cameroons, even if this included some old-established French colonies. I said that some people held the view that we should form a sort of subscription list for Germany and that the Belgians and Portuguese should be pressed to make their contributions as well as France and England. He said he did not quite see why Belgium should contribute since States without colonies would then be unduly favoured. I said that Belgium had a great lump of territory in the Congo, and since she was running out of all her obligations under the Covenant it was not unreasonable, I thought, that, if anything was to be given away, she should give something.

He was reasonably confident and contented with the internal political situation in France. There was no alternative in the Chamber to a Front Populaire Government and many people would support a Chautemps Government for fear that the alternative was a return of Blum. This would keep the Right Radicals in check and Chautemps's personal relations with Blum were so good that he thought the Socialists would continue to support the present Government.

DIARY

Straws in the wind, latter half of November, 1937.

I made a note at the time of my talk with Nevile Henderson. There is a lot going on of which his visit here and Halifax's to Berlin are outward signs. The movement in influential quarters here to come to some kind of Anglo-German agreement, even if this means making large "concessions" to Germany, either at our own or other people's expense, is formidable. German strength and determination are impressive; the weakness and unreliability of others not less so. Who knows what is happening in Russia or what will happen to-morrow, or what she would be worth if war came, or whether she would really be willing to march or fly at all. France. The Cagouillard conspiracy is rather disconcerting, even though Chautemps and others may have written it up for their own political purposes (e.g., it is suggested that some of the "great arsenals" of hidden arms are really small private collections of ancient weapons). It is not good that such things should be happening, even though the police under a Left Wing Government are well on top. Lees-Smith quotes Deverell, Chief of I.I.G.S., as saying "What we are worried about is not so much our own Army and armament programme as that of the French." He seemed doubtful as to their reliability and efficiency. Peter Howard told me on November 23rd that Hoare had said to him "The trouble is that Europe is divided into two armed camps and we are in the weaker of the two." P.H. also said that Beaverbrooke would be in favour of giving back all German colonies at an early date.

I was stopped on November 27th in St James's Park by Abrahamson, who made propaganda for Italy and against Germany. He said that Giannini was in London trying to get commercial credits. He realised that anything more than this was impossible. A., who is a dingy little Jew, probably in the pay of Mussolini and possibly others, was all for helping Italy and ~~drawing~~ trying to reconstitute a Stresa bloc against Germany. He tried to make my flesh creep by allegations against F.O. officials, particularly "some of the younger ones", who, he said, "care nothing for democracy" and would come to terms with Hitler to-morrow. He was anxious to get members of the Labour Party in with those Conservatives who were taking up a rigid line against the return of any colonies to Germany, or their use "as a bargaining counter" in any negotiations now proceeding.

R.R.Stokes, the Managing Director of Ransome and Rapier, Labour candidate for North Glasgow and land value fanatic, saw me on November 23rd at the House of Commons. He had recently been in Berlin and talking to Kirkpatrick, who is First Secretary and has been there four years. K. had said, (1) that it was a pity

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that members of the Labour Party should speak abusively of Hitler and the German regime in public because this would make it more difficult to carry on reasonable relations if a Labour Government came in; (2) that it would be very valuable if some of us would go over to Berlin and meet some of the important people; it could be arranged that we could meet whom we liked and nobody we didn't like, and stay with British diplomats; (3) that he doubted whether we fully realised the danger that, if nothing was settled, Hitler would one day just lose patience and ring up Goring and ask when the first bombs could be dropped on London. I said that our Ambassador had been talking on somewhat similar lines to me already. There were great difficulties in the way of any of us going to Berlin as suggested.

Ben Riley and Noel Buxton have been staying in the Sudeten Deutsch country. They spent some days at Reichenburg and talked to Pares, our consul there, son of Sir Bernard. B.R. talked to me at the House on November 22nd about their impressions. They are full of the grievances of the German minority and think that Henlein was a very reasonable person and all the Czechs most unreasonable. They say that the decision to postpone the local elections had been taken long before the incidents at Teplitz. They think that most of the Germans in C.S. would be delighted to find themselves in the Reich. Meanwhile, little or nothing is being done to carry out Hodza's agreement with the activists. The claims for some kind of federal solution they think are very reasonable. I gathered that they are thick with Hadow, now returned to the F.O. from Prague. He has been furnishing them with comments, violently pro-German and anti-Czech, on the document left by Winter on behalf of the Czech Socialist Party. I told B.R. that I was interested to hear what he said, that there was a great conflict of evidence as to all the facts and peaceful possibilities, and that, although I regarded him as an intelligent and objective traveller, I could not say the same of Noel Buxton who had always had his ears wide open to all German grievances and tight shut to the grievances of anybody else.

Rang up Wiskeman on November 29th. Full of excitement about C.S. She says that Hadow was notorious and nobbled everyone who went to Prague and loaded them up with pro-German and anti-Czech propaganda. He was the chief influence in our Legation owing to the fact that, after Addison went, Bentink and Newton knew very little about local conditions. She is sure that Voigt's version in the M.G. of the background of the Halifax-Hitler conversations was accurate. She said that Benes and Hodza were doing their best to get the agreement with the activists carried out, but there was great resistance both from small local Czech

officials and from the leaders of the Czech Agrarian Party. I said "But Hodza is an Agrarian". She said "Yes, but he has made himself very unpopular with his own Party by his reasonable attitude towards the German minority, and also by sticking to the Czech-Soviet Pact. The Czech Agrarians are the devil. They are flirting with Germany and in favour of dropping the Pact with Moscow but at the same time they are preventing all efforts to conciliate the German minority in C.S." She thought that any so-called federal solution in C.S. would simply mean handing the country over to Hitler. An early step would be a demand from Berlin for the suppression by Prague of all Left Parties. The technique was familiar. The Germans would take violent objection to something someone had said at a public meeting or to some article in the Left press. I asked whether some moderate rectification of the Frontier in favour of Germany would not be better. She said yes, it would, but this would be opposed by the Henleinners because it would reduce their influence in C.S. It would probably also be rejected in Berlin for the same reason. The time to have done this was 1919. We were 18 years too late.

In the Sunday press of November 28th there is a great barrage in favour of concessions to Germany. "Scrutator" in the Sunday Times (who would pay any heed to him if he signed his name Sidebottom?) thinks that "There is no doubt that, but for France's Eastern alliance, the peace of Western Europe could be made secure for at least a generation, and it is sheer vanity that pretends to be able to see further ahead than that". His geography is very wonky, thus "France could not reach Czechoslovakia to help her against Germany except through Italy or by way of the sea, which Italy could probably prevent and only British sea power could guarantee." Further, "Does Czechoslovakia place such implicit trust in the efficacy of her alliances that she thinks her independence safer when rested upon the incalculable risks of war rather than on the chances of neighbourly friendship with Germany? Is the project attributed to Herr Hitler of some measure of Home Rule for the Sudeten Germans in Czechoslovakia so wholly unreasonable and so destructive of her national rights when it is remembered that Dr Benes himself at the Peace Conference announced his intention of making Czechoslovakia a sort of Switzerland?". The Observer contains the usual Garvin slobber including proposals for a wholesale return of German colonies: "Britain and France by themselves could effect the restoration of the Cameroons and Togoland with some enlargement of either or both. This part of the question is much more important than it looks. Concession in that quarter would largely relieve Germany's want of vegetable oils - one of the needs which her synthetic chemistry cannot yet supply.....Other Dominions, free as they are, should contribute something positive to the peace of the world. Already

some thoughtful Australians think that it would be better to bring Germany back to New Guinea, and to have another European Power on that side of the world as well as Japan. The South African Union, again, cannot throw all the burthen on Britain, by merely adhering to a double negative on South-West Africa and Tanganyika alike. If anything went wrong with Britain, everything would go wrong with all the Dominions except Canada.....Make no mistake. The Sibylline books are the symbol of this situation. The time for Anglo-German settlement is now. We all wish to strive for continued concert with France. If Paris were hopelessly fettered by the fixed idea of anti-German combinations in concert with Russia, we should be forced to act alone. The life of the Empire depends upon our judgment and steadfastness in this sense. We cannot allow the British Empire to be dragged down to disaster by the separate French alliances with Moscow and Prague. As we have now shown, neither the continental nor the colonial question is an insuperable obstacle to friendship between the British and German peoples." Reynolds is full of a story of a grave Cabinet Crisis and a split which may result in Eden's resignation. It represents Eden and Vansittart against the rest and says that Kingsley Wood is exercising great influence on the other side.